

July 2026

New Bedford/Fairhaven Municipal Harbor Plan



Submitted by:

City of New Bedford
Town of Fairhaven

Submitted to:

Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management



June 16, 2026

Secretary Rebecca Tepper
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge St.
10th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Secretary Tepper,

On behalf of the City of New Bedford and the Town of Fairhaven, we are pleased to submit the enclosed 2026 New Bedford/Fairhaven Municipal Harbor Plan (MHP) and Designated Port Area (DPA) Master Plan for review and approval pursuant to 301 CMR 23.00.

The MHP represents a renewed partnership between the City and Town to guide the future of New Bedford Harbor and the Acushnet River in a manner that strengthens our maritime economy, advances environmental restoration and coastal resiliency, and enhances public access to this critical shared resource. Building upon the 2002 MHP and the 2010 Amendment, the new 2026 MHP reflects extensive public engagement, coordination with state and federal agencies, and careful analysis of evolving economic, environmental, and resiliency conditions.

The 2026 MHP reaffirms our commitment to the Harbor's role as the nation's highest-value commercial fishing port and as a premier Designated Port Area supporting seafood processing, vessel repair and fabrication, marine transportation, and emerging water-dependent industries. At the same time, it advances a forward-looking framework for climate resilience, infrastructure investment, improved watershed management, and expanded public access — including continued advancement of the New Bedford RiverWalk and enhanced connections between our waterfronts and downtown districts.

Throughout the planning process, we worked closely with the Harbor Plan Renewal Committee, the New Bedford Port Authority, municipal departments, community organizations, industry stakeholders, and the public. Multiple public meetings, listening sessions, focus groups, and other outreach efforts ensured that the 2026 MHP reflects the priorities of residents, businesses, and maritime users on both sides of the Harbor. We are particularly grateful for the continued collaboration and guidance provided by the Office of Coastal Zone Management, MassDEP Waterways, and other state partners.

The enclosed MHP includes:

- A comprehensive assessment of Harbor conditions and economic market trends;
- Targeted economic development and regulatory recommendations, including amplifications and substitutions, to support balanced waterfront redevelopment while protecting public trust interests;

- A renewed DPA Master Plan to preserve and enhance water-dependent industrial capacity; and
- A clear implementation framework to ensure coordinated action over the coming decade.

We respectfully request review and approval of the 2026 MHP and DPA Master Plan. We look forward to continued collaboration with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Office of Coastal Zone Management to advance the long-term vitality, resilience, and public value of New Bedford Harbor.

Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing partnership in stewarding the Commonwealth's coastal resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Mitchell".

Jon Mitchell
Mayor
City of New Bedford

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Keith Hickey".

Keith Hickey
Town Administrator
Town of Fairhaven

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	V
LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	VII
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 MHP OVERVIEW	1
1.2 PLANNING AREA	2
1.3 PURPOSE & AUTHORITY	4
CHAPTER 2: PLANNING PROCESS.....	6
2.1 INTRODUCTION	6
2.2 BACKGROUND DATA.....	6
2.3 HARBOR PLAN RENEWAL COMMITTEE	7
2.4 PUBLIC OUTREACH	7
2.5 AGENCY COORDINATION.....	11
CHAPTER 3: HARBOR CONDITIONS.....	12
3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & CURRENT HARBOR USES.....	12
3.2 INFRASTRUCTURE CONDITIONS	15
3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS	17
3.4 PUBLIC ACCESS & RECREATION CONDITIONS	18
3.5 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK	19
3.6 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2010 MHP	23
CHAPTER 4: ECONOMIC MARKET TRENDS	24
4.1 INTRODUCTION	24
4.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS	24
4.3 EXISTING MARKET CONDITIONS.....	24
4.4 KEY FINDINGS	26
CHAPTER 5: PLANNING ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS	33
5.1 INTRODUCTION	33
5.2 PLANNING ANALYSIS	33
5.3 PLANNING PRINCIPLES & PRIORITIES	46
5.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS.....	47

5.5	REGULATORY RECOMMENDATIONS	58
CHAPTER 6:	DPA MASTER PLAN.....	70
6.1	OVERVIEW	70
6.2	EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS.....	70
6.3	WATER-DEPENDENT INDUSTRIAL USES.....	71
6.4	SUPPORTING DPA USES.....	72
6.5	TEMPORARY USES	74
6.6	STRATEGIES & PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE DEVELOPMENT IN THE DPA.....	74
CHAPTER 7:	IMPLEMENTATION.....	77
7.1	INTRODUCTION	77
7.2	IMPLEMENTATION OVERSIGHT & FUNDING APPROACH.....	78
7.3	SUMMARY OF SCHEDULE & SEQUENCING.....	83
7.4	POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS.....	84
CHAPTER 8:	REGULATORY COMPLIANCE.....	85
8.1	INTRODUCTION	85
8.2	CONSISTENCY WITH CZM PROGRAM POLICIES.....	85
8.3	CONSISTENCY WITH STATE TIDELANDS POLICY OBJECTIVES	91
8.4	CONSISTENCY WITH STANDARDS FOR AMPLIFICATIONS.....	94
8.5	CONSISTENCY WITH STANDARDS FOR SUBSTITUTIONS.....	95
8.6	CONSISTENCY WITH DPA MASTER PLAN REQUIREMENTS.....	99
8.7	COMPATIBILITY WITH PLANS & PLANNED ACTIVITIES OF STATE AGENCIES.....	102
8.8	IMPLEMENTATION.....	103

TABLES

Table 5-1	Planning Principles and Priorities Currently in Effect under 2010 MHP and 2020 MHP Clarification and to be Continued in the 2026 MHP
Table 5-2	Economic Development Recommendations Associated with 2026 MHP Objective #1
Table 5-3	Economic Development Recommendations Associated with 2026 MHP Objective #2
Table 5-4	Economic Development Recommendations Associated with 2026 MHP Objective #3
Table 5-5	Chapter 91 Substitution and Offsetting Measure Recommendations
Table 5-6	Chapter 91 Amplification Recommendation
Table 6-1	DPA Metrics
Table 6-2	DPA Land Use

Table 6-3	List of Supporting DPA Uses
Table 6-4	Benefits of the 2026 MHP Recommendations to the DPA
Table 7-1	Matrix of 2026 MHP Implementation Oversight and Funding Approach
Table 8-1	Consistency with CZM Program Policies
Table 8-2	Consistency with State Tidelands Policy Objectives
Table 8-3	Consistency with Standards for Amplification to 310 CMR 9.52(1)(b)
Table 8-4	Consistency with Standards for Approval of Substitution Provisions (301 CMR 23.05(2)(d))
Table 8-6	Consistency with DPA Master Plan Requirements
Table 8-7	Compatibility with Plans & Planned Activities of State Agencies

FIGURES

Figure 1-1	Planning Area
Figure 1-2	Focus Areas
Figure 3-1	Historic Resources
Figure 3-2	Recently Completed and Ongoing Maritime Industrial Projects
Figure 3-3	Transportation Infrastructure
Figure 3-4	Wetland Resource Areas
Figure 3-5	Chapter 91 Jurisdiction
Figure 3-6	New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA
Figure 3-7	State Harbor Lines and Federal Navigation Channels
Figure 3-8	Harbor Dredging, CAD Cells, and WDSFs
Figure 4-1	Port of New Bedford Commercial Fisheries Economic Market Trends 2012-2022
Figure 4-2	Lumber Imports & Exports at New England Ports 2014-2024
Figure 4-3	Perishables by Tonnage by Transport Type at New England Ports 2014-2024
Figure 4-4	Non-Containerized Perishables at New England Ports – Tonnage Per Port 2014-2024
Figure 4-5	Auto Imports and Exports at New England Ports 2014-2024
Figure 5-1	Harbor – Port Focus Area Land Use Map
Figure 5-2	Harbor Focus Area Land Use Map
Figure 5-3	Acushnet River Focus Area Land Use Map
Figure 5-4	Proposed RiverWalk Alignment
Figure 5-5	Buzzards Bay Focus Area Land Use Map
Figure 5-6	Public Access and Recreation in the Planning Area
Figure 5-7	Applicability of Acushnet River Focus Area Regulatory Recommendations
Figure 6-1	New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A Notice to Proceed
- Attachment B Community Survey Form and Results
- Attachment C Status of Recommendations from the 2010 MHP
- Attachment D Coastal Flood Resiliency Analysis

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2026 New Bedford/Fairhaven Municipal Harbor Plan and Designated Port Area Master Plan was made possible through a Massachusetts Seaport Economic Council grant, for which the Project Team is deeply appreciative. The Project Team would also like to thank New Bedford and Fairhaven residents, business owners, and other stakeholders for their participation in the public process for this Plan and thoughtful input that helped shape it. Please see Chapter 2 for a full list of the many local organizations, government agencies, and other groups that were involved in this process. Last but not least, the dedicated participation in developing this Plan by the individuals below is specifically recognized.

Municipal Leadership

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Keith Hickey, Fairhaven Town Administrator

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Municipal Departments

New Bedford Port Authority
New Bedford Department of City Planning
New Bedford Office of Environmental Stewardship
New Bedford Department of Public Infrastructure
New Bedford Cable Access
Fairhaven Land Use and Planning Department
Fairhaven Conservation & Sustainability Department
Fairhaven Marine Resources Department
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Consultant Team

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
ACL	American Cruise Lines
BASE	Buyers and Sellers Exchange
CAD Cell	Confined Aquatic Disposal Cell
CDF	Confined Disposal Facility
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CSO	Combined Sewer Overflow
CZM	Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management
DCR	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
DPA	Designated Port Area
EEA	Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
FPA	Facilities of Public Accommodation
HDC	Harbor Development Commission
HPRC	Harbor Plan Renewal Committee
MassCEC	Massachusetts Clean Energy Center
MassDEP	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
MassDOT	Massachusetts Department of Transportation
MBTA	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority
MCT	New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal
MCRR	Massachusetts Coastal Railroad
MHP	Municipal Harbor Plan
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NAVD88	North American Vertical Datum of 1988
NBPA	New Bedford Port Authority
NMF	National Marine Fisheries
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
PNDA	Potential Navigational Dredge Areas
RoRo	Roll-on/Roll-off
SER	State-Enhanced Remedy
SPREDD	Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District
SRF	Massachusetts State Revolving Fund
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USCG	United States Coast Guard
WDIU	Water Dependent Industrial Use
WDSF	Waterfront Development Shoreline Facility
WDUZ	Water Dependent Use Zone

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 MHP OVERVIEW

The Port of New Bedford, situated along the tidally influenced Acushnet River, has a rich and storied maritime history dating back nearly 400 years. Most widely known for its prominence as the world's leading commercial whaling port in the mid-nineteenth century, it currently holds the superlative of the United States' highest-value commercial fishing port and is a growing center for tourism, recreational boating, and emerging maritime industries. Indeed, its culture, economy, and overall identity have long been closely tied to the ocean.

The City of New Bedford and Town of Fairhaven border this regionally critical harbor to the west and east, respectively. In New Bedford, maritime industrial port facilities for commercial fishing, seafood processing, marine construction, transportation, and clean energy sectors predominate, with a substantial presence of former mill buildings along the upper reaches of the Acushnet River. The Fairhaven shoreline is a mix of private residences, shipyards, and recreational marinas. Over the centuries, the waterfronts on both sides of the Harbor have been reshaped and expanded through filling to create wharves, piers, and expanded facilities for maritime activities.

Waterfront development in these communities and use of the shared watershed have been guided by the New Bedford/Fairhaven Municipal Harbor Plan (MHP) and Designated Port Area (DPA) Master Plan since its first iteration was adopted in 2002 and last amended in 2010. Through adoption of the 2026 MHP and DPA Master Plan, the two communities have once again partnered to prepare a comprehensive assessment of the Harbor's strengths and challenges and establish a framework for guiding waterfront development, preservation, and management into the future. Key topics addressed in the 2026 MHP include maritime industries, infrastructure, public access, climate resiliency, and environmental conditions. Creation of this Plan has been guided by the following overarching objectives:

- 1. Develop and sustain the prominent industries of the Harbor, including commercial fisheries, seafood processing, ship repair and fabrication, and terminals to support water transportation, cargo, and offshore construction;*
- 2. Support expanding maritime industrial uses and other waterfront development opportunities, including emerging ocean technologies and redevelopment of the State Pier and remediated sites along the Acushnet River; and*
- 3. Expand tourism, cultural activities, and recreation including increased waterfront public access, harbor activation, and water transportation, expanded cruise ship dockings, preservation of historic assets, and expansion of recreational rowing and boating.*

1.2 PLANNING AREA

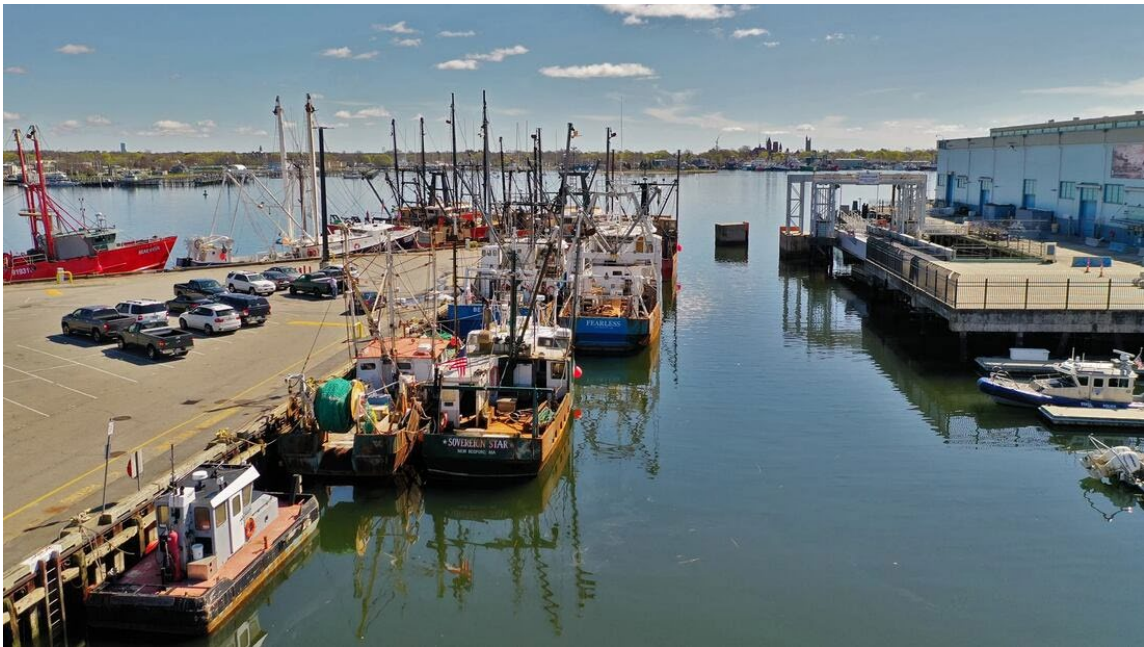
The Planning Area for the 2026 MHP is based on the Planning Area used in the 2010 MHP, with minor refinements to reflect properties with direct connections to the Harbor. It includes the Acushnet River, the islands therein, and the New Bedford and Fairhaven waterfronts on either side of it. Additionally, the Planning Area extends to outside of the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier to encompass the adjacent waterfront districts of Clarks Point in New Bedford and Fort Phoenix in Fairhaven. In recognition of the geographic diversity and varying uses throughout the overall Planning Area, the Plan will be developed with respect to the four Focus Areas summarized below. See Figure 1-1, Planning Area; and Figure 1-2, Focus Areas.

Acushnet River Focus Area: Includes the portion of the Acushnet River and the adjacent waterfront north of the Interstate 195 bridge. On the New Bedford side, it contains a mix of historic mill buildings, newer commercial development, and public open space. The Fairhaven side includes wetlands, commercial properties, and residential neighborhoods. Due to navigation constraints created by the bridge and insufficient water depth, there is limited vessel activity in the Focus Area, and waterfront land uses are predominantly nonwater-dependent.



Restored salt marsh and historic mill building along New Bedford's Acushnet River shoreline.

Harbor – Port Focus Area: Encompasses the lands and watershed within the boundaries of the New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA, including the majority of New Bedford's waterfront south of Interstate 195 and a portion of Fairhaven's waterfront between Washington Street and South Street. In general, these areas are developed with and under use by a variety of water-dependent industrial uses and form the economic engine of New Bedford Harbor.



Pier 3 and New Bedford State Pier.

Harbor Focus Area: Includes the Acushnet River and adjacent shoreline south of the Interstate 195 bridge that falls outside of the New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA boundaries. In New Bedford, this waterfront includes public open space and a marina on Popes Island. On the Fairhaven side, land use is primarily residential and also includes open space and several marinas. The Focus Area extends landward to encompass portions of both communities' downtowns and adjacent neighborhoods, in recognition of the inherent links between them and the Harbor.



Fairhaven Waterfront and New Bedford Hurricane Barrier.

Buzzards Bay Focus Area: Includes New Bedford and Fairhaven’s Buzzards Bay shorelines, generally south of the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier at the mouth of New Bedford Harbor. On the New Bedford side, the Focus Area consists of the entire shoreline of Clarks Point, which includes portions of the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier, public beaches, Historic Fort Taber and Fort Rodman, and some residential buildings. The Fairhaven side consists of the public open space and beaches of historic Fort Phoenix.



New Bedford’s historic Fort Rodman.

1.3 PURPOSE & AUTHORITY

The 2026 MHP has been developed in accordance with the applicable state regulations governing the preparation of MHPs at 301 CMR 23.00, which are administered by the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM). MHPs establish local objectives, standards, and policies for guiding public and private use of the land and water within the proposed planning area. The 2026 MHP processes commenced with submission of a Request for Notice to Proceed to CZM on February 18, 2025, with CZM issuing the Notice to Proceed on April 28, 2025. See Attachment A, Notice to Proceed. The 2026 MHP replaces and supersedes all prior versions and is anticipated to be in effect for ten years, with opportunity for further renewal, amendment, or extension as deemed appropriate.

Development on the New Bedford and Fairhaven waterfronts is subject to local land use regulations (zoning, subdivision, etc.) unique to each municipality, but also to State land use regulations on filled and flowed tidelands under Chapter 91 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Chapter 91 compliance is administered by the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) under the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), in accordance with applicable Waterways regulations at 310 CMR 9.00.

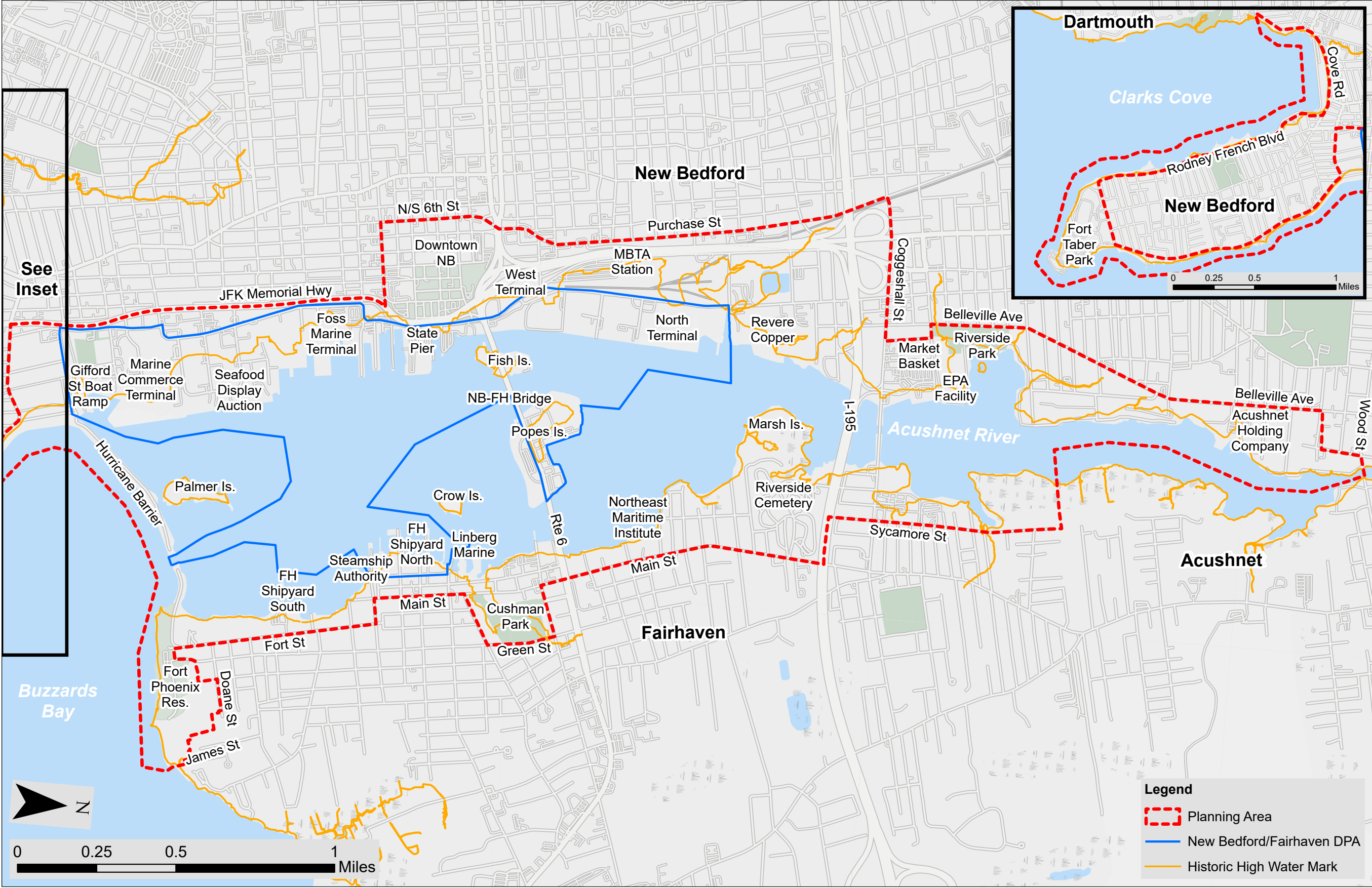
Chapter 91 and its implementing regulations recognize the public rights in tidelands and define the constraints under which activities affecting those rights may take place. In general, activities and development in tidelands which are water-dependent – as defined by the regulations – are presumed to serve a proper public purpose. Water-dependent uses are varied, including maritime industry, commercial and recreational boating and waterborne passenger transportation facilities, parks and boardwalks that promote use and enjoyment of the water by the general public and are located at or near the water's edge, marine research and educational facilities, and others. There are several constraints on those activities, but the constraints are not nearly as great as those placed on projects that are nonwater-dependent.

Development in tidelands of nonwater-dependent projects must also comply with numerous standards to ensure that the benefit to the public resulting from the development is greater than the detriment to the rights held in public trust. Application of these standards is, in part, a process that may result in the identification of mitigation measures intended to preserve and enhance water-dependent activity and public use and enjoyment of tidelands.

In recognition of the Harbor's importance in supporting water-dependent industry, portions of the waterfront in New Bedford and Fairhaven are also located in a DPA. The Commonwealth's DPA program was in 1978 in order to preserve and promote maritime industry by requiring that these areas be dedicated primarily to the support of maritime industries. Established under the Commonwealth's CZM program, DPAs are subject to specific provisions under the Chapter 91 regulations.

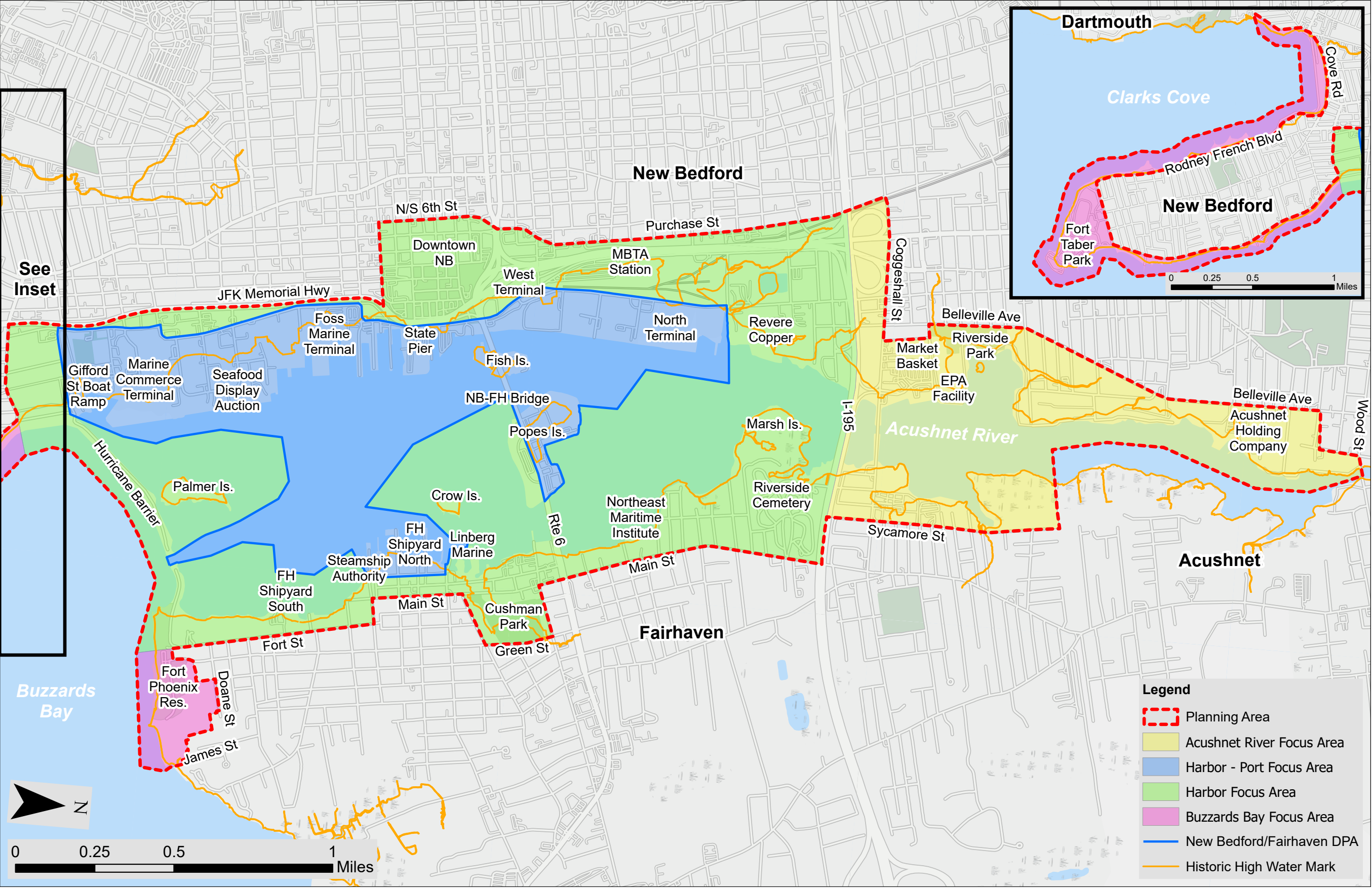
Proposals for waterfront development in the Planning Area will be subject to all other applicable local, state, and federal regulatory requirements. These may include, but are not limited to, the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, local wetland protection ordinances¹, the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, CZM Federal Consistency Review, the 401 Water Quality Certification Program, Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Projects that impact filled or flowed tidelands within the Planning Area must comply with the Chapter 91 standards at 310 CMR 9.00, as may be modified by amplification and substitution provisions of the 2026 MHP.

¹ Including requirements that a copy of a Notice of Intent for work within the Harbor north of the New Bedford Hurricane Protection Barrier be submitted to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, which is implementing the environmental cleanup of New Bedford Harbor further discussed in Section 3.5.4.



New Bedford and Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Figure 1-1
Planning Area
Fort Point Associates, Inc., 2025



New Bedford and Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Figure 1-2
Focus Areas
Fort Point Associates, Inc., 2025

CHAPTER 2: PLANNING PROCESS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Public input is a key component of the 2026 MHP. Throughout the process, four in-person public meetings, two virtual listening sessions, an organized Harbor walk, a community survey, a project website, a half dozen focus groups, and dozens of interviews with key stakeholders have been conducted. All public meetings and engagements included translated project materials and live interpretation services for Cape Verdean Kriolu, Portuguese, and Spanish languages. This public outreach is described in detail in Section 2.4 below.

In addition to engagement with the public, meetings were held with representatives from key sectors operating in the Planning Area: commercial fishing; seafood processing; ship building and repair; offshore wind construction, operation, and maintenance; other marine construction businesses; cargo shipping; ferry, cruise, and excursion services; recreational boating; marine science and technology; and maritime support businesses. These meetings were a valuable source of insight from those engaged in businesses in the Harbor and provided key input for the market analysis further described in Chapter 4: Economic Market Trends.

This MHP is also built off of and consistent with other recently completed or ongoing planning studies and initiatives undertaken by both communities. For the City of New Bedford, these include New Bedford Comprehensive Plan (2025) and NB Resilient (2020), the City's resiliency plan. For the Town of Fairhaven, these include Fairhaven 2040 (2018), the Town's comprehensive plan; the Fairhaven Open Space and Recreation Plan (ongoing); the Fairhaven Municipal Vulnerability Plan (2020); and the 40R Overlay District (ongoing), which is pending final approval from the Commonwealth. Data collection and review of these planning processes are described in detail in Section 2.2 below.

2.2 BACKGROUND DATA

Data to inform the 2026 MHP was collected from the 2010 MHP, a review of existing Harbor land use and zoning, site visits, completed and ongoing reports and studies, public documents, public and private databases, stakeholder interviews, public meetings, and analysis of existing and potential future maritime industries in the Harbor. The Project Team examined trends and facility requirements in areas such as commercial fishing and seafood processing, recreation, clean energy, and marine technology. The availability and type of existing public access facilities along New Bedford and Fairhaven's waterfronts, both within and outside of the DPA, was reviewed and inventoried. A combination of virtual and in-person meetings with key sectors of the maritime economy, local, state, and federal agencies, local organizations, and other key stakeholders supported these data collection efforts.

2.3 HARBOR PLAN RENEWAL COMMITTEE

The Harbor Plan Renewal Committee (“HPRC”) is a ten-member Committee with six members from New Bedford and four members from Fairhaven that was assembled to guide development of the 2026 MHP and ensure local priorities and perspectives were incorporated into the Plan. The HPRC includes elected officials, city/town staff members, appointed city/town Board/Commission members, and New Bedford Port Authority (NBPA) representatives. The HPRC met six times starting in April 2025 through December 2025 as follows:

- *HPRC Meeting #1* was held at the NBPA office on Wednesday, April 2, 2025
- *HPRC Meeting #2* was held at the NBPA office on Wednesday, May 21, 2025
- *HPRC Meeting #3* was held at the NBPA office on Wednesday, June 16, 2025
- *HPRC Meeting #4* was held at the NBPA office on Wednesday, August 13, 2025
- *HPRC Meeting #5* was held at the NBPA office on Wednesday, September 17, 2025
- *HPRC Meeting #6* was held at the NBPA office on Thursday, December 18, 2025

Additionally, HPRC members attended public meetings and other engagement events and worked with the Project Team to review public input and incorporate that input into the 2026 MHP. The HPRC reviewed Project Team analyses and findings and provided guidance in drafting the Plan2026 and associated regulatory and economic recommendations.

2.4 PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public outreach to support the 2026 MHP included in-person and televised public meetings held in New Bedford and Fairhaven, virtual listening sessions with the Project Team, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, an organized Harbor Walk, participation in longstanding community meetings and events, a project website, and a community survey. This public outreach is detailed below.

Public Meetings

The following four in-person public meetings were held at key milestones in the 2026 MHP process:

- *Public Meeting #1* – a kickoff meeting focused on the municipal harbor planning process, review of the prior MHP, and discussing the planning area was held at the Waypoint Event Center in New Bedford on Wednesday, April 30, 2025
- *Public Meeting #2* – a meeting focused on key elements of the MHP including Chapter 91 amplifications and substitutions, public access, coastal flood resiliency, coastal infrastructure and vessel management was held at Fairhaven Town Hall on Wednesday, June 18, 2025

- *Public Meeting #3* – a meeting focused on draft plan regulatory and economic recommendations was held at Fairhaven Town Hall on Wednesday, October 15, 2025
- *Public Meeting #4* – a meeting focused on the contents of the draft MHP report was held at the Waypoint Event Center in New Bedford on Thursday, January 15, 2026

All public meetings included translated project presentation materials and live interpretation services for Cape Verdean Kriolu, Portuguese, and Spanish languages. Public meetings were also videotaped by New Bedford Cable Network (NBCN) and/or FairhavenTV and available for viewing by the public on the local cable access channel websites (<https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/cable-access/> and <https://www.fairhaventv.com/>).



Public Meeting #3 – October 15, 2025 at Fairhaven Town Hall.

Virtual Office Hours

To support the public's review of 2026 MHP content, the Project Team also held virtual office hours on Zoom following Public Meeting #3 and Public Meeting #4 as follows:

- *Virtual Office Hours #1* – continued discussion of draft plan regulatory and economic recommendations was held on Zoom on Wednesday, October 22, 2025
- *Virtual Office Hours #2* – continued discussion of the contents of the draft MHP report was held on Zoom on Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Focus Groups

To collect feedback on specific economic sectors, recreational uses, community interests, geographies, and other topics, the Project Team convened the following focus groups:

- *Focus Group on Recreational Boating* – this focus group included representatives from New Bedford Rowing Center, Northeast Maritime Institute, and others and was held on Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, June 11, 2025

- *Focus Group on Community Organizations* – this focus group included representatives from the Buzzards Bay Coalition, Gomes Street Neighborhood Association, New Bedford Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE), and others and was held on Microsoft Teams on Thursday, June 12, 2025
- *Focus Group on Water Transportation* – this focus group included representatives from Cuttyhunk Ferry, the New Bedford Port Authority representatives and others and was held on Microsoft Teams on Friday, June 13, 2025
- *Focus Group on Tourism* – this focus group included representatives from the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center, city/town staff members in economic development and tourism roles, and others and was held on Microsoft Teams on Friday, June 13, 2025
- *Focus Group on Clark’s Cove* – this focus group included representatives from Community Boating Center and the Friends of Hazelwood Park and was held on Microsoft Teams on Wednesday, August 27, 2025
- *Focus Group with Community Economic Development Center of Southeastern MA* – this focus group included representatives from the Community Economic Development Center of Southeastern MA (CEDC) and was held in-person on Thursday, December 18, 2025

Stakeholder Interviews

Throughout preparation of the 2026 MHP, the Project Team conducted dozens of interviews with representatives from key sectors operating in the Planning Area: commercial fishing; seafood processing; ship building and repair; offshore wind construction, operation, and maintenance; other marine construction businesses; cargo shipping; ferry, cruise, and excursion services; recreational boating; marine science and technology; and maritime support businesses. Participants included representatives from 41 North Offshore, Atlantic Capes, Buyers and Sellers Exchange (BASE), Coast Line Transfers, East Coast Fabrication, Eastern Fisheries, Fairhaven Shipyard, MA Lobstermen’s Association, New Bedford Foss Marine Terminal, Robert B Our Marine Division, Servedwell Hospitality, Tucker Roy Marine Towing & Salvage, and other participants who wish to remain uncredited.

Organized Harbor Walk

On Tuesday, September 23, 2025, a community site walk along the New Bedford Harbor Walk was held starting at the Gifford Street Lot near the Hurricane Barrier. Members of the Project Team and the HPRC welcomed community members with a summary of the 2026 MHP project and light refreshments. Following the project update, participants walked on the Hurricane Barrier to the Barrier’s gates and back while discussing key topics with members of the Project Team and HPRC. Participants completed comment cards following the site walk to document their feedback for incorporation into the Plan2026 .



September 23, 2025 Public Site Walk.

Participation in Community Meetings/Events

Additionally, HPRC members brought the 2026 MHP into existing community engagement frameworks through participation in community events and meetings and updates to local boards and commissions. On Tuesday, June 17, 2025, Gordon Carr, Executive Director of the NBPA, participated in a Gomes Neighborhood Association Monthly Meeting to update neighbors on the 2026 MHP and to invite interested parties to upcoming project engagements. Michael McCarthy, New Bedford Assistant City Planner, along with other city staff and community leaders joined New Bedford Seaport Chowderfest on Saturday, October 11, 2025. A staffed table at the event included an opportunity to discuss the harbor, view project posters, complete comment cards, and take flyers for upcoming 2026 MHP project engagements.

Project Website

The Project Team developed a project website to communicate with the public throughout the planning process and to share project documents and recordings of public meetings. Users were also able to sign up for notifications of upcoming public engagements associated with the 2026 MHP.

The project website can be viewed here: <https://newbedfordfairhavenmhp.weebly.com/>.

Community Survey

To gather community feedback, the Project Team developed an online survey which was distributed widely to the community through the project website, flyers, posters/presentations with QR codes, city/town and organization e-mail distribution lists, and other posting sites/boards. The Community Survey was active on September 10, 2025, ran through November 10, 2025, and received approximately 40 responses. The survey asked participants a range of questions from favorite harbor destinations/uses to key areas of focus for future of harbor planning area, as well as collected optional demographic and contact information.

See Attachment B - Community Survey Results for a compilation of survey responses.

2.5 AGENCY COORDINATION

Representatives of state and federal agencies participated in this planning process, including MA CZM and MassDEP Waterways Regulation Program, and provided guidance and expertise to the City of New Bedford, the Town of Fairhaven, and the HPRC during Plan development. Additional agencies/entities that contributed to this process through participation in meetings/interviews and provided technical guidance included Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC), MassDEP, MassDevelopment, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and others.

CHAPTER 3: HARBOR CONDITIONS

3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & CURRENT HARBOR USES

The City of New Bedford and Town of Fairhaven are waterfront communities located in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts along Buzzards Bay, a bay of the Atlantic Ocean. The two communities are separated from each other by the tidally influenced Acushnet River, which serves as New Bedford Harbor and supports a diverse array of industrial, commercial, and recreational water-dependent uses.

The Wampanoag Tribe originally inhabited the area surrounding the Acushnet River, with European settlement of the Planning Area beginning in the mid-seventeenth century in what was then part of the Town of Dartmouth. New Bedford incorporated as an independent town in 1787, with Fairhaven separating from New Bedford in 1812.

New Bedford Harbor is known worldwide for its prominence as a commercial whaling port between the late-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. The strong global demand for whale oil as a fuel source drove a dramatic expansion of the Planning Area's population and waterfront development during this period; by 1857, New Bedford's whaling fleet peaked and was the largest in the world, with hundreds of vessels and thousands of workers based out of the City. The industry was so lucrative that New Bedford was by some measures the world's wealthiest city per capita at this time. Many of the City's wharves and coastal infrastructure were constructed during the commercial whaling era. Fairhaven similarly supported a whaling fleet, as well as industries such as shipbuilding and associated maritime trades.

The whaling industry declined over the latter half of the nineteenth century as petroleum-based products displaced whale oil as a fuel source. Concurrently, the prominence of industrial production centered on textile manufacturing rose and came to dominate the local economy for decades, with large mills constructed along New Bedford's Acushnet River shoreline. Development in Fairhaven also continued, with much of its shoreline outside of the traditional waterfront built out with residential uses.

Following World War II, manufacturing further expanded beyond textile manufacturing in New Bedford, and largescale waterfront urban renewal projects through the New Bedford Redevelopment Authority continued to shape what comprises the City's present-day waterfront. The expanded manufacturing sector increased local employment opportunities but also resulted in environmental impacts, such as the contamination that led to an ongoing decades-long Harbor remediation effort under the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund Program and associated MassDEP State-Enhanced Remedy (SER), further discussed in Section 3.5.4.

Commercial fishing, while long practiced by residents of New Bedford and Fairhaven, grew as a key sector in the Harbor during the twentieth century. Since 2001, New Bedford has held the title of the nation's highest-value commercial fishing port and serves as the home port for over 300 commercial fishing vessels and as many as 100-220 out-of-state transient fishing vessels. Many local fishermen are engaged in the scallop fishery, which has driven the growth and prosperity of the Harbor. The sector is supported by the port infrastructure developed over previous centuries, as well as associated industries such as provisioning, seafood processing and distribution, marine construction, and notably in Fairhaven, vessel repair services. New Bedford is home to the Buyers and Sellers Exchange ("BASE") seafood display auction, which sets the price nationally for many types of seafood. Also present within the Harbor at varying times is break/bulk shipping activity and ferry services to the islands of Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and Cuttyhunk.



Commercial fishing vessels berthed along New Bedford's waterfront.

Amid the continued prominence of commercial fishing, significant opportunities for the Harbor economy have emerged since the 2010 MHP due to expansion of the clean energy sector and other maritime growth industries. The reasons that the Harbor is well-positioned to capitalize on these industries are myriad, including deep navigation channels and the absence of vertical clearance restrictions, the diversified local maritime support services, and the presence of large parcels suitable for redevelopment along New Bedford's waterfront.

In recent years significant public and private investment has flowed into the Harbor, supporting development of over 50 acres along the waterfront into modernized maritime industrial uses associated with the offshore wind sector. Much of this development has centered on underutilized former industrial sites that were prioritized for re-use in the 2010 MHP. Of note, MassCEC completed construction of the New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal in 2015 as the first purpose-built offshore wind port facility in the nation. New Bedford's position as the closest deep water industrial port to the Massachusetts/Rhode Island Wind Energy Areas is also a unique competitive advantage for serving the offshore wind industry in both the recently completed marshaling for the Vineyard Wind I project and long-term Operations & Maintenance phases. Offshore wind-related projects in the Harbor have driven an unprecedented expansion in coastal infrastructure investments and other benefits such as employment opportunities for commercial fishermen in the offseason and workforce training programs for local residents.

New Bedford and Fairhaven's deep maritime heritage is reflected today in the many extant historic resources present throughout the Planning Area. This includes centuries-old buildings in the two municipalities' downtowns, wharfs and piers dating to the whaling era and earlier, military installations at the mouth of the Harbor, and mill buildings constructed during the industrial revolution. The Harbor's status as a historical global center of the whaling industry and current leader in commercial fishing is celebrated through exhibits at the New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center, and other cultural destinations. See Figure 3-1: Historic Resources.

Beyond port facilities, recreational marinas, moorings, and waterfront open space are interspersed throughout the Planning Area in both communities. Interest in the Harbor as a tourist destination has grown in recent years, with transient boaters and out-of-town visitors coming to the Planning Area in large numbers during the warmer months to experience its maritime history and thriving port. The ferry services to Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and Cuttyhunk that operate from the New Bedford State Pier, as well as port calls by coastal cruise ships, drive significant visitation to New Bedford's waterfront and the adjacent downtown.

The remainder of this chapter addresses existing conditions related to specific subject matter areas (e.g., infrastructure, environment, public access, etc.), then proceeds to discuss the implementation status of the 2010 MHP recommendations. A planning analysis relative to these topics is provided in Chapter 5.

3.2 INFRASTRUCTURE CONDITIONS

Uses in the Planning Area are supported by a variety of coastal and transportation infrastructure facilities. Since the 2010 MHP, completion of the New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal has established new state-of-the-art bulkheads and laydown space to enable berthing of large vessels along the industrial waterfront and transfer of construction equipment and material between ship and shore. In addition, several major coastal infrastructure expansion projects overseen by the New Bedford Port Authority are currently underway or recently completed, including at Leonard's Wharf, North Terminal 1, and North Terminal 2. Expansion of these sites has been enabled in part by the Harbor Superfund cleanup and SER's expedited permitting, as further discussed below. See Figure 3-2: Recently Completed and Ongoing Maritime Industrial Projects. Despite these prominent projects, Harbor stakeholders and several prominent occurrences including the closure of the State Pier South and East Wharfs in Fall 2025 have highlighted the need for increased funding to maintain and improve aging coastal infrastructure for maritime industry. Improvements to privately owned coastal infrastructure are particularly challenging due to high costs and limited funding and financing available for these sites.

Constructed by the USACE in the 1960s in response to a devastating hurricane, the New Bedford Hurricane Protection Barrier consists of an earth and rock fill dike across the mouth of the Harbor and adjacent low-lying lands. A 150-foot-wide gate spanning the Harbor's navigation channel allows vessels to enter and leave the Harbor during normal conditions, and the gates to be closed during high water levels to mitigate coastal flooding events along the protected waterfront. In addition to coastal flood protection, the Hurricane Barrier facilitates waterfront public access, with maintenance access and shared use pathways located along the dikes in both New Bedford (known as the Harbor Walk and Cove Walk) and Fairhaven.



Looking east at Fairhaven's waterfront and the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier.

New Bedford is a key water transportation Hub, with Seastreak fast ferry service to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket as well as a separate ferry service to Cuttyhunk Island operating from the New Bedford State Pier. On the Fairhaven side of the Harbor is the Steamship Authority's vessel maintenance facility.

Key roadway infrastructure within the Planning Area connects New Bedford and Fairhaven and provides vehicular access to waterfront sites both within and outside of the DPA. See Figure 3-3, Transportation Infrastructure. Interstate 195 travels east/west, spanning the Harbor along the boundary between the Harbor and Acushnet River MHP Focus Areas. South of this highway are the main navigable waters of the Harbor, while to the north vessel activity consists principally of small watercraft such as rowing sculls due to shallow water depths and vertical restrictions created by the Interstate 195 and Coggeshall Street bridges. Also spanning the Harbor is US Route 6, a four-lane roadway that runs between New Bedford and Fairhaven and connects waterfront facilities on Popes Island and Fish Island to the mainland. Between these islands is the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge, a swing bridge that allows vessels to pass between northern and southern portions of the Harbor. Interstate 195 and Route 6 connect to Massachusetts Route 18 (also known as JFK Memorial Highway), a multilane roadway along the New Bedford waterfront running to points south. Parallel to Route 18 are MacArthur Drive, Herman Melville Boulevard, and North Front Street, key truck routes providing direct access to New Bedford's waterfront parcels within the DPA.

Several projects completed since 2010 or currently underway to improve the Planning Area's transportation infrastructure include the Interstate 195/Route 18 Interchange Project (MassDOT Project No. 606527; currently under construction) and the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge Reconstruction Project (MassDOT Project No. 612557; currently in the design and public engagement phase). In 2023, the City of New Bedford was awarded a \$1.7 million grant under the United States Department of Transportation's RAISE program to advance engineering design for multimodal improvements along MacArthur Drive, Herman Melville Boulevard, and North Front Street as part of city's Blue Lane Working Waterfront Connector Project (MassDOT Project No. 614055). Through a Massachusetts Housing Works Grant, the City is also upgrading the Hillman Street/Purchase Street intersection with a new signal to better accommodate truck traffic to the DPA from Route 18 southbound via Hillman Street, and Acushnet Avenue/MacArthur Drive.

Especially notable since the 2010 MHP is the completion of Phase 1 of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (MBTA) South Coast Rail project. This long-planned initiative reopened passenger rail service between New Bedford, Boston, and intermediate locations for the first time since the 1950s. Additional related projects include a reconstructed pedestrian bridge over Route 18 and opening of a portion of the Whale's Tooth parking lot adjacent to New Bedford Station for passenger rail parking. Rail service brings residents and visitors to and from New Bedford without a car, including patrons of local water transportation services.

Other rail infrastructure in the Planning Area includes several spurs connecting DPA properties to the regional freight rail network, including a presently inactive one along MacArthur Drive. These rail crossings will be updated to current standards as part of the Blue Lane Working Waterfront Connector Project. The City also invested funding in reconstruction of MacArthur Drive from Pier 3 southerly to Walnut Street, including replacement of the rail tracks. Massachusetts Coastal Railroad (MCRR), the area's private freight rail operator, is also upgrading two of the rail crossings at the southerly end of the railyard adjacent to New Bedford Station.

3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

The Planning Area, while industrial in nature across much of its extent, also includes several conservation areas and other undeveloped wetlands. For example, upriver from the I-195 Bridge along significant extents on both sides of the Harbor, nature-based shoreline restorations have been implemented by United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as part of the ongoing Harbor cleanup project. The first phase of a project at Marsh Island in Fairhaven to reestablish salt marsh habitat and open it to public access was recently completed under a partnership between two local nonprofit organizations. In New Bedford, Palmer's island is a natural space that the public can access on foot from the Hurricane Barrier walkway at low tide. New Bedford and Fairhaven both have public beaches along much of the Buzzards Bay Focus Area shoreline, and in 2025 the City of New Bedford was awarded a grant by CZM to evaluate nature-based alternatives for stabilizing a 500-linear-foot shoreline at Fort Taber Park. See Figure 3-4, Wetland Resource Areas.

While significant progress has been made in addressing longstanding environmental degradation through Harbor cleanup activities (further discussed in Section 3.5.4) and other related initiatives, public input during the MHP outreach process has made clear that more work remains. Of particular interest to many local stakeholders is addressing combined sewer overflows (CSOs) from New Bedford's legacy stormwater/sewerage collection system, portions of which are over 100 years old. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested in CSO abatement projects in recent decades, decreasing their occurrence by over 90% since 1990.² The City of New Bedford is committed to continuing its work to address this challenge, including through implementation of projects identified in its 2017 Long Term CSO Control and Integrated Capital Improvements Plan such as an ongoing sewer separation project within the Coggeshall Street sewer service area and flow reduction and conveyance improvement projects in other priority areas of the collection system.

² *Integrated Planning in Action, 2017 Long Term CSO Control and Integrated Capital Improvements Plan, New Bedford, Massachusetts*. United States Environmental Protection Agency, June 2021.

Another priority revealed during MHP public engagements included support for constructing a commercial bilge pump-out facility to minimize oil spills in the Harbor. Between 2006 and 2022, there were over 600 reported oil spills in New Bedford Harbor, primarily from discharge of oil-contaminated bilge water. In spring 2026, the Buzzards Bay Coalition worked with local legislators to advance an amendment to the 2026 Environmental Bond Bill (the “Mass Ready Act”) that would make necessary changes to existing state environmental regulations to allow for the siting of a landside bilge pump-out facility in New Bedford Harbor. The City of New Bedford supports this pending legislation, which would remove current state regulatory barriers to enable development of such a facility in the Port of New Bedford for use by commercial vessels.³

Notably on the topic of environmental conditions (while outside of the Planning Area), the Town of Fairhaven is currently advancing a \$70 million upgrade to its wastewater treatment plant with enhanced treatment capacity. Continued improvements in surrounding communities would further improve water quality in the Buzzards Bay Focus Area and overall Planning Area. For example, the City of New Bedford has partnered with the neighboring Town of Dartmouth and several local organizations to design and implement green stormwater infrastructure in the Buttonwood Brook watershed, which would capture and filter pollutants from non-point source stormwater prior to discharge to Apponagansett Bay in Dartmouth. The Town of Acushnet, located along the northeast edge of the Acushnet River Focus Area, is also currently developing an updated Water Management Plan to address nitrogen and other nutrients that impair water quality in the river.

3.4 PUBLIC ACCESS & RECREATION CONDITIONS

The 2026 MHP has assessed existing conditions and gathered extensive public feedback related to public access throughout the Planning Area. Many popular open space and recreational resources that accommodate walking, biking, fishing, water access, and community gathering exist in both New Bedford and Fairhaven. For example, Fort Rodman/Fort Taber State Park, the New Bedford Cove Walk and Harbor Walk, the Blue Lane, West Beach and the West Beach Pavilion, public boat ramps, the State Pier, and Riverside Park all provide important public access resources. In Fairhaven, the Harbor Walk, Fort Phoenix Reservation, Union Wharf, and Marsh Island provide unique public opportunities to engage with the waterfront (see Section 5.2.1 for a planning analysis of several of these sites). Both communities’ downtowns have walkable streets and significant cultural and historical destinations.

³ See associated economic development recommendation #3.7 on page 56 of the MHP.

Since the previous MHP was completed in 2010, increased recreational use of the waterfront has been accompanied by emerging public access opportunities and completed projects in several Planning Area locations. Significant investment in Harbor remediation has led to improved water quality and new access opportunities on shoreline parcels, including the Aerovox site north of the I-195 Bridge in New Bedford. Public access infrastructure has been expanded, with the completion of the New Bedford Harborwalk in 2015, the Cove Walk around the Clark's Cove Peninsula in 2017, the planning for the Blue Lane Connector and RiverWalk, and the MBTA Station completed in 2025. These new routes have increased multi-modal travel opportunities and have improved waterfront access for residents and visitors, especially in New Bedford.



Location of planned RiverWalk alignment at Sawyer Street facility.

3.5 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This section summarizes regulatory programs at the state and federal levels that have unique implications for development in the MHP Planning Area. For a summary of additional regulatory programs that may apply to projects in and near the waterfront, See Section 1.3.

3.5.1 CHAPTER 91 JURISDICTION

As discussed in Section 1.3 and throughout this document, Chapter 91 and the Massachusetts Waterways Regulations (310 CMR 9.00) is the central program underpinning the 2026 MHP. Chapter 91 jurisdiction includes not just present-day waterways (flowed tidelands), but former waterways that have been filled through land reclamation projects (filled tidelands) since in the early days of settlement in the Planning Area. Tidelands owned by state and local governmental bodies or otherwise defined as such under 310 CMR 9.02 are Commonwealth tidelands, which are subject to additional regulatory standards beyond those applicable to Private tidelands (tidelands held by private parties). Chapter 91 jurisdiction extends to all such areas, which in most cases are subject to licensing requirements through the MassDEP Waterways Regulation Program when new fill, structures, and uses are proposed.

Over 1,000 Chapter 91 licenses have been issued for projects in New Bedford and Fairhaven since the nineteenth century, and MHPs have guided Chapter 91 licensing decisions in New Bedford and Fairhaven since the first MHP was adopted in 2002. The industrial waterfronts in both New Bedford and Fairhaven are comprised nearly entirely of filled tidelands, with jurisdictional limits less extensive elsewhere in the Planning Area. The presumed limit of the Chapter 91 jurisdiction is based on historic cartographic resources represented in a geospatial data layer published by CZM in 2011, shown in Figure 3-5, Chapter 91 Jurisdiction.

3.5.2 DESIGNATED PORT AREA

Much of New Bedford and Fairhaven's traditional working port falls within the New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA. See Figure 3-6, New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA. Since it was established in 1978, this state-level designation has protected filled and flowed tidelands consisting of navigation channels, coastal infrastructure, and large-lot industrial backlands from encroachment by nonwater-dependent development, reserving them primarily for the diverse and complementary set of water-dependent industrial uses described above. These uses are also present outside of the DPA boundary, particularly along the New Bedford side of the Harbor where virtually the entire waterfront between the Hurricane Barrier and Interstate 195 is under maritime industrial use.

Outside of the DPA, land uses are more varied and less restricted, with historical mill facilities built in the Acushnet River Focus Area between the mid-nineteenth and twentieth centuries now providing opportunities for housing development, public open space, and wetland restorations. Municipal and state-owned beaches and historical sites are predominant south of the Hurricane Barrier in the Buzzards Bay Focus Area.

3.5.3 STATE HARBOR LINE & FEDERAL CHANNELS

The primary regulatory mechanisms that limit the extent of coastal infrastructure and port facilities in the Harbor are the State Harbor Line and Federal Navigation Channels. State Harbor Lines were established by the Massachusetts Legislature beginning in 1837 and represent the seaward limit of structures that can be authorized under Chapter 91 licenses. Structures proposed to extend beyond the State Harbor Line require legislative approval. The State Harbor Line in the Harbor-Port and Harbor Focus Areas is shown in Figure 3-7: State Harbor Lines and Federal Navigation Channels.

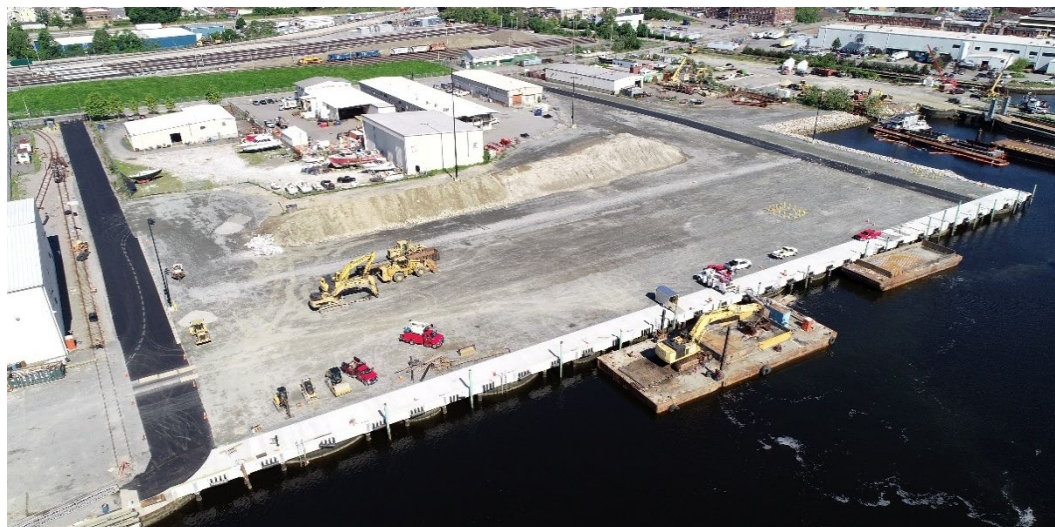
In addition to the State Harbor Line, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) administers a network of Federal Navigation Channels in the Harbor. A 30-foot-deep channel extends from outside of the Hurricane Barrier, into the Harbor, and through the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge opening. Several additional channels, anchorages, and maneuvering areas connect to this central channel to provide access to waterfront facilities in both New Bedford and Fairhaven. See Figure 3-7. Work within these channels, as well their buffer zones (extending to a width of three times the authorized depth of each channel) is subject to USACE review under Section 408 of the Clean Water Act. Authorization of new structures within a Federal Navigation Channel is not likely to be granted under Section 408 except under very limited circumstances where the work is determined to not interfere with vessel navigation.

Together, the State Harbor Line and Federal Navigation Channels have created a constraint to expansion of coastal infrastructure in the Harbor that could alleviate shortage of vessel berthing space, particularly for commercial fishing vessels.

3.5.4 HARBOR CLEANUP & STATE-ENHANCED REMEDY

As noted above, significant environmental improvements in the Harbor have been enabled through federal and state environmental remediation programs implemented to address historical pollution in the Harbor. PCB contamination from past untreated industrial discharges resulted in 18,000 acres of the Harbor being designated as a Superfund site in 1983 under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (“CERCLA”). The EPA is the lead agency overseeing Harbor cleanup activities, with a focus on remedial dredging of high-contamination areas and disposal of dredged material either at upland management facilities, in shoreline Confined Disposal Facilities (“CDFs”), or in-water Confined Aquatic Disposal (“CAD”) cells. Limited areas where removal of impacted sediment was determined to be impracticable have been addressed with sediment capping.

An additional component of the cleanup is the SER, which is overseen by MassDEP and allows additional navigational dredging and shoreline infrastructure improvements to leverage exemptions under CERCLA for streamlined permitting. The SER also allows for beneficial reuse of clean dredged material for construction of Waterfront Development Shoreline Facilities (“WDSF”), resulting in expansion of the Harbor’s industrial port facilities. The USACE is also involved in the Harbor cleanup, providing engineering oversight and dredging support to the EPA. NBPA is the agency managing local implementation and infrastructure upgrades related to the cleanup and owns WDSF sites including the North Terminal further discussed in the planning analysis in Section 5.2.1.



Phase 1 of the North Terminal expansion project under construction.

The cleanup effort has leveraged hundreds of millions of dollars in CERCLA settlement funds in the decades since the Harbor was designated a Superfund site, as well as for related projects such as wetland restorations and construction of living shorelines. Significant Harbor cleanup milestones since the 2010 MHP include:

- Dredging: Completion of Phases IV and V of SER navigational dredging program. Over 1 million cubic yards of sediment have been dredged over the total project duration.
- CAD cells: Construction and capping of CAD cells throughout the Harbor to contain impacted sediment, with some now able to support mooring fields.
- Infrastructure Upgrades at WDSFs: Bulkhead construction at the Marine Commerce Terminal, (complete; expansion ongoing) North Terminal (complete with potential for further project work), and Leonard's Wharf (ongoing).
- Environmental/Ecosystem Improvements: Salt marsh restoration at Marsh Island, establishment of living shorelines across large areas north of the Interstate 195 bridge.

See Figure 3-8: Harbor Dredging, CAD Cells, and WDSFs. Overall, the Harbor cleanup progress since 2010 has resulted in numerous interrelated benefits. Restored wetlands and improved water quality have expanded habitat for local flora and fauna, while also contributing to the growing recreational interest in the Harbor. Construction of WDSFs has supplemented existing coastal infrastructure to create expanded space for maritime industries. WDSFs have also provided opportunities to elevate waterfront facilities to address coastal resiliency with respect to sea level rise.

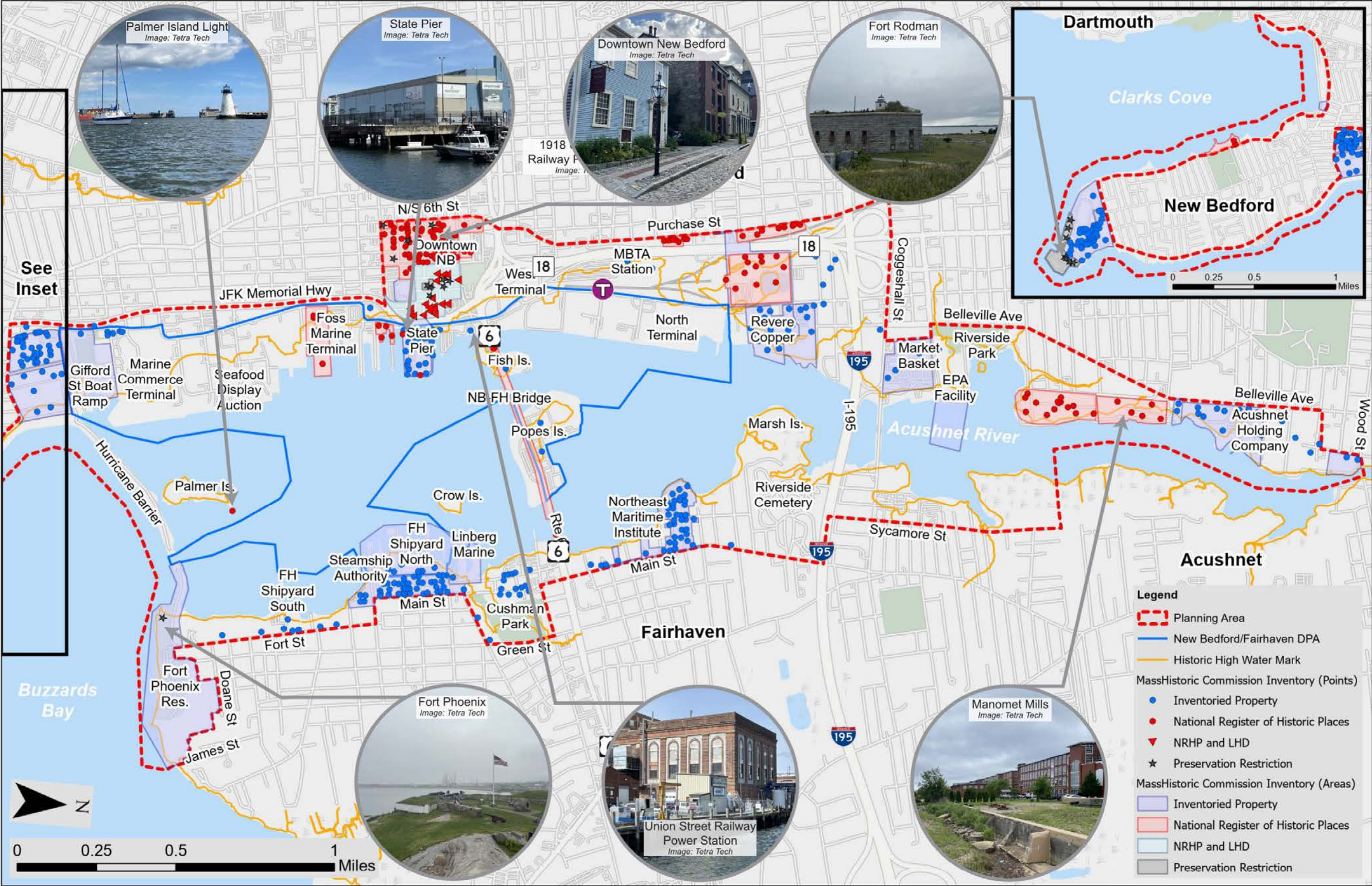
As of this writing the majority of Harbor cleanup activities under CERCLA and the SER are substantially complete, with priorities shifting to final closeout and long-term monitoring of remediation measures. Still ongoing is capping of the Sawyer Street Facility, further discussed in Section 5.2.1, to prepare it for redevelopment. Phase VI navigational dredging is currently being contemplated to continue leveraging the SER for streamlined permitting, with an Expression of Interest issued to Harbor stakeholders in Fall 2025.

As of 2025, there are 10 sediment caps in the Acushnet River Focus Area, which are proposed to be made permanent with long term monitoring, maintenance, and other protective measures. These measures may include limitations on activities and uses adjacent to the sediment caps. The City of New Bedford continues to work with the EPA and MassDEP as the environmental remediation work nears completion.

3.6 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2010 MHP

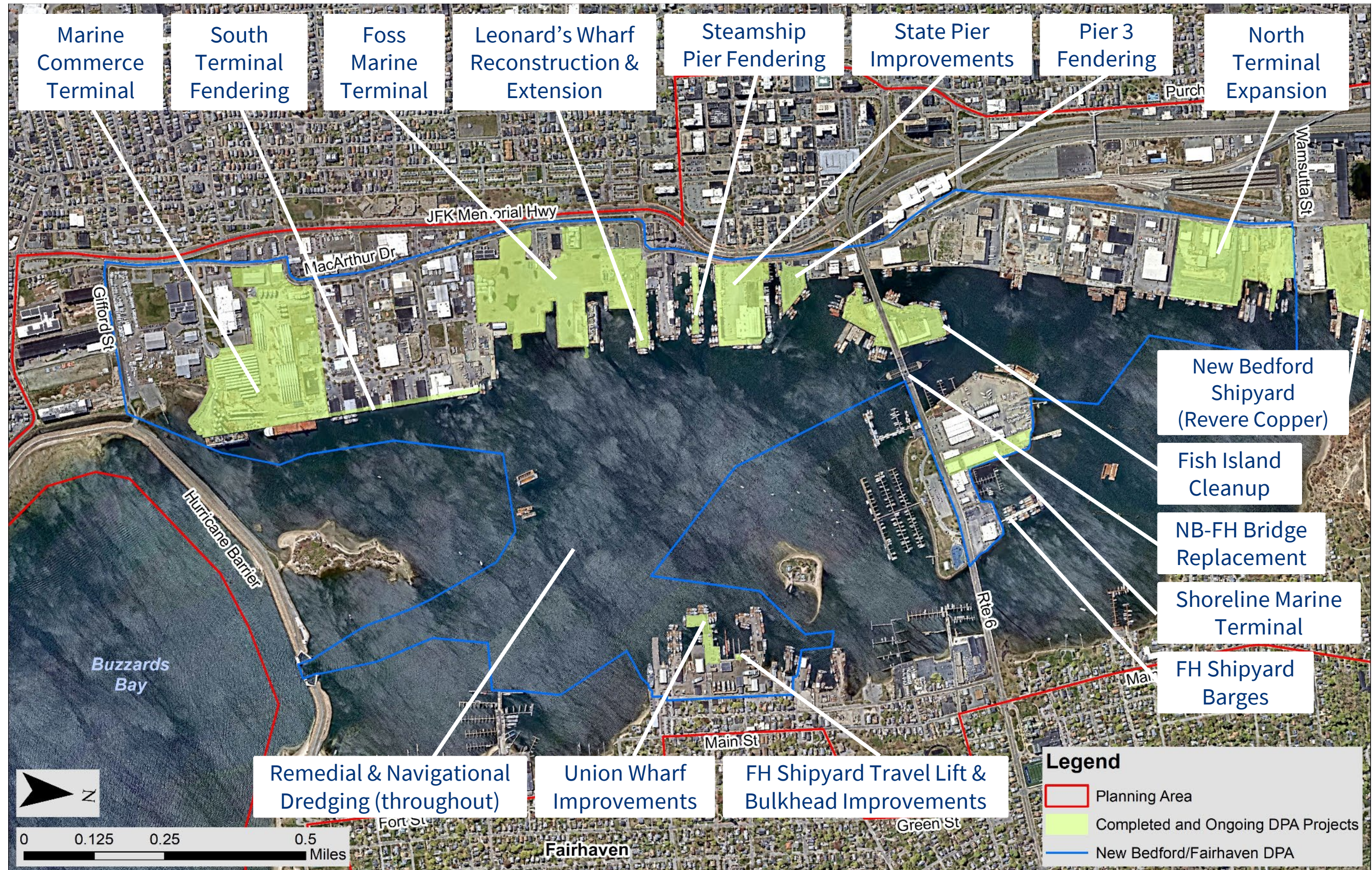
Since the issuance of the 2010 New Bedford-Fairhaven MHP, significant progress has been made on the recommendations listed in that plan. Attachment C: Status of Recommendations from the 2010 MHP provides a comprehensive inventory of those recommendations and their status. Each 2010 recommendation is listed by reference to the section within the 2010 MHP and marked as one of four options including Completed, Partially Completed, Not Completed, and No Longer Applicable. Items listed as No Longer Applicable are due predominantly to changing market conditions or a change in local community goals and objectives since 2010 as documented in recent planning studies. Contextual notes are provided for each item listed in Attachment C.

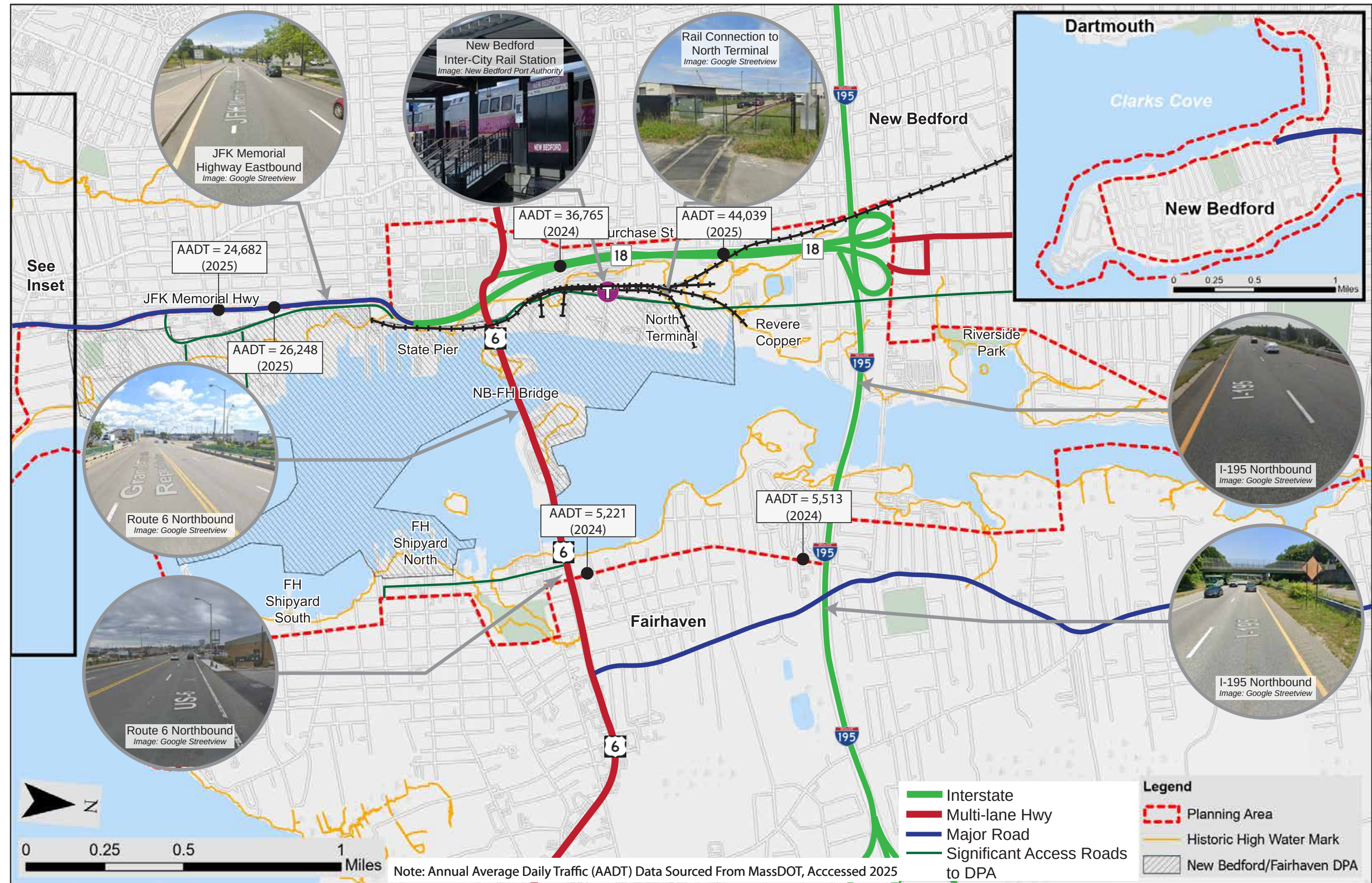
Significant completed work since 2010 includes completion of Phase V of the Harbor Dredging Program, completion of the New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal (formerly known as South Terminal), and investments in coastal infrastructure at North Terminal, Leonard's Wharf, and the Foss Marine Terminal. Additionally, progress was made on improving public access through investments in the Harbor Walk and Cove Walk in New Bedford, improvement of Route 18/JFK Memorial Highway at the intersection of Union Street to enhance pedestrian connectivity to the State Pier, and streetscape improvements in Fairhaven. Key items that were not fully completed and are being carried over to the 2026 MHP include replacement of the New Bedford-Fairhaven bridge and repairs at the State Pier.



New Bedford and Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Figure 3-1
Historic Resources
Fort Point Associates, Inc., 2025

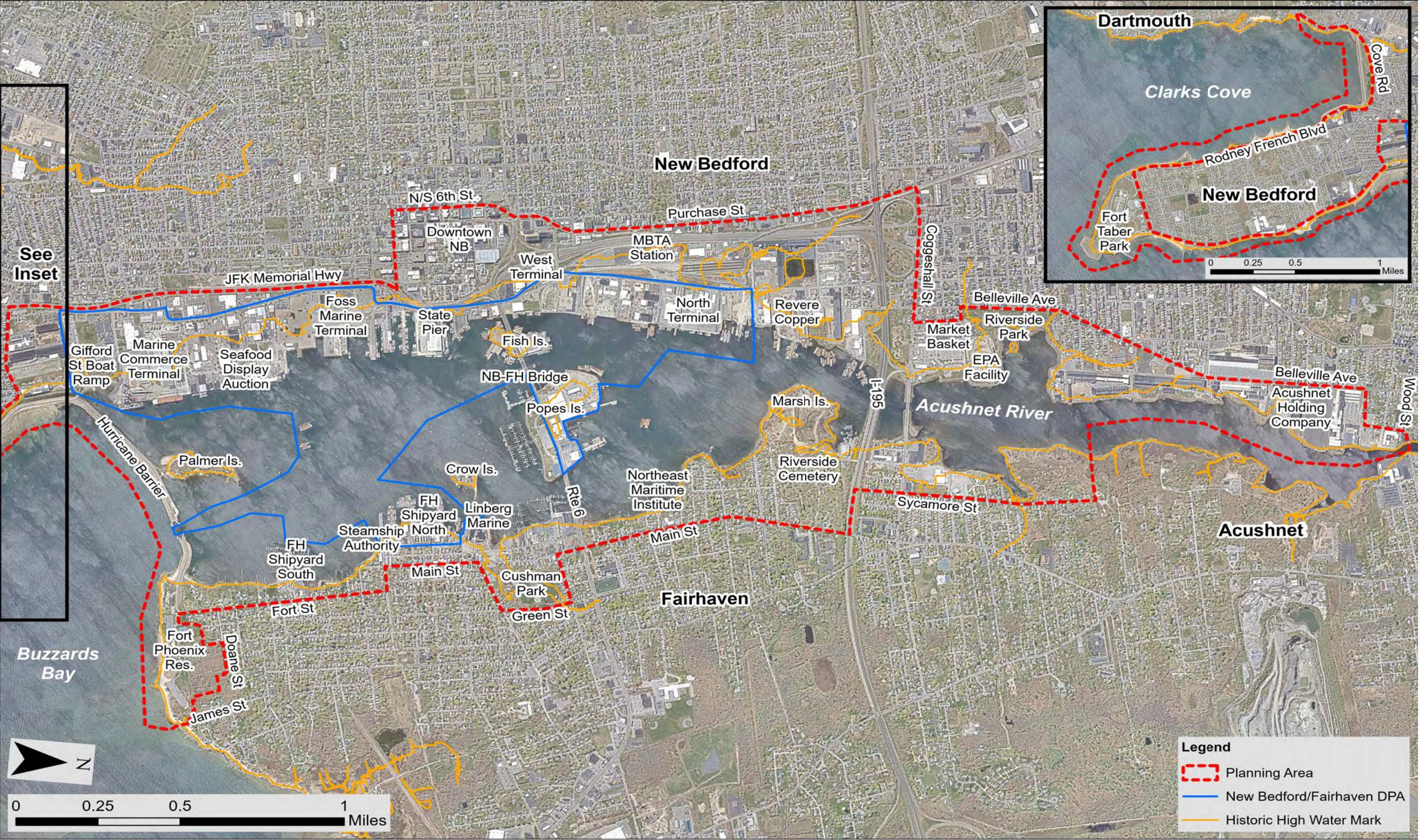






New Bedford and Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Figure 3-4
Wetland Resources
Fort Point Associates, Inc., 2025



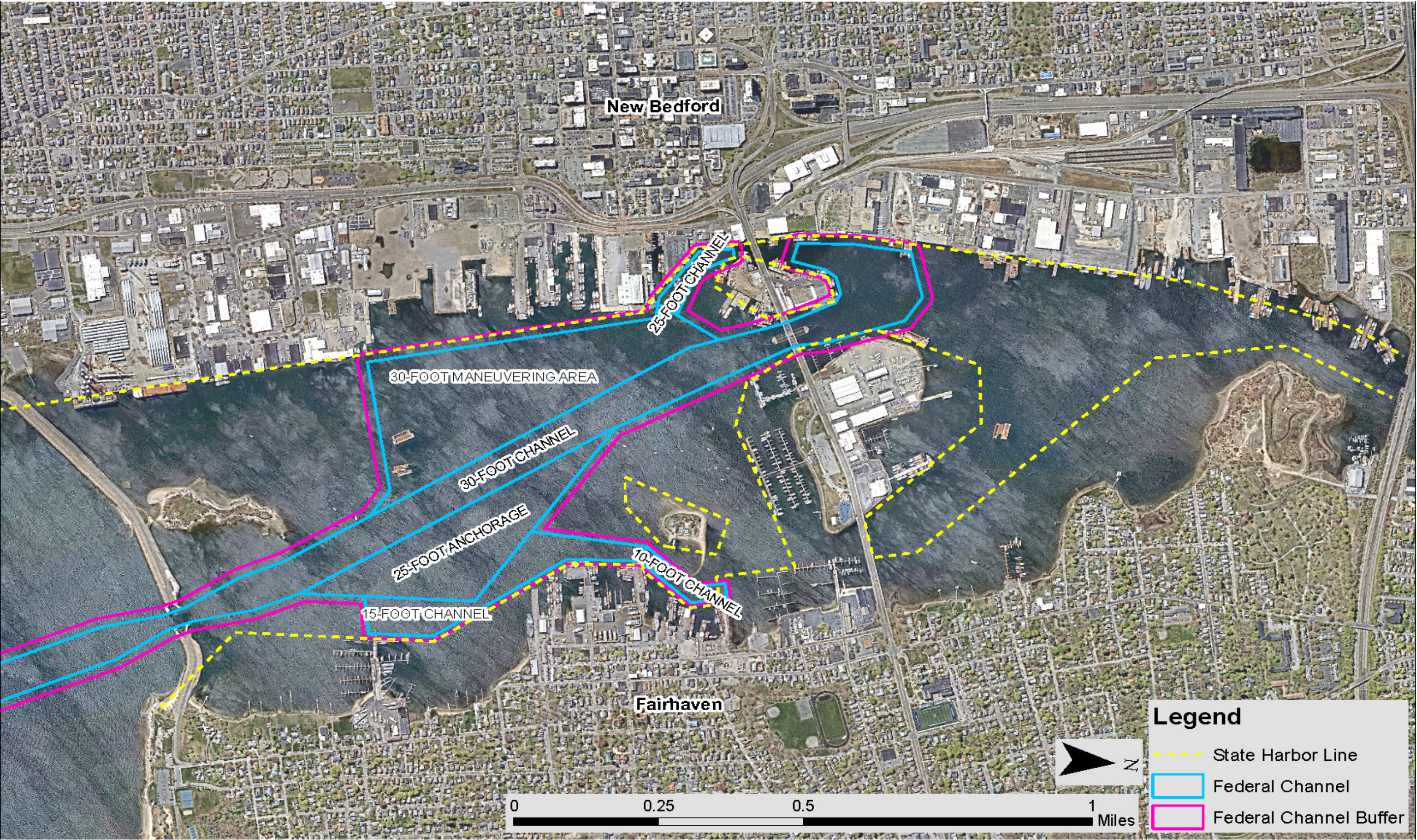
New Bedford and Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Figure 3-5
Chapter 91 Jurisdiction
Fort Point Associates, Inc., 2025



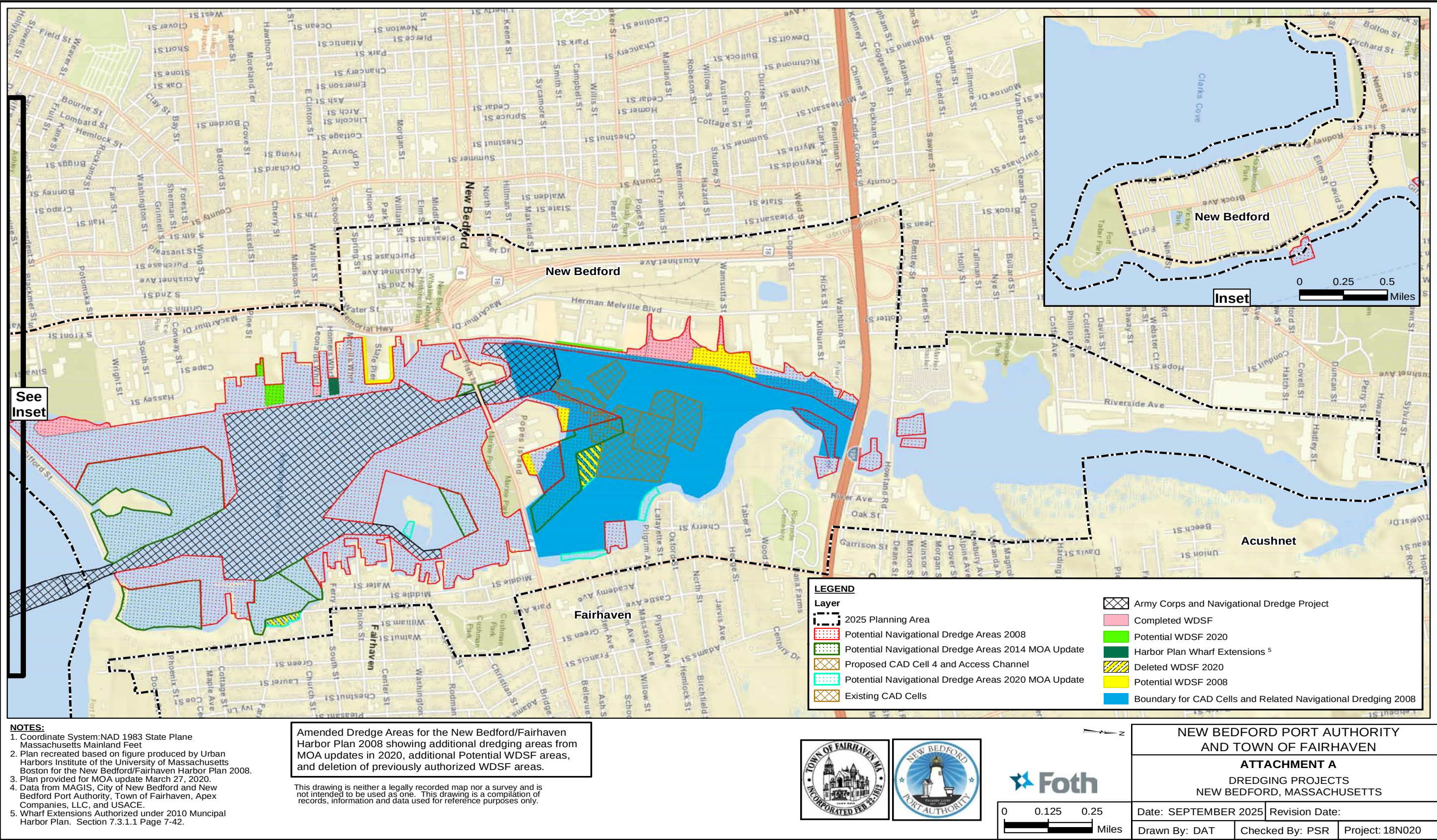
New Bedford and Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Figure 3-6
New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA
Fort Point Associates, Inc., 2025



New Bedford and Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Figure 3-7
State Harbor Lines and Federal Navigation Channel
Fort Point Associates, Inc., 2025



New Bedford and Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Figure 3-8
Harbor Dredging, CAD Cells, and WDSFs
Foth, 2025

CHAPTER 4: ECONOMIC MARKET TRENDS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Spring 2025, an economic market trends analysis by Martin Associates was initiated to support the 2026 MHP. Martin Associates is an internationally recognized economic and marine transportation consulting firm with nearly four decades' experience in market analysis, strategic planning, and economic impacts. Through interviews with key stakeholders, the economic market trends analysis identified industry trends, opportunities, constraints for expansion, and threats for growth by sector. Combined with a review of historical trends, this analysis is intended to provide input into the 2026 MHP and shape economic recommendations presented in Chapter 5: Recommendations.

4.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The Project Team interviewed key stakeholders in the Planning Area in coordination with the NBPA. The major economic market sectors comprised by the stakeholders interviewed included commercial fishing and seafood processing, ship repair and fabrication, offshore construction and water transportation, cargo operations, and water transportation. The intent of these interviews was to assess the various constraints, opportunities, and threats shared by the stakeholders to form an economic market trends analysis. Also, historical trade data from the U.S. Census Bureau /USA Trade Online was reviewed for breakbulk cargo such as forest products, perishables, and autos/roll-on/roll-off (RoRo).

4.3 EXISTING MARKET CONDITIONS

New Bedford has a rich, storied maritime history and has been the number one commercial fishing port, by value, in the United States for the past twenty-plus years. Concurrently, other compatible maritime sectors have grown as well, such as seafood processing and ship repair and fabrication. By contrast, the offshore wind industry is a relatively new venture in the United States at only a decade old, but similarly has utilized the ideal maritime industrial characteristics found in the New Bedford area.

Commercial Fisheries and Seafood Processing

New Bedford's commercial fishing industry includes sea scallops, groundfish such as cod, haddock, and flounder, surf clams and ocean quahogs, and lobster. New Bedford remains the leading U.S. commercial fishing port in the U.S. in terms of value, but landings have been declining as shown in Figure 4-1: Port of New Bedford Commercial Fisheries Economic Market Trends 2012-2022.

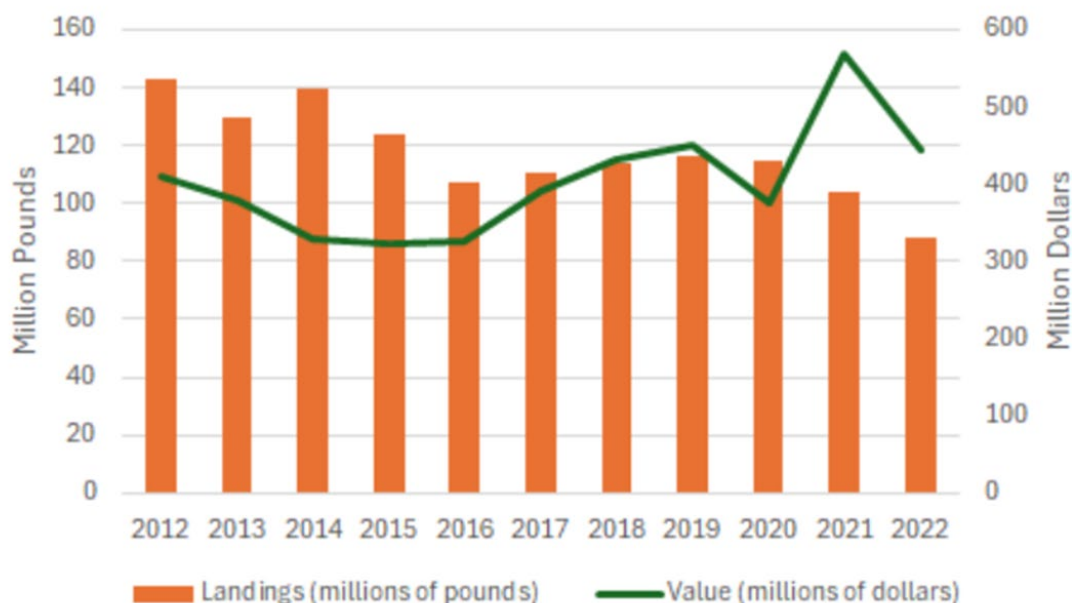


Figure 4-1: Port of New Bedford Commercial Fisheries Economic Market Trends 2012-2022

Prepared by Martin Associates using data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Overall, the industry benefits from highly developed industrial and transportation infrastructure. This includes the Buyers and Sellers Exchange (BASE) which oversees daily live seafood auctions for scallops and various species of groundfish, ample supply, ship repair, and bunkering facilities, and multiple seafood processing operations. The industry employs highly experienced, often generational, fishermen and specialized supporting maritime tradespeople. Since some seafood species have relatively short fishing seasons, off-season fishermen have supplemented their time by performing contract work for maritime construction or offshore wind energy support. The advantages of this world-class environment attract fishing boats from other coastal areas as well.

Ship Repair and Fabrication

The established ship repair and fabrication sector capably supports commercial and recreational maritime activities with highly trained maritime tradespeople. In addition to supporting the local commercial fishing industries' needs, the sector is also able to attract vessels from other ports for repair and provide support for offshore energy supply boats. The industry is also flexible and able to adapt to changing market demands, venturing into fabrication and testing new technologies.

Offshore Construction and Water Transportation

The New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal supported the construction staging needs for the Vineyard Wind 1 project, which was completed in 2026. Infrastructure has been developed throughout the Harbor to support operations and the maintenance and repair phase of that project and future offshore energy projects. Open storage and dock space is available for supply boats, cable storage, surveying, and crew transport.

Despite industry uncertainty, existing offshore energy projects in Massachusetts and Rhode Island offer potential opportunities for long-term maintenance and repair support. Additional space would be needed for storage of equipment such as cables, gear boxes, and transition pieces, and home porting of service vessels for supply and crew transport. Once established, it could support additional offshore energy projects in the future.

Cargo Operations

The Harbor's limited existing capacity for cargo operations is predominantly centered around smaller goods packed as break bulk cargo. There is no significant offloading equipment to handle sizable volumes of large, containerized cargo within the Harbor. Recently, longshoremen working at the Harbor predominantly supported clean energy projects to unload wind turbine components and other construction materials for the offshore construction, as well as the water transportation sector.

Water Transportation

Water Transportation operating at or near the New Bedford State Pier is central to connecting the Harbor to other ports/harbors and increasing the overall tourism sector in the area. Seastreak Ferries operates three seasonal boats from the State Pier with two vessels to Martha's Vineyard and one boat to Nantucket between April and October and some limited off-season and holiday runs. The Cuttyhunk Ferry Company provides essential transportation to approximately 100 full-time island residents year-round and many visitors in the peak season. American Cruise Lines (ACL) has visited the Harbor for more than twenty years and has doubled their calls to the Harbor since 2023. The Harbor has recently exceeded 50 calls per year from ACL on their New England Islands and Cape Codder coastal cruises.

4.4 KEY FINDINGS

The economic market trends analysis identified numerous strengths throughout the Harbor including those listed in the existing market conditions section above. Key strengths identified include existing transportation infrastructure to the Harbor, recent coastal infrastructure investments on waterfront parcels, and a skilled, versatile workforce that supports multiple maritime industries. Opportunities to build upon these identified strengths and to continue to grow the economic vitality of the Harbor are detailed below.

Opportunities Identified

1. Transportation Infrastructure & Planned Future Infrastructure Investments

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is currently improving Interstate-195 (I-195) including the ramps at the Route 18/I-195 interchange, which serves the DPA. MassDOT is also currently designing a replacement structure for the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge, which is planned to be a vertical lift bridge. A lift bridge with multiple height options has the potential to improve traffic flow on Route 6 to waterfront properties and improve vessel navigation within the Harbor. The imposition of a new height restriction could impact future port uses north of the bridge. However, the location and operational requirements make other bridge designs infeasible, leaving the vertical lift design as the only viable option.

Seafood industry stakeholders could also benefit from increased utilization of existing freight rail to move reefer boxes from the West Coast as well as to ship frozen seafood from the Port of New Bedford. Rail spurs exist to multiple properties north of Route 6 along the New Bedford waterfront and continued investment in rail could benefit the commercial fisheries and seafood processing industry. Seafood processing has been identified as a growing market within the DPA and supporting infrastructure is key to building upon this growth.

2. Growing Tourism Sector

Since the 2010 MHP, the tourism sector has continued to grow along the waterfront, with visitors drawn to the Harbor's maritime heritage as reflected in the many historical sites and cultural destinations present throughout. Cruise ship calls to the Port of New Bedford by ACL have nearly doubled in the last three years, bringing large numbers of tourists to New Bedford's waterfront and adjacent downtown and creating a boon for local businesses. To build upon this success, New Bedford could pursue additional coastal cruise lines such as Pearl Seas and Ponant Cruises, both of which have New England/Canadian itineraries. The Pearl Mist M/V has a 210-passenger capacity and Ponant's ships: Le Bellot, Le Champlain, Le Boreal, and Le Lyrial average between 180-264 passengers. Itineraries are usually established a few years in advance. Several smaller passenger lines may also provide some potential for a New Bedford port call. Pearl Seas is an arm of American Cruise Lines, while Ponant Cruises is based in France and specializes in luxurious, educational cultural immersion type cruises often in partnership with the Smithsonian Institute. Seabourn Cruises is another luxury expedition type cruise line, with the Seabourn Sojourn having a passenger capacity of 456.

Growth in the tourism industry has also been supported by the introduction of intercity rail service to and from Boston. This service provides an additional travel option for day trips to New Bedford, as well as opportunity for layover stays by passengers using the service to connect to the Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and Cuttyhunk ferries. With close proximity to the destinations in the city's downtown and along its waterfront, New Bedford station is well-positioned drive additional growth to the local tourism industry and other related sectors.

3. New State Funding Opportunities for Ports & Harbors

Companies with operations based in the DPA would benefit from funding opportunities currently under legislative consideration such as state grants for public infrastructure, as well as possible programs to offer low-interest loans to improve private infrastructure. There is also existing earmarked state legislative funding of infrastructure projects such as the recently announced Mass Ready Act legislation. Companies could also apply for state and federal grants by establishing strategic partnerships of DPA stakeholders and the NBPA.

4. Recently Improved Large Waterfront Parcels

In the last decade, both the public and private sectors have invested in large waterfront parcels in New Bedford, including the New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal, North Terminal, New Bedford Foss Marine Terminal, and Shoreline Shipyard. Many of these projects were a product of the significant growth in the offshore wind industry between 2017 and 2024, and resulted in important benefits for the Harbor's overall maritime economy by driving investments in navigational dredging, improved coastal infrastructure, and new employment opportunities in maritime trades. There are additional projects ongoing such as Leonard's Wharf and future potential projects such as the Phase VI dredging program under the ongoing EPA and MassDEP-led Harbor cleanup effort.

New Bedford's redeveloped waterfront parcels are sizable and flexible enough to support a wide range of industries while awaiting resolution of uncertainty in the offshore energy industry. Potential interim, alternative, and complementary uses that are viable considerations include, for example, receipt and storage of construction materials and over-dimensional project cargo moved into the Harbor via barge. These sites could also be developed for commercial use such as expansion of bunkering or development of green energy solutions. Several of the facilities are well-served by utility infrastructure and could include maritime shore power facilities and other energy uses.

Despite offshore energy market industry uncertainty, existing offshore energy projects in Massachusetts and Rhode Island offer potential opportunities for long-term maintenance and repair support. This additional space would be needed for storage of equipment such as cables, gear boxes, and transition pieces, and home porting of service vessels for supply and crew transport. Once established, these parcels could support additional offshore energy projects in the future.

The economic market trends analysis also identified weaknesses throughout the Harbor including those listed in the existing market conditions section above. Key weaknesses identified include aging coastal infrastructure and lack of dedicated funding to support needed repair and replacement projects, congestion within the Harbor due to high volume of inactive fishing vessels within the Harbor due to federal fishing permit restrictions, and navigational constraints for large vessels associated with the size of the Hurricane Barrier opening. The types of threats posed by these identified weaknesses and other future projections are detailed below.

Challenges Identified

To undertake the above-described opportunities, the following identified challenges will need to be addressed.

1. Aging Coastal Infrastructure and Associated Funding and Regulatory Challenges

Infrastructure deficiencies such as aging bulkheads and piers and a lack of funding to support repair and replacement of this coastal infrastructure are obstacles to growth. Infrastructure improvements also endure a long regulatory process which can last multiple years. Dated channel delineations limit where bulkheads may be built and impede needed expansion along the waterfront.

2. Harbor Navigation Constraints

The size of vessels that can enter the Harbor is restricted by limited the 150 feet of horizontal clearance through the opening of the Hurricane Barrier. For example, as wind turbines associated with potential future offshore energy projects grow in scale from 13.6MW to 22MW, the navigational constraints presented by the Hurricane Barrier could be an increasing issue. Investments in navigational technology and physical improvements to channel through the Hurricane Barrier will improve the Port's ability to support the offshore construction market in the future.

The current New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge is a swing bridge structure which pivots on a center point and poses navigation constraints when it is open. MassDOT is currently designing a replacement structure which is planned to be a vertical lift bridge. It will be important to maximize the lift height and navigational channel width associated with a replacement bridge project to avoid future constraints for large vessels.

3. High Rate of Competition in Limited Markets

Sectors as diverse as the ones covered: commercial fishing and processing, ship repair and fabrication, offshore wind, and marine cargo, can compete for resources or trigger conflict. In some instances, there are multiple stakeholders competing in limited and uncertain markets.

The offshore wind industry faces a potential future lack of investment in growth and expansion due to overall market uncertainty. Competing ports along the East Coast may develop their own maintenance and repair support operations for existing wind farms. Also, as the size of turbines and their foundations grow it will strain space within the Harbor and may be restricted by size of the passage through the Hurricane Barrier.

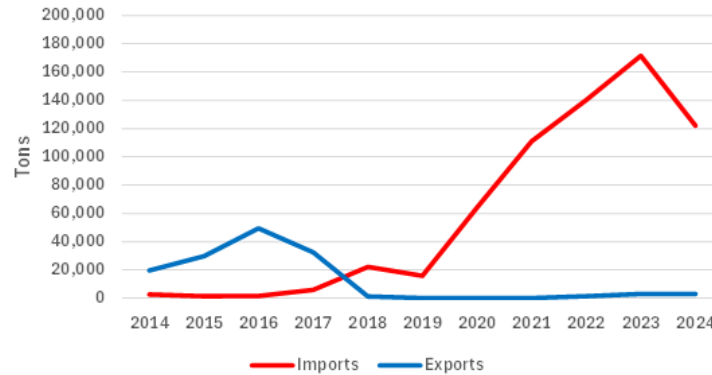
4. Watersheet Congestion and Lack of Vessel Berthing Space

The recurring constraint mentioned in data collection process was harbor congestion and limited dock and slip space. Scallop boats, clambers, trawlers, lobster boats, repair barges, and offshore supply boats all jockey for limited vessel berthing slips. Congested setups may pose a risk of possible vessel collisions and other accidents.

Specific to the fishing industry, there are continual vessel slip space constraints for fishing fleets of varying size and type all competing for berthing space. This impacts not only home-ported vessels but out-of-area vessels as well, which utilize the harbor due to the well-established support infrastructure and seafood auction. The multiple year cyclical nature of the scallop life cycle and current scallop permitting regulations by National Marine Fisheries (NMF) also limit options. In addition to the permit restriction, each scallop boat is restricted to a limited number of fishing days per year, which for 2026 is set at 34 days per permit. This constrained utilization of the fishing fleet means boats are tied up and docked for months at a time, further limiting berthing space in the Harbor.

5. Limited Commercial Cargo Market

The final identified challenge is the limited commercial cargo market. Three main breakbulk cargos are handled in New England ports: forest/lumber products, food perishables, and automobiles. There is strong competition from New Haven and the Port of Providence (ProvPort) for forest products such as lumber and pulp which require substantial covered storage facilities along the waterfront. See Figure 4-2: Lumber Imports & Exports at New England Ports 2014-2024. While the strength of these nearby ports in the cargo sector is evident in the data below, this should not dissuade the Port of New Bedford from pursuing potential opportunities to enter the market. For example, the Harbor is favorably located to serve as a hub for freight going to and from Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard.



	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
New Haven, CT						2,117	55,750	110,211	111,371	153,715	69,986
Providence, RI	1,612					7,913	8,365		28,913	12,724	51,929
Boston, MA	0	305	243	130	126	0	54	198	20	5,026	162

Figure 4-2: Lumber Imports & Exports at New England Ports 2014-2024

Prepared by Martin Associates using data from the U.S. Census Bureau /USA Trade Online.

Most perishables handled at New England ports are containerized and though it is a stable annual volume, handling this perishable cargo is not presently viable through New Bedford due to a lack of infrastructure for offloading containers. Instead, the predominantly imported container volume is served via Boston, which has recently invested in larger cranes for container offloading, and direct Eimskip container service at Portland, Maine. See Figure 4-3: Perishables by Tonnage by Transport Type at New England Ports 2014-2024.

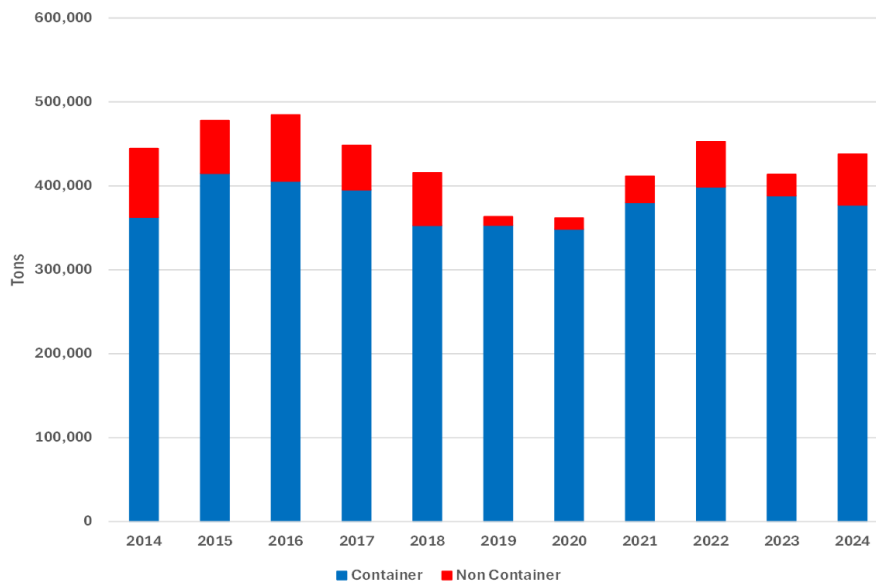


Figure 4-3: Perishables Tonnage by Transport Type at New England Ports

Prepared by Martin Associates using data from the U.S. Census Bureau /USA Trade Online.

The non-container perishables market is very small, and Providence has historically handled much of this tonnage. See Figure 4-4: Non-Containerized Perishables at New England Ports – Tonnage Per Port 2014-2024. The limited commercial cargo market limits work opportunities for longshoremen who are also threatened by the uncertainty in the offshore construction market.

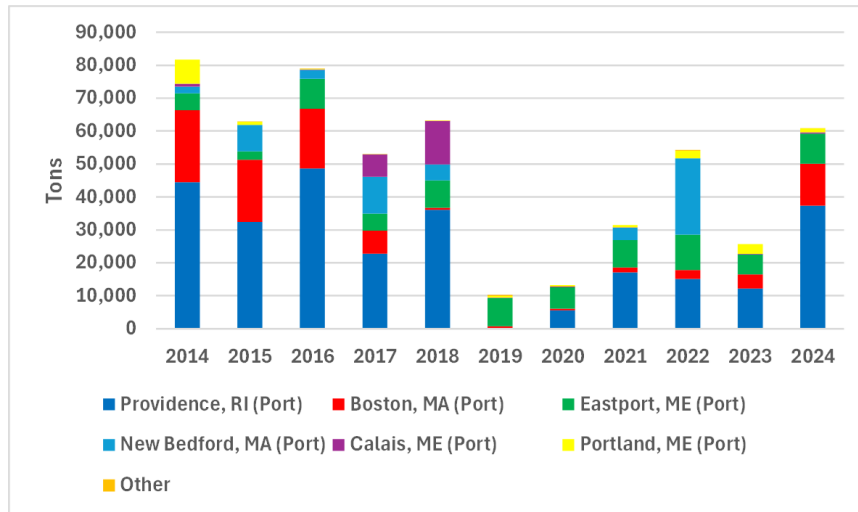


Figure 4-4: Non-Containerized Perishables at New England Ports – Tonnage Per Port 2014-2024
Prepared by Martin Associates using data from the U.S. Census Bureau /USA Trade Online.

Lastly, the auto market is dominated by Davisville, Rhode Island followed by Boston, with Davisville handling 86% of the auto market. See Figure 4-4: Auto Imports and Exports at New England Ports 2014-2024.

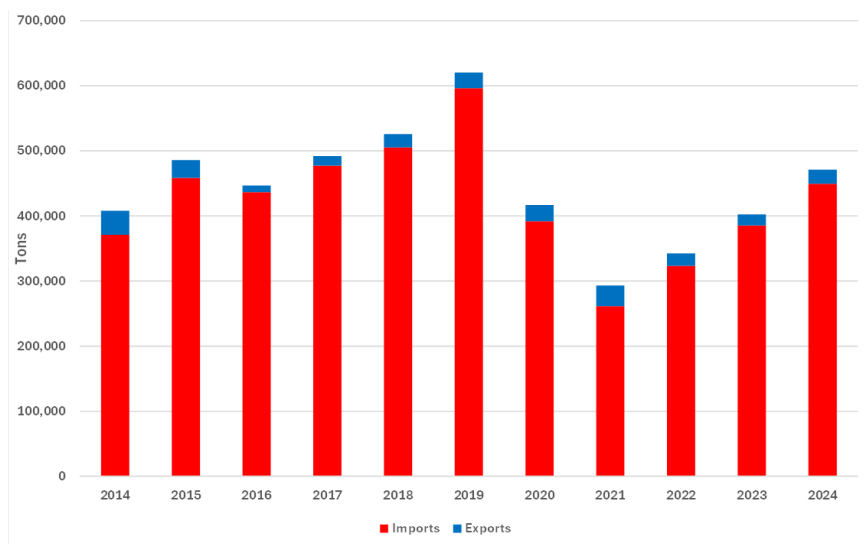


Figure 4-5: Auto Imports and Exports at New England Ports 2014-2024
Prepared by Martin Associates using data from the U.S. Census Bureau /USA Trade Online.

CHAPTER 5: PLANNING ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the planning analysis and recommendations of the 2026 MHP intended to achieve the community's vision for continued success of the New Bedford-Fairhaven DPA, as well as a vision to build upon the Harbor Cleanup environmental remediation efforts by revitalizing the Acushnet River along its New Bedford waterfront with mixed use development and enhanced public access amenities. The economic and regulatory recommendations of the 2026 MHP have been guided by the three objectives identified by the community and are organized by type and objective in this chapter.

5.2 PLANNING ANALYSIS

The section presents the planning analysis categorized by the key elements of the plan including land use, coastal infrastructure, public access and recreation, and coastal flood resiliency. The planning analysis builds upon data collection completed and presented in Chapter 3: Harbor Conditions, as well as technical analysis of spatial data sets and flood modeling to support the recommendations of the 2026 MHP. Supporting materials for coastal flood resiliency work are also included as Attachment D: Coastal Flood Resiliency Analysis.

5.2.1 LAND USE

Harbor – Port Focus Area

The Harbor-Port focus area is approximately 600 acres in total including both land area and watershed. The parcel area is estimated to be approximately 240 acres of that total area and encompasses predominantly water-dependent industrial uses within the DPA. See Figure 5-1: Harbor-Port Focus Area Land Use Map.

The Harbor-Port Focus Area is well-served by transportation and coastal infrastructure assets including the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge/Route 6, JFK Memorial Highway/Route 18 in New Bedford, the newly constructed intercity rail station, and the federal navigational channel through the Hurricane Barrier. This Focus Area also includes Pope's Island and Fish Island.

Key sites within the Harbor-Port Focus Area that are subject to the recommendations of the 2026 MHP are reviewed in more detail below. The land use in this Focus Area is also further analyzed in Chapter 6: DPA Master Plan.

New Bedford State Pier (93 State Pier, New Bedford)

The eight-acre New Bedford State Pier site is both in the heart of the port and at the foot of Union Street, representing a prime opportunity to connect New Bedford's downtown to the waterfront. This locally critical facility, owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and operated by MassDevelopment, has historically served as a multiuse site. It is the local hub for waterborne commercial and passenger activity and other water dependent industrial uses. Most prominently, the northern edge of the State Pier is the location of the Seastreak Ferry Terminal, providing fast ferry service to Marthas Vineyard and Nantucket. The Pier has also provided berthing space for American Cruise Lines coastal cruise ships, periodically bringing significant visitors into the city who patronize nearby downtown businesses. A smaller ferry service – the Cuttyhunk Ferry – was, until recently, situated along the southern edge of the site along with the Schooner Ernestina-Morrissey, a historic sailing vessel and cultural landmark. A warehouse along the eastern edge of the Pier was once used for importing perishables. Portions of the Pier are used for marine public safety and commercial fishing vessel berthing.



Public safety marina, Seastreak berth, and existing warehouse at the State Pier.

The State Pier has long been envisioned for redevelopment to optimize maritime use of property and establish commercial uses along its landward edge. In October 2025, inspections revealed significantly deteriorated conditions at the Pier's south and east pile-supported aprons, requiring these areas to be immediately vacated by their users. Over the anticipated four years needed to complete critical coastal infrastructure repairs or replacement, several water-dependent businesses and operators will be displaced. At the time of this writing, MassDevelopment, NBPA and other key stakeholders are collaborating to find alternative locations within the Harbor to host these businesses while this work is undertaken.

Once the immediate needs of the former State Pier tenants are addressed, the state agencies responsible for its maintenance and management, in collaboration with the NBPA and City of New Bedford, should consider the viability of the structures on the Pier to serve the needs of the Harbor and to plan for the development of the western edge of the State Pier property so the site's design better reflects its status as an critical economic asset at the heart of an urban waterfront and the doorstep of the historic downtown.

New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal (4 Wright Street, New Bedford)

The New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal (MCT) is a 29-acre site owned by MassCEC. Completed in 2015, the MCT is the nation's first purpose-built offshore wind terminal and has the East Coast's highest uniform load capacity. The facility is currently leased to Vineyard Wind for partial assembling and loading wind turbine components onto vessels for offshore installation. In 2024, MassCEC announced a project to acquire several abutting parcels to expand the facility's bulkhead and laydown space and create new office space to support terminal operations, which is expected to be completed in 2026.

New Bedford Foss Marine Terminal (180 MacArthur Drive, New Bedford)

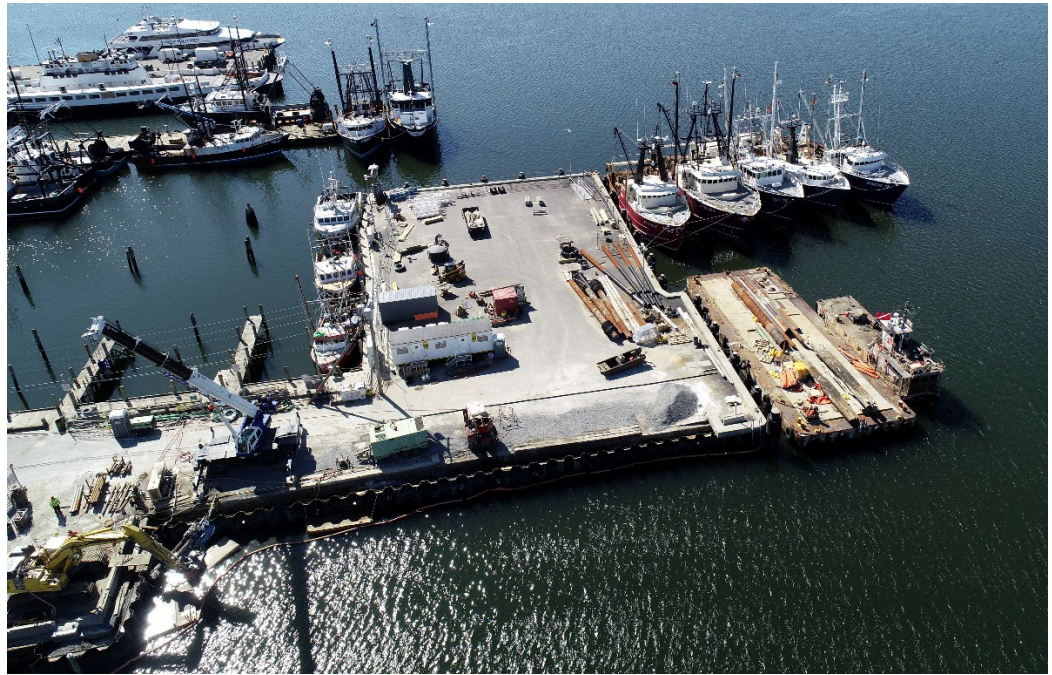
The approximately 29-acre New Bedford Foss Marine Terminal is a waterfront site formerly occupied by the coal-fired Cannon Street Power Station and a bulk petroleum terminal. Following a long succession of unsuccessful redevelopment proposals, the property was purchased by Foss Maritime in 2022, with plans to redevelop it into a facility to support the staging and operations and maintenance phases of offshore energy projects. Structures from the site's previous uses were demolished in 2023 and a new berth and associated dredging was completed in 2024, facilitated by the SER. The site continues to evolve to meet the shifting demands of the offshore energy sector in an uncertain economic climate and adapt to support interim uses for its newly accessible waterfront acreage.

North Terminal Area and North Terminal 1 (256-352 Herman Melville Boulevard, New Bedford)

The broad area historically known as North Terminal is a collection of parcels north of the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge. Owned by the City of New Bedford and ground leased to private operators, uses are varied and include a mix of fishing vessel berthing space and several commercial businesses. Facilitated by its status as a WDSF under the Harbor cleanup and SER, a new project to construct North Terminal 1 funded by a variety of local, state, and federal sources was recently completed and offers over 11 acres of additional waterfront space for maritime industrial uses. A warehouse with direct rail access via a rail spur is also present within North Terminal 1.

Union Wharf (Union Wharf, Fairhaven)

The Town of Fairhaven-owned Union Wharf was initially constructed in the 18th century and is home to a variety of water-dependent uses, including a public safety marina, berthing space for commercial fishing vessels, and a charter fishing business. A long-term project to rehabilitate the Wharf and reconstruct its bulkheads was completed in 2024, leveraging a mix of local and state funding sources. Closely proximate to Fairhaven's downtown, Union Wharf is also notable in that it is one of the only publicly accessible waterfront properties along Fairhaven's central waterfront.



Union Wharf while undergoing repairs in 2024.

Fairhaven Shipyard (50 Fort Street and 32 Water Street, Fairhaven)

Fairhaven Shipyard Companies, Inc. owns two prominent sites along the Harbor where it operates a shipbuilding, vessel repair, and marina business. Its two main facilities are North Yard and South Yard, both in Fairhaven. The North Yard is adjacent to the Town of Fairhaven-owned Union Wharf and services larger commercial vessels, supported by a travel lift and marine railway. The South Yard on Fort Street offers similar shipyard services as well as a marina for recreational craft. The company also owns property on Popes Island in New Bedford and plays a critical role in making the Harbor a full-service port for the commercial fishing industry and other maritime sectors.

Harbor Focus Area

The Harbor Focus Area is approximately 1,065 acres in total including both land area and watershed. The parcel area is estimated to be approximately 450 acres of that total area and encompasses a wide range of land uses that surround the New Bedford-Fairhaven DPA. See Figure 5-2: Harbor Focus Area Land Use Map. Features of the Harbor Focus Area include downtown New Bedford, businesses along Purchase Street to the north and MacArthur Drive to the south, the Revere Copper site, and industrial users along Cove and Gifford Streets in New Bedford. Downtown New Bedford includes a robust mix of small businesses and local, state, and federal assets including New Bedford City Hall, the New Bedford Whaling Museum, and numerous mixed use redevelopment projects along Union Street.

In Fairhaven, Fairhaven Shipyard South Yard provides recreational marina services, the Seaport Inn and Marina features recently renovated hotel rooms, a restaurant, and a marina, and Water and Main Streets feature a mix of small businesses that are commercial and industrial in nature. The Fairhaven waterfront in this Focus Area also includes a number of waterfront single-family residences with private docks.

The Harbor Focus Area is well-served by transportation and coastal infrastructure assets including Route 6, JFK Memorial Highway/Route 18 in New Bedford, the newly constructed intercity rail station, and the Hurricane Barrier. This Focus Area also features open space at Pope's Island and Palmer's Island in New Bedford and Marsh Island and Cushman Park in Fairhaven. Key sites within the Harbor Focus Area that are subject to the recommendations of the 2026 MHP are reviewed in more detail below.

Shoreline Shipyard/Revere Copper (24-26 N Front Street, New Bedford)

The property commonly known as the "Revere Copper Site" due to its historical metalworking use, is an approximately 14-acre property just north of the North Terminal. Vacant since manufacturing operations ceased in 2008, the property is currently being redeveloped into a new multi-use Shoreline Shipyard by a local venture.

Linberg Marine (50 Middle Street, Fairhaven)

50 Middle Street in Fairhaven is an approximately 1.5-acre waterfront property previously operated by Linberg Marine, a marine construction company. It includes two wharfs extending into the Harbor, and notably is the only maritime industrial property in Fairhaven that is outside of the DPA. The site was recently sold to a new owner, and its future use is yet to be determined.

Marsh Island (1-2 Marsh Island, Fairhaven)

Marsh Island, long known locally as “Tin Can Island,” is an approximately 22-acre conservation area on the Fairhaven just south of the Interstate 195 Bridge. Over the 20th century, material dredged from the Harbor was disposed there, filling what was once a coastal wetland. Portions of the site are also occupied by radio broadcast towers. Today it is jointly owned by the Buzzards Bay Coalition and the Fairhaven-Acushnet Land Preservation Trust, who recently completed Phase 1 of a restoration project that reestablished salt marsh and constructed new public access walkways. Restoration will be completed with Phase 2 of the Project, expected to be undertaken in the 2030s. Marsh Island is the largest open space site along the Fairhaven waterfront within the Hurricane Barrier, representing significant public access and ecological amenity.

Acushnet River Focus Area

The Acushnet River Focus Area is approximately 420 acres in total including both land area and watershed. The parcel area is estimated to be approximately 210 acres of that total area and encompasses a wide range of land uses. See Figure 5-3: Acushnet River Focus Area Land Use Map.

Residential uses in this Focus Area range from blocks of three-decker homes along Belleville Avenue to converted historic mill buildings along the New Bedford riverfront to single family homes along the Fairhaven waterfront. Commercial uses range from small businesses along Belleville Avenue in New Bedford and Sycamore Street in Fairhaven to large retailers such as Market Basket along Coggeshall Street and Sawyer Street in New Bedford. Along the northern edge of the New Bedford riverfront, longstanding industrial users such as the Acushnet Holding Company maintain a steady presence.

The Acushnet River Focus Area is well-served by transportation assets such as Interstate I-195, which is subject to ongoing investment to reconstruct the Coggeshall Street offramps and Route 18 interchange in New Bedford. This Focus Area also features prominent open space at Riverside Park in New Bedford and a large area of coastal salt marsh along the Fairhaven waterfront. Key sites within the Acushnet River Focus Area that are subject to the recommendations of the 2026 MHP are reviewed in more detail below.

Riverside Park (ES Belleville Avenue, New Bedford)

Riverside Park is a City-owned public open space on the New Bedford side of the Acushnet River Focus Area. It includes walkways and benches, a playground, several sports fields and courts, a community garden, and coastal wetland resource areas. It serves as the main public gateway to the Acushnet River Focus Area waterfront in New Bedford, and is the centerpoint of the ongoing New Bedford RiverWalk project discussed below.



Acushnet River shoreline seen from Riverside Park.

Sawyer Street Facility (0 NS Sawyer Street, New Bedford)

The site known as the Sawyer Street Facility at 0 NS Sawyer Street has played a key role in facilitating ongoing Harbor cleanup activities. Expected to be conveyed to the City of New Bedford, for years it has been operated by the EPA as a landside processing facility for dredge spoils gathered during Harbor cleanup activities. This use has been discontinued, and remediation and capping of the site is currently underway. The City of New Bedford is currently studying opportunities for future redevelopment of the site, with options for waterfront open space complemented by inland residential, commercial, or mixed-use redevelopment under consideration. Due to its relatively large acreage, City ownership, and adjacency to Riverside Park, it provides a strong opportunity for expansion of waterfront public access as part of the New Bedford RiverWalk project.

New Bedford RiverWalk (Multiple Parcels, New Bedford)

The New Bedford RiverWalk will reconnect North End neighborhoods of New Bedford to the Acushnet River. Following over a decade of planning, community visioning, and environmental cleanup, the RiverWalk will, when complete, provide approximately 2 miles of accessible riverfront pathways that have the potential to connect Coggeshall Street to River Road. The RiverWalk will include important neighborhood connections, new overlooks, amenity areas, a kayak launch, future rowing facility and comprehensive educational and wayfinding signage. By proposing consistent path width, minimum design elevation, and unified furniture selections, the RiverWalk will become a cohesive and memorable public amenity. See Figure 5-4, Proposed RiverWalk Alignment.

The planned RiverWalk route runs through numerous public and private parcels and requires significant coordination across many landowners. Due to the former heavy industrial uses that occurred on many of the riverfront parcels that the RiverWalk will pass through, as well as recent intertidal zone remediation and ongoing Harbor cleanup, careful site design and complex permitting are required to implement this important and long-sought public asset.

Given the scale of this project, it is intended that the construction of the RiverWalk will be completed in phases. Currently Phase 1 and 2 are in the early design stage, with Phase 1 construction planned to commence in 2027. Future phases or portions of the RiverWalk will be constructed by private landowners or through publicly funded projects as funding becomes available. To ensure a cohesive RiverWalk design is implemented across all parcels, the 2026 MHP provides important guidelines that can be followed by future phase project proponents during the design and permitting process.

Buzzards Bay Focus Area

The Buzzards Bay Focus area differs from the remainder of the Planning Area as it is the only Focus Area seaward of the Hurricane Barrier. The Buzzards Bay Focus Area is approximately 435 acres in total including both land area and watersheet. The parcel area is estimated to be approximately 130 acres of that total area, much of which is publicly accessible open space along the ocean. See Figure 5-5: Buzzards Bay Focus Area Land Use Map. Roadway infrastructure in this Focus Area includes Rodney French Boulevard and Cove Road in New Bedford and Fort Street in Fairhaven

The Focus Area also has substantially greater existing public access facilities than the other MHP Focus Areas. Several publicly accessible historic military installations are present, including Fort Taber and Fort Rodman in New Bedford and Fort Phoenix in Fairhaven. Numerous public beaches are also present in both communities. The New Bedford portion of the Buzzards Bay includes the Community Boating Center, where area youth are taught to sail, and Cisco Brewers, a popular local restaurant and brewery. As discussed in Section 5.2.4, coastal flood resiliency is a particular consideration for sites within the Buzzards Bay Focus Area due to the location outside of the Hurricane Barrier.



Fort Phoenix in Fairhaven.

5.2.2 COASTAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Despite the completion of many large-scale projects throughout the Harbor since the 2010 MHP, maintenance and improvements are still needed at several key public and private sites to support ongoing growth and development of maritime industries, particularly north of the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge where recent infrastructure failures have occurred. Some coastal infrastructure has deteriorated to the point of collapse, while other sites remain operational but require near-term improvements to maintain the full functionality of the waterfront parcels. Over the past decade, several sites such as the New Bedford Foss Marine Terminal and Shoreline Shipyard have received substantial private investment and are now well-positioned to support multiple industries. Key to the 2026 MHP is underlining the importance of continued investment in coastal infrastructure repairs and upgrades to support the Harbor's maritime industries.

The construction of CAD Cell No. 4 and the completion of Phase V dredging were significant milestones for remedial activities and navigation improvements in the Harbor. The existing CAD Cells have varying amounts of available capacity and will require the construction of containment berms to maximize this capacity before future filling activities commence. Once the available capacity within open CAD Cells is utilized, sediment caps will be needed to complete the CAD Cells. At North Terminal, additional WDSF authorization remains to further expand the terminal and support additional industries and users. See Figure 3-8, Harbor Dredging, CAD Cells, and WDSFs.

5.2.3 PUBLIC ACCESS & RECREATION

The Harbor offers a unique blend of authentic maritime industry, natural beauty, and historic and cultural destinations. The 2026 MHP seeks to protect, preserve, and enhance maritime industries as well as the public's access and use of the amenities along the waterfront. Through an extensive public engagement process, opportunities for improved access and connectivity were identified. In addition, planned and potential future development and recreational opportunities shared by project stakeholders and municipal representatives helped shape the vision for improved public access across the Planning Area. The following goals emerged from the community and project stakeholders through this engagement process:

- Identify opportunities to improve public access to the water in appropriate locations while balancing the needs of maritime industries.
- Celebrate, preserve, and leverage the historic identity of the Harbor.
- Consider opportunities for expanded recreational boating and water transportation.

Through discussions with stakeholders, potential gaps were identified in the overall waterfront access network; however, planned connections such as the Blue Lane Connector and the RiverWalk, each in New Bedford, will dramatically improve the connections between the many existing publicly accessible resources while also creating new destinations. In Fairhaven, walkable and bikeable streets, together with the Phoenix Rail Trail, reinforce the neighborhood character of downtown Fairhaven and provide connections to points further afield. See Figure 5-6: Public Access and Recreation in the Planning Area.

The 2010 MHP identified community boating groups' interest in expanding their programs. By 2025, these programs have significantly expanded and need new facilities to accommodate the large number of people interested in taking part. The remediation of waterfront sites as part of the Harbor cleanup/SER, especially in the Acushnet River Focus Area, provides opportunities for these local boating groups to expand their operations while avoiding safety concerns and potential conflicts with commercial vessels within the inner harbor area.

New waterfront destinations, an increase in tourism, and expanded ferry and cruise ship activity have contributed to the evolution of the New Bedford and Fairhaven waterfronts since the 2010 Plan. Similarly, an increased demand for recreational moorings, transient slips, and recreational boating of all types, has also increased vessel activity and revealed some potential conflicts with growing commercial vessel traffic. A key focus of the 2026 MHP is to balance demands from newer uses with the strong maritime economy that relies on waterfront and watersheet access.

Opportunities exist to expand and improve non-industrial use and access to the Harbor; however, these improvements must be made in ways that do not deter or compete with maritime industries. Recent development plans for the New Bedford State Pier offer an opportunity to improve compatibility between important Harbor uses. For example, the planned increase in commercial space on the State Pier, oriented towards downtown New Bedford, can provide destinations for tourists and visitors along the street corridor, while allowing for an optimization of dock space for ferries, cruise ships, and ancillary industrial vessels. Improved signage and wayfinding across the Harbor could improve the public's ability to navigate and experience the waterfront, while simultaneously offering an opportunity to celebrate its deep cultural and historical significance. Promoting access across the Harbor by way of a water taxi/launch could potentially link the communities across the Harbor and provide important connections between existing and new destinations such as Union Wharf, Pope's Island, the New Bedford State Pier, and a possible stop near the intercity rail station.

There are specific public access opportunities highlighted through the 2026 MHP including, by Focus Area:

Harbor and Harbor-Port Focus Areas

The Harbor and Harbor-Port Focus Areas are the industrial core of both communities, and the 2026 MHP supports the protection, preservation, and enhancement of maritime industries while improving awareness of and accessibility to waterfront destinations for residents and visitors alike. The connection from the Blue Lane Path on East Rodney French Boulevard to the on-street Blue Lane Path could be improved with enhanced striping to denote the continuation of the path. Improved signage and wayfinding along the path would further encourage multi-modal travel from downtown New Bedford to both the South End and Clarks Cove, as well as northward to the Acushnet River Focus Area. Improved clarity for entry points and orientation signage would improve the understanding of Harbor access points within the industrial center of the waterfront.

Acushnet River Focus Area

The planned New Bedford RiverWalk, which is currently in design, will reconnect residents with areas of the Harbor that were inaccessible prior to the Harbor cleanup. The option for community boating groups, such as the New Bedford Rowing Center, to relocate to the Acushnet River Focus Area would expand use of this watersheet and address navigation safety concerns in the DPA. Due to the low bridge clearance heights, consideration of emergency services access or dockage should be prioritized to ensure appropriate response times for potential safety incidents on the water is feasible. In Fairhaven, options for water-based access to the Marsh Island reservation could be considered as well as improved land-based access to celebrate this new recreational amenity.

Buzzards Bay Focus Area

Current public waterfront access around the Clarks Cove peninsula is a key amenity in the Buzzards Bay Focus Area. Improved multi-modal access from the corner of East Rodney French Boulevard through Cove Street, and again down Gifford Street would help encourage alternative forms of transportation to destinations such as Fort Tabor/Fort Rodman, Cisco Brewery, West Beach Pavilion, and the many other public access destinations for both boating and swimming. Improvements to the existing Gifford Street boat ramp conditions, including bike parking, improved signage, and kayak racks, could help improve the existing site and encourage more frequent use.

In summary, expansion across a range of waterfront uses, from tourism and recreation to new maritime industries and increased vessel sizes, has increased the spatial demand on the Harbor in both New Bedford and Fairhaven. The 2026 MHP acknowledges both the importance of the economic and cultural impact that these uses have on these two communities, as well as the potential conflicts that increased non-industrial uses might have on the vital waterfront economy. Where feasible, clarifying or improving Harbor access points for non-industrial visitors is proposed in appropriate locations, while identifying essential waterfront industrial parcels that should be preserved and protected from noncompatible uses.

5.2.4 COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCY

The Harbor is unique among Massachusetts ports in that today it is largely protected from the impacts of coastal flooding by the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier. This flood control system is owned and operated by the USACE in coordination with the City of New Bedford and Town of Fairhaven, and has been certified by FEMA to provide a certain level of flood protection landward of the barrier and berm. Areas inside the Hurricane Barrier are considered substantially protected from storm surge up to elevation 18.6 feet NAVD88. This elevation provides a significant protective benefit for storms in the present day and in future projections.

The decision to close the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier takes in factors other than the real-time water surface elevation, but closures generally occur when the water level reaches Elevation 5.4' Mean Lower Low Water (or Elevation 3.48' NAVD88). Closing the Barrier during non-storm conditions is not ideal as the Harbor cannot operate normally during a closure. As sea levels rise due to climate change, barrier closures are anticipated to increase in frequency and result in associated risks to the local maritime economy by restricting navigation into and out of the Harbor. Severe storm surge events are not expected to necessitate Barrier closures at an unacceptable frequency; however, more closures may be required to prevent flooding, particularly along low-lying portions of the Fairhaven waterfront. These conditions necessitate proactive, targeted planning for implementation of coastal resiliency measures to balance flood mitigation with regionally critical maritime activity. To this end, many of the NBPA's recent and ongoing projects have integrated resiliency measures to address sea level rise.

Woods Hole Group, a member of the Project Team, prepared a Barrier closure analysis included in Attachment D that outlines projected closure frequencies under a variety of sea level rise scenarios. The memorandum also includes recommendations for design flood elevations to enable raising the barrier closure thresholds and how to potentially reduce the number of closures that would occur under future sea level rise conditions.

The Barrier closure analysis identified a target design flood elevation of 6.0 feet NAVD88 to address coastal flooding risks in low-lying areas of New Bedford and Fairhaven. Adaptation of vulnerable waterfront sites to meet this target elevation would allow the Barrier closure threshold to be raised to elevation 6.0 feet NAVD88, thereby delaying the onset of more frequent closures by approximately 40 years, (until 2080) and mitigating disruption to port operations.

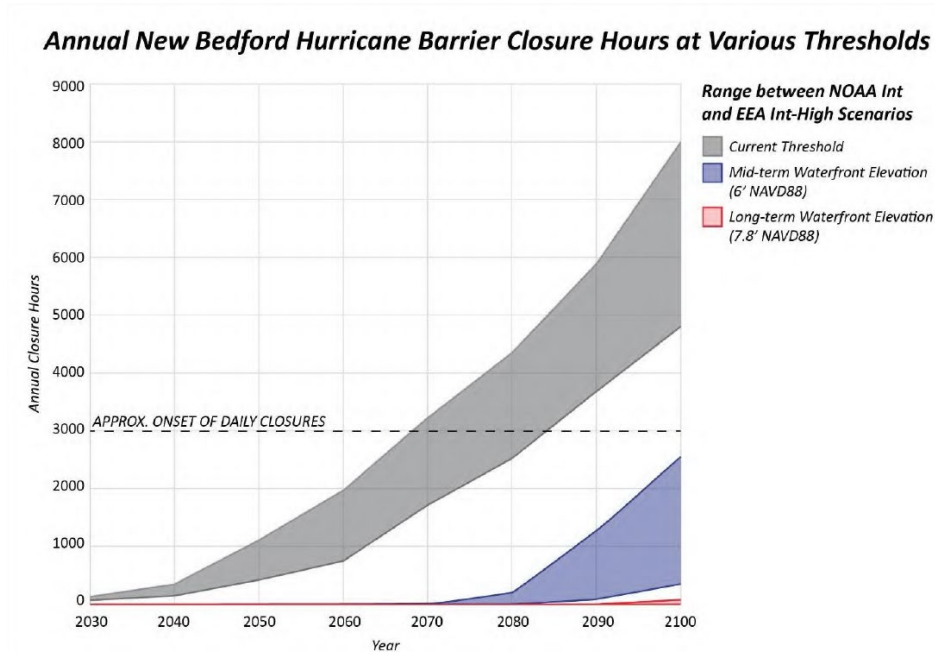


Figure 30 from Barrier closure analysis: Annual Barrier closure hours per year with the current closure threshold (3.4 feet NAVD88), mid-term waterfront edge elevation (6.0 feet NAVD88), and long-term waterfront edge elevation (7.8 feet NAVD88).



Figure 31 from Barrier closure analysis: areas where adaptation would be required to increase Hurricane Barrier closure threshold to elevation 6.0 feet NAVD88 (denoted in purples) and corresponding potential flood patterns without shoreline adaptation (denoted in blue).

5.3 PLANNING PRINCIPLES & PRIORITIES

A planning principle/priority of the 2010 MHP and the subsequent 2020 MHP Clarification was the inclusion of approved Potential Navigational Dredge Areas (PNDA) and potential WDSF locations in the Harbor. These approved locations are eligible for streamlined regulatory review and permitting through an SER within the Superfund regulations to support the Harbor Cleanup effort. Since 2010, the Harbor has seen increased investment in coastal infrastructure due to the SER, which provides predictable regulatory approval timeframes and outcomes. As the Harbor Cleanup continues over the next few years, it is critical to continue this element of the MHP to support continued investment in waterfront properties to support local maritime industries.

See Table 5-1: Planning Principles and Priorities Currently in Effect under 2010 MHP and 2020 MHP Clarification and to be Continued in the 2026 MHP below for additional context of this element of the plan. Figure 3-8 shows approved locations of PDNA and WDSF areas within the Harbor.

Table 5-1: Planning Principles and Priorities Currently in Effect under 2010 MHP and 2020 MHP Clarification and to be Continued in the 2026 MHP

Planning Principle/ Priority	Decision Standard	Implementation Mechanism	Notes
2010 MHP and 2020 MHP Clarification approved PNDA and potential Waterfront Development Shoreline Facility (WDSF) locations. Inclusion in the MHP and Clarification allowed these areas to be eligible for navigational dredging and potential filling of shoreline facilities with clean material through a stream-lined permitting process within the Superfund Regulations known as the SER.	EPA makes all final decisions on SER Work Plans for PNDA's and WDSFs. Approved SER activities are exempt from all state and federal procedural regulatory requirements, but must continue to meet all substantive environmental standards.	MADEP coordinates the SER Work Plan reviews and inputs from state and federal agencies. EPA makes all final decisions on SER Work Plans for PNDA's and WDSFs.	See Figure 3-8 for PNDA and WDSF location.

5.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The economic development recommendations of the 2026 MHP were shaped through review of the economic market trends analysis presented in Chapter 4 and the three community-driven objectives of the 2026 MHP. The sections below highlight a selection of the recommendations associated with each objective and are followed by itemized tables with the complete list of recommendations.

Economic Development Recommendations Associated with MHP Objective #1

MHP Objective #1 seeks to develop and sustain the success of existing industries, including commercial fisheries, seafood processing, ship repair and fabrication, and Harbor terminals that support water transportation, cargo, and offshore construction. Based upon stakeholder interviews with local maritime business operators and review of the existing conditions of the Harbor, recommendations were developed that build upon the existing perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Harbor. Recommendations include:

- Work with EPA and MassDEP to implement the Phase VI dredging program and extend SER in support of continued environmental remediation and replacement of aging coastal infrastructure in the Harbor.
- Study revision and/or elimination of portions of the State Harbor Line along the New Bedford waterfront to support reasonable expansion of waterside coastal infrastructure while maintaining safe and efficient vessel navigation within the Harbor.
- Build stakeholder coalitions in pursuit of federal/state low-interest loans and/or grant funding applications for repair or replacement of privately-owned coastal infrastructure.

Overall, recommendations associated with this objective seek to advance the repair, upgrade, and expansion of coastal infrastructure key to the functioning of the Harbor's maritime industries. See Table 5-2: Economic Development Recommendations associated with MHP Objective #1 for a full list of recommendations.

Economic Development Recommendations Associated with MHP Objective #2

MHP Objective #2 seeks to expand maritime industrial uses, including emerging ocean technologies, and to redevelop key sites in the Harbor, including land along the Acushnet River in New Bedford. Based upon stakeholder interviews and review of the existing conditions of the Harbor, recommendations were developed to enhance the opportunities present for further growth in the Harbor. Recommendations include:

- Install shore power services on wharves and piers and develop a grant-supported program for fishing vessel conversions to increase uptake in available shore power by fishing vessels while in port.

- Continue to advocate for a cleanup outcome that supports redevelopment of New Bedford's Acushnet River waterfront that allows for a wide range of land uses, public amenities and coastal infrastructure such as docks, canoe/kayak ramps, and other features along the Acushnet River and does not add costs to development due to legacy environmental contaminant cleanup/disposal.
- Advocate for urgent reconstruction of the recently closed south and east pile-supported aprons on State Pier to return that essential asset to fully productive operational use.

See Table 5-3: Economic Development Recommendations associated with MHP Objective #2 for a full list of recommendations.

Economic Development Recommendations Associated with MHP Objective #3

MHP Objective #3 seeks to expand tourism, cultural activities, and recreation including increased waterfront public access, expanded cruise ship dockings, preservation of historic assets, and expansion of recreational rowing and boating in the Harbor. Based upon stakeholder interviews with community organizations, residents, and business operators and review of the existing conditions of the Harbor, recommendations were developed to foster expansion of tourism, cultural activities, and recreation. These include:

- Advocate for near-term activation of the New Bedford State Pier through redevelopment of the land along its western edge with restaurant use and/or other commercial uses to further enhance downtown New Bedford's connection to the waterfront
- Encourage additional cruise ship visits to the Port of New Bedford by ACL and explore other regional cruise lines that could add landings in the Harbor
- Support deauthorization of portions of existing federal navigation channels and modification of the State Harbor Line to expand recreational marina and water transportation uses along the Fairhaven waterfront.

See Table 5-4 Economic Development Recommendations associated with MHP Objective #3 for a full list of recommendations.

Table 5-2: Economic Development Recommendations Associated with 2026 MHP Objective #1: *Develop and sustain the prominent industries of the Harbor, including commercial fisheries, seafood processing, ship repair/fabrication, and terminals to support water transportation, cargo, and offshore construction*

Item	Feedback from Key Stakeholders	Economic Development Recommendations
Potential economic development recommendations to build upon identified Harbor strengths...		
1.1	<i>...highly developed infrastructure to serve commercial fishing/seafood processing... live auction, ship repairs, supplies, experienced/skilled workforce, professional services (legal, insurance...)</i>	Work with MassDOT during the reconstruction of Interstate-195, including key ramps/access to Coggeshall Street, to avoid construction period impacts on trucking routes. Explore collaboration between the NBPA and the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SPREDD) to study designating local truck routes to protect long-term access to DPA sites.
1.2	<i>...ship repair/construction... supports local commercial fishing industry... history of maritime trades necessary to support commercial maritime activities</i>	Study the revision of and/or the elimination of portions of the Harbor Line along the New Bedford waterfront to reflect consistency between navigational channel setbacks and the Harbor Line and to support reasonable expansion of waterside coastal infrastructure while maintaining safe and efficient vessel navigation within the Harbor.
1.3	<i>... experience in marine construction for Vineyard Wind 1 Project... development of infrastructure to support long-term maintenance and repair of Vineyard Wind 1 project and other potential offshore clean energy projects</i>	Continue to advocate for the USACE to develop a necessary Dredged Materials Management Plan to perform maintenance dredging of existing federal channels and navigational projects that could extend the federal navigational channel further north within in the Harbor, which would support large vessel traffic and increase activation of infrastructure in the northern Harbor.
Potential economic development recommendations to mitigate identified Harbor weaknesses...		
1.4	<i>... current New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge limitations...</i>	Continue to collaborate closely with MassDOT on the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge replacement to ensure the design honors the existing historical structure and does not impose height restrictions less than 138 feet on vessels accessing watersheet to the north. Coordinate construction to minimize impacts on vessel and vehicular traffic.

Item	Feedback from Key Stakeholders	Economic Development Recommendations
1.5	<i>Aging coastal infrastructure and lack of funding sources to replace/repair infrastructure...</i>	Advocate for legislation under the Mass Ready Act that establishes financial assistance opportunities for both public and private property owners through a combination of new grant and financing programs (separate public program and private program) specific to coastal infrastructure in DPAs. Programs could be modeled after the Massachusetts State Revolving Fund (SRF) for water infrastructure. Reactivate MassDevelopment's previously authorized program for coastal infrastructure financing for private entities. NBPA to build coalitions of multiple stakeholders in pursuit of federal/state low-interest loans and/or grant funding applications for coastal infrastructure that supports multiple properties/industries in accessing capital for privately-owned coastal infrastructure investments. Advocate for increased total value of the Seaport Economic Council grant program to allow for larger awards for port infrastructure.
1.6	<i>... long regulatory process for these infrastructure improvements and/or repairs...</i>	Advocate for streamlined permitting for certain uses through the establishment of an additional statewide Chapter 91 General License category for bulkhead repairs/replacements in DPAs. Use the existing SER process as a model for streamlining the regulatory approach to coastal infrastructure improvements without compromising environmental oversight. Work with EPA and MassDEP to implement Phase VI dredging program under the SER and advocate for continued environmental remediation and replacement of aging coastal infrastructure along the waterfront.
1.7	<i>... lack of commercial vessel berthing space...</i>	Consider opportunities for temporary vessel berthing space at vacant or underutilized sites, including through floating barge installations to reduce near-term congestion in the Harbor.
1.8	<i>... dated channel delineations...</i>	Continue to work with United States Coast Guard (USCG) to evaluate effectiveness of existing buoys and need for additional navigational buoys .

Item	Feedback from Key Stakeholders	Economic Development Recommendations
Potential economic development recommendations to capitalize upon identified Harbor opportunities...		
1.9	<i>... ample offshore federal lease areas for clean energy projects nearby in Massachusetts and Rhode Island...</i>	Continue to position the Port as a central point to serve future offshore construction and marine transportation needs for future offshore wind projects, heavy project cargos, and break-bulk shipping.
1.10	<i>... potential to support maintenance and repair of Vineyard Wind 1 project (and other East Coast projects with turbine installations completed)..</i>	Position port and its terminals for long-term maintenance repair operations by focusing on the storage and technical expertise associated with the operation and servicing of wind turbines.
1.11	<i>... utilization of rail to move refrigerated containers of seafood in/out of Port of New Bedford for processing...</i>	Advocate for state/federal funding for the maintenance and improvement of existing rail infrastructure north of the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge. Advocate for state investment in an updated intermodal study to identify opportunities to utilize/activate freight rail infrastructure to the Port of New Bedford.
Potential economic development recommendations to address identified Harbor threats...		
1.12	<i>... hurricane barrier limits size of vessel that can enter harbor... growing size of transport vessels for marine construction equipment including replacement turbines...</i>	Develop a navigational improvements project that incorporates remote sensing technology and installation of other measures (rollers, guide walls, etc.) at the Hurricane Protection Barrier opening to aid navigation of large vessel traffic through the barrier.
1.13	<i>... few vacant properties in DPA for business expansion... high land acquisitions costs... encroachment of residential and commercial development around DPA...</i>	Initiate a DPA boundary review through CZM to better align DPA with current and anticipated land use patterns while maintaining overall existing ~597-acre DPA area. Areas of focus to include: a. MacArthur Drive land-locked DPA parcels; b. Non-DPA parcels between North Terminal and I-195 in New Bedford; and c. Non-DPA parcels encompassing Linberg Marine in Fairhaven.

Item	Feedback from Key Stakeholders	Economic Development Recommendations
1.14	<i>... slip congestion for fishing fleet... limited season... currently only 1 permit allowed per vessel which is leading to underutilization of fishing fleet</i>	Develop protocols and enforcement mechanisms to improve space management and berthing optimization through the removal of derelict, non-paying, or non-fishing vessels from NBPA managed piers. If a change to the federal permit requirements for scallop boats is approved, ensure that binding and enforceable methods are established to ensure that all boats without permits are permanently removed from NBPA wharves and piers and berthing fees are reviewed and updated to capture multi-permitted vessels.
1.15	<i>... multiple stakeholders competing in limited and uncertain clean energy market...</i>	Support the use of under-utilized facilities for staging construction materials and other large non-perishable cargo that can be moved in/out of Port of New Bedford by barge.
1.16	<i>...restrictive commercial fisheries regulations...</i>	Advocate for expanded National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and other federal agency staff presence by relocating and centralizing NOAA administrative and research operations in New Bedford to better align regulatory decision-making and promote collaborative discussions with the commercial fishing industry.
1.17	<i>...balance the operational needs of the port, closure of the Hurricane Barrier, and resiliency considerations for low-lying areas...</i>	Encourage municipalities to require new construction or significant renovation projects within the Hurricane Barrier to design to a minimum elevation of 6.0 feet NAVD88 where feasible to promote resilience to sea level rise and enable raising the Hurricane Barrier closure threshold in the future. Pursue funding and financing to support implementation of projects that address low-lying areas prone to flooding within the Hurricane Barrier and enable raising the Hurricane Barrier closure threshold in the future. Prioritize projects that have the greatest community and economic benefit. Continue to meet with the USACE to discuss the Hurricane Barrier closure threshold and potential future modifications.

Table 5-3: Economic Development Recommendations Associated with 2026 MHP Objective #2: *Support expanding maritime industrial uses and other waterfront development opportunities, including emerging ocean technologies and redevelopment of the State Pier and remediated sites along the Acushnet River.*

Item	Feedback from Key Stakeholders	Proposed Economic Development Recommendations
2.1	<i>... expansion of bunkering/green energy opportunities along waterfront... potential to attract home ported service vessel... need for cold ironing/shore power.....</i>	Support waterfront clean energy projects that facilitate electrical grid interconnections and the installation of charging infrastructure to serve emerging vessel technologies and strengthen the transmission of clean energy through the existing electrical grid. Continue to install shore power services on wharves and piers and develop a grant-supported program for fishing vessel conversions to increase uptake in available shore power by fishing vessels while in port.
2.2	<i>... ongoing EPA Clean Up issuance of Explanation of Significant Differences ESD-7 document generated concerns related to proposed locations of sediment caps and potential for future navigational and use restrictions in Acushnet River... as well as details of the long-term management and monitoring program to be conducted by MassDEP</i>	Continue to advocate for a cleanup outcome that supports redevelopment of New Bedford's Acushnet River waterfront in a manner that is not prohibitive of a wide range of land uses, public amenities and coastal infrastructure or leads to additional costs due to legacy environmental contaminant cleanup/disposal. As EPA considers ongoing and future environmental cleanup program activities, no additional burdens should be placed on the redevelopment of waterfront parcels and use of the waterway that could limit the ability to deliver a successful outcome along the Acushnet River for the community and port area businesses.
2.3	<i>State Pier South Wharf bulkhead requires significant repair... no funding source has been identified for these repairs at this time.</i>	Advocate for urgent repair or replacement of State Pier south and east wharfs , which are critical to water transportation operators, marine cargo, commercial fishing vessel berthing and other key users at the State Pier.
2.4	<i>... lack of commercial vessel berthing space...</i>	Evaluate opportunity for projects to expand or extend Homer's Wharf and Steamship Pier to provide additional vessel berthing space for maritime industrial uses. As needed, identify compensatory flood storage locations around the Harbor to facilitate this work.
2.5	<i>... need for additional opportunities to expand marine technology and innovation near the port...</i>	Identify opportunities for development of underutilized properties in the vicinity of North Terminal as potential locations for marine technology, innovation, and related makerspace and fabrication facilities .

Item	Feedback from Key Stakeholders	Proposed Economic Development Recommendations
2.6	<i>...compensatory flood storage may be needed to offset fill associated with waterfront development...</i>	Encourage the USACE New England District to initiate an update of the 1987 Hydrology of Floods New Bedford Harbor Massachusetts study.

Table 5-4: Economic Development Recommendations Associated with 2026 MHP Objective #3: *Expand tourism, cultural activities, and recreation, including increased waterfront public access and harbor activation and water transportation, expanded cruise ship dockings, preservation of historic assets, and expansion of recreational rowing/boating.*

Item	Feedback from Key Stakeholders	Proposed Economic Development Recommendations
Subject Matter: Tourism and Public Access in/around the Harbor.		
3.1	<i>Study of the State Pier indicates that near-term initiative could include the addition of retail/restaurant uses at the landward edge of the State Pier adjacent to Route 18/Union Street intersection.</i>	Work with MassDevelopment to continue advancing development of the identified commercial uses and enhanced connections to downtown New Bedford along the western edge of the State Pier property.
3.2	<i>Cruise ship visits to the Harbor promote vibrant tourism scene and support the local economy... over the last few years, cruise ship visits by American Cruise Lines (ACL) have increased significantly to nearly 60 planned visits per year.... Local institutions including NB Fishing Heritage Center have supported these visits by boarding the vessels and providing local context to visitors onboard when they arrive in the Harbor.</i>	Encourage ACL cruise ship visits to the Port of New Bedford and explore opportunities for additional cruise companies (including Pearl Seas and Ponant Cruises) that run Northeast/Canada itineraries to consider stopping in the Harbor in the future. To create capacity for additional cruise ship visits, identify underutilized sites with recently constructed bulkheads for dockage of additional vessels.
3.3	<i>Summary of Stakeholder Feedback – Many local residents and visitors have never visited publicly accessible areas of the waterfront such as the Hurricane Barrier. Other stakeholders have identified a need to increase the availability of waterfront public access along the Acushnet River.</i>	Expand multilingual wayfinding signage to spread awareness of and improve access to waterfront destinations around the Harbor. Continue advancing implementation of the New Bedford RiverWalk project to create connections to adjacent neighborhoods that provide equitable access for all residents to enjoy the Acushnet River waterfront. Incorporate environmental features with public health benefits including wetland restorations, green stormwater infrastructure, and expansion in tree canopy.

Item	Feedback from Key Stakeholders	Proposed Economic Development Recommendations
Subject Matter: Recreational Boating in the Harbor		
3.4	<i>Economic Market Trends Feedback from Martin Associates' stakeholder interviews "a strength of the Harbor is ship repair/construction... attracts vessels from other ports, history of maritime trades to support recreational maritime activities ..."</i>	Consider supporting deauthorization of portions of the existing 15-ft Federal Navigation Channel along the Fairhaven waterfront to allow for additional recreational dockage at Fairhaven Shipyard South Yard (50 Fort Street, Fairhaven), including slips for larger recreational vessels. Following any deauthorization of the existing channel, seek to amend the Harbor Line along the Fairhaven waterfront to reflect these modifications.
3.5	<i>Summary of Stakeholder Feedback – "lack of transient slips for recreational boaters visiting Harbor on day trips", "lack of amenities and investment at Popes Island Marina facilities to attract luxury vessel dockage and transient vessel trips"</i>	Work with DCR to have the agency invest in replacement and potential expansion of its floats and docks at Popes Island Marina (102 Popes Island, New Bedford), then execute a long-term operating agreement with the NBPA to ensure a safe and functional marina and to capitalize on growing interest in recreational/transient boating in the Harbor, including preservation and potential expansion of transient slips. Identify alternative locations for new transient boat slips and consider improvements to existing boat ramps to enhance recreational boating and tourism in the Harbor.
3.6	<i>Summary of Stakeholder Feedback – significant increase in the number of recreational boaters/rowers, including clubs that support involvement by novice and youth boaters/rowers, in the Harbor.</i>	Review current public safety response/deployment approaches in the Northern Harbor in anticipation of increased public use of the watersheet.

3.7	<i>Summary of Stakeholder Feedback – water quality concerns limit boaters/rowers and residents enjoyment/use of the Harbor, uncertainty of the safety of water for recreational use due to legacy contaminants, bilge pump-outs, nutrient loading, and Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs). Litter in the Harbor is a persistent issue that should also be addressed.</i>	Continue to update and implement the City of New Bedford’s Long Term CSO Control and Integrated Capital Improvements Plan, which outlines projects from 2017 through 2036 and is subject to an Administrative Order from EPA to address Clean Water Act obligations in New Bedford. Since the 1990s, the City of New Bedford has invested approximately a half-billion dollars (2025 dollars) in addressing this legacy wastewater discharge infrastructure throughout the Harbor. Consider investments in increased water quality testing in shellfish growing areas to limit closures. Advocate for the testing to be conducted at local state-run lab. Continue to collaborate with the Division of Marine Fisheries on the status of federal and state regulations for shellfish harvesting, which govern the closure of shellfish beds. Continue to advocate for site-specific updates to the Commonwealth’s water quality parameters and timely and transparent reporting to the public. Complete the \$70M upgrade of the Fairhaven Wastewater Treatment Plant to enhance nitrogen removal from wastewater in compliance with federal NPDES discharge requirements. Advocate for continued financial assistance through the existing Sewer Overflow program of the SRF and other state and federal grant programs. Develop a public-private partnership to evaluate locations and funding sources for a commercial fishing vessel bilge pump-out facility to improve water quality in the Harbor. Advocate for MassDEP to reinstitute the “Clean Bilge” program until such a facility is available. Continue to collaborate with the adjacent Dartmouth and Acushnet communities to advance water quality improvements through a combination of adaptive management strategies and point/non-point source discharge improvements. Work with waterfront businesses, nonprofit partners, and other stakeholders to identify significant sources of litter in the Harbor. Provide public education and develop strategies to prevent illegal dumping, hold seasonal litter cleanups, and place additional waste receptacles in active areas along the waterfront.
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Item	Feedback from Key Stakeholders	Proposed Economic Development Recommendations
Subject Matter: Water Transportation in the Harbor		
3.8	<i>Economic Market Trends Feedback from Martin Associates' stakeholder interviews "a strength of the Harbor is ship repair/construction..."</i>	Consider supporting deauthorization of portions of the existing 15-ft Federal Navigation Channel along the Fairhaven waterfront to allow for expansion of the Steamship Authority Vessel Repair Facility to support regional water transportation. Following any deauthorization of the existing channel, seek to amend the Harbor Line along the Fairhaven waterfront to reflect these modifications.
3.9	<i>State Pier North Wharf bulkhead requires significant repair, which will require the temporary relocation of the pier of existing water transportation operators and other businesses/users on the State Pier.</i>	Work with MassDevelopment to limit impacts to water transportation operators and other users/businesses on the State Pier while crucial repairs are made to the North Wharf bulkhead.
3.10	<i>Summary of Stakeholder Feedback – Harbor launch services are a popular travel option and expanded service is desired.</i>	Pursue funding for an additional Harbor launch to support movement of residents, visitors, and recreational boaters between mooring fields and waterfront destinations.

5.5 REGULATORY RECOMMENDATIONS

The regulatory recommendations of the 2026 MHP were shaped through meetings with state agencies, municipal officials, key stakeholders, and the public. The section below presents two Planning Area-wide substitutions to Chapter 91 regulations to allow some flexibility to the establishment of the Water Dependent Use Zone (WDUZ) and the public pedestrian walkway network. Specific to the Acushnet River Focus Area, there is also one amplification of the Chapter 91 regulations to support New Bedford's vision for a RiverWalk along the Acushnet River and four substitutions to Chapter 91 regulations associated with building height, Facilities of Public Accommodation (FPA), and lot coverage.

Note that the consistency of the regulatory recommendations presented in this section with CZM Program Policies, state tidelands policy objectives, and standards for amplifications and substitutions are addressed in Chapter 9, Regulatory Compliance.

Harbor-wide Regulatory Recommendations

Based upon the size and range of land use within the overall Planning Area, two harbor-wide recommendations are proposed in the 2026 MHP. One is a proposed substitution to 310 CMR 9.51(3)(c) that would allow flexibility in the implementation of the WDUZ if the use of this substitution does not result in a loss of overall WDUZ area on a property. This substitution is in use in many harbors around the Commonwealth to promote efficient land use patterns and support a diverse mix of users on complex parcels. See Table 5-5: Chapter 91 Substitutions and Offsetting Measures Recommendations for more detail on this substitution.

The other proposed Planning Area-wide substitution allows for a reduction in the width of public pedestrian walkways required under to 310 CMR 9.52(1)(b). The minimum walkway width allowed under this substitution would be eight feet and is only available in the narrow circumstances where existing physical restrictions are present. For example, along significant stretches of the waterfront, recently established wetlands may be closely proximate to historic structures and could pose challenges to meeting the base Chapter 91 standards' 10-foot minimum walkway width without resulting in undesirable resource area impacts. In no case may this substitution be used in circumstances where physical restrictions are created by new construction. The substitution is appropriately offset by requiring an expansion in walkway width elsewhere in the WDUZ at a ratio of two square feet in expanded walkway area to one square foot in reduced walkway area. This offset improves the usability of the pedestrian access network by creating an overall net increase in walkway area compared to the base Chapter 91 standard.

New Bedford Portion of the Acushnet River Focus Area Regulatory Recommendations

In the New Bedford portion of the Acushnet River Focus Area, significant and costly environmental remediation efforts are restoring filled and flowed tidelands, including establishing living shorelines and enhanced public access and open space to support the public's use and enjoyment of the waterfront. The City of New Bedford continues to advocate for a cleanup outcome that supports redevelopment of the Focus Area in a manner that is not prohibitive of a wide range of land uses, public amenities and coastal infrastructure or leads to additional costs due to legacy environmental contaminant cleanup/disposal. As EPA considers ongoing and future environmental cleanup program activities, no additional burdens should be placed on the redevelopment of waterfront parcels and use of the waterway that could limit the ability to deliver a successful outcome along the Acushnet River for the community and area businesses.

The regulatory recommendations of the 2026 MHP that apply to the New Bedford portion of the Acushnet River Focus Area support the future redevelopment of this remediated waterfront by incentivizing development activities that create vibrant mixed-use development, promote continuous public access along the riverfront, and activate the Acushnet River for recreational boating use. See Figure 5-7: Applicability of Acushnet River Focus Area Regulatory Recommendations.

The Chapter 91 substitutions for the Focus Area include reasonable measures to encourage economically viable redevelopment of these remediated waterfront sites and create practical built environment outcomes complementary to the RiverWalk and related public amenities. These regulatory provisions will also enable building massing consistent with the existing historical mill buildings along the northern stretch of the Acushnet River as well as the City of New Bedford's River District zoning initiative. The full text of the substitutions and offsets applicable to the Acushnet River Focus Area are provided in Table 5-5, Chapter 91 Substitution and Offsetting Measure Recommendations, and are reviewed with respect to the City of New Bedford's goals for the area below.

Lot Coverage:

One of the recommendations of the 2026 MHP is for a substitution to allow for additional lot coverage within Chapter 91 jurisdiction, beyond the 50% limit established under the base Chapter 91 standard at 310 CM 9.51(3)(d). The 2026 MHP allows for an additional 10% of lot coverage within Chapter 91 jurisdiction (up to 60% total) for the following reasons:

1. Key waterfront parcels such as 0 Sawyer Street (EPA Facility) have undergone significant investment in recent years to remediate historical soil and groundwater impacts. These sites continue to have Activity and Use Limitations and other restrictions that increase development costs and limit design configurations;
2. There is a deficiency of waterfront public amenities in the Acushnet River Focus Area, while an important goal of the City of New Bedford is to better connect residents and visitors to the waterfront; and

3. There is increased public demand for watershed activation in the form of kayaking, rowing, and other forms of recreational boating that require shoreline facilities to operate.

The 1:5 ratio of offset to expanded lot coverage was determined based on the City of New Bedford's preference for investment in a high-quality amenities with costlier marine structural components to activate the Acushnet River watershed. As an example, a 10,000-sf reduction in open space would require an offsetting pile-supported pier comparable in area to the wooden boardwalk/pier at the National Lightship Sailor's Memorial park adjacent to New Bedford State Pier (approximately 2,000 sf).

These amenities would replace less desirable areas that currently qualify as open space under the base Chapter 91 standards (e.g., parking areas or lawn) and provide significantly greater value to the public through enhanced activation of the waterfront. In aggregate total, there are approximately 30 acres of filled tidelands in the Acushnet River Focus Area, and this substitution would result in a maximum of three additional acres of allowable lot coverage across all properties.

Building Height:

The 2026 MHP also proposes a substitution to the standard at 310 CMR 9.51(3)(e), governing the maximum heights of buildings within Chapter 91 jurisdiction. Rather than the base requirement that prescribes stepped back building heights based on proximity to the shoreline, the substitution will allow for buildings to be constructed to a uniform height of up to 80 feet while also resulting in reduced overall building volume. This substitution will promote building massing on waterfront sites similar to the existing mill buildings in the Acushnet River Focus Area and will be consistent with the City of New Bedford's River District zoning initiative. Any applicant for a Chapter 91 license that uses this substitution measure will be required to demonstrate that in general, new or expanded buildings for nonwater-dependent use will be relatively modest in size, in order that wind, shadow, and other conditions of the ground level environment will be conducive to water-dependent activity and public access associated therewith. Additional offsetting measures may be required and prescribed during Chapter 91 licensing.

Facilities of Public Accommodation:

The 2026 MHP also proposes two substitutions related to Facilities of Public Accommodation (FPAs) and Facilities of Private Tenancy (FPTs). The base standard at 310 CMR 9.51(3)(b) relates to private tidelands and requires that FPAs be located on any pile-supported structures on flowed tidelands and at the ground level of any filled tidelands within 100 feet of a project shoreline. The base standard at 310 CMR 9.53(2)(b) relates to Commonwealth tidelands and, among other conditions, requires provision of FPA space at least equal in area to the square footage of filled Commonwealth tidelands on project sites within the footprint of buildings containing FPTs.

The proposed substitutions reduce the required FPA space under each of these standards to 25% of the building footprints within 100 feet of the shoreline and on filled Commonwealth Tidelands, respectively, which is offset through provision of a freestanding water-dependent or water-dependent accessory use structure(s) devoted to public amenities.

The need for these substitutions was determined based on the location of the Acushnet River Focus Area, which is disconnected from New Bedford's downtown and receives significantly less foot traffic from residents and visitors. Prior redevelopment projects in this area have struggled to generate sufficient visitation to justify a significant set-aside of retail or interior community spaces. Additionally, sites across the Focus Area are subject to Activity and Use Limitations and other development restrictions that increase cost of redevelopment and pose challenges for beneficial reuse under traditional real estate investment practices. The decrease in the overall supply of FPA space created by this substitution is intended to reduce the likelihood of retail vacancies and other underutilized space and instead support alternative community benefits such as expanded housing opportunities, consistent with New Bedford's goals for the Acushnet River Focus Area. The offsetting measure will encourage creation of high-quality public amenities to enhance the pedestrian experience of the future RiverWalk and support recreational use of the watersheet.

The 1:5 ratio of offset to reduced FPA space was determined because the FPAs in freestanding buildings will be more beneficial by creating customizable space that can directly respond to the design and programming needs of water-dependent users and mitigate potential conflicts with FPT users. For example, uses like a rowing or boating club are not typically compatible with the spatial constraints, hours of operation, and location of largescale multiuse buildings, while siting of such uses in purpose-built independent structures could better meet the needs of the public.

Amplification:

In addition to the substitutions described above, the 2026 MHP proposes an amplification to the public pedestrian access network standard at 310 CMR 9.32(1)(b) that establishes design standards for the New Bedford RiverWalk, a City of New Bedford project to expand public access along the City's Acushnet River Focus Area waterfront by reopening the remediated shoreline to recreational use. See Table 5-6: Chapter 91 Amplification Recommendation for more detail on this amplification. An exhibit highlighting the City of New Bedford's vision for the RiverWalk is included in Figure 5-4, Proposed RiverWalk Alignment.

Note: All Chapter 91 base standards, substitutions and offsets, and amplifications apply only within Chapter 91 jurisdictional areas. Project site (which may include more than one parcel or property), project shoreline, and other phases contained in the Tables 5-5 and 5-6 below are terms defined at 310 CMR 9.02 and are used with respect to these definitions, as applicable.

Table 5-5: Chapter 91 Substitution and Offsetting Measure Recommendations

Regulatory Provision	Chapter 91 Standard	Proposed Substitution	Proposed Offsetting Measure
310 CMR 9.51(3)(c): Conservation of Capacity of Water- dependent Use, Water-Dependent Use Zone (WDUZ)	<i>New or expanded buildings for nonwater-dependent use, and parking facilities at or above grade for any use, shall not be located within a water-dependent use zone; except as provided below, the width of said zone shall be determined as follows:</i> <i>1. along portions of a project shoreline other than the edges of piers and wharves, the zone extends for the lesser of 100 feet or 25% of the weighted average distance from the present high-water mark to the landward lot line of the property, but no less than 25 feet; and</i> <i>2. along the ends of piers and wharves, the zone extends for the lesser of 100 feet or 25% of the distance from the edges in question to the base of the pier or wharf, but no less than 25 feet; and</i> <i>3. along all sides of piers and wharves, the zone extends for the lesser of 50 feet or 15% of the distance from the edges in question to the edges immediately opposite, but no less than ten feet.</i>	Applicable Planning Area-wide: The required WDUZ dimensions may be modified as long as a minimum width of 25 feet is maintained along the project shoreline and the ends of piers and wharves, and a minimum of 10 feet is maintained along the sides of piers and wharves, and as long as the modification results in no net loss of WDUZ area.	This substitution can only be applied to those project sites where it is shown that application of the Chapter 91 standard would result in an inefficient siting of uses in the WDUZ, and where the reconfiguration of the WDUZ achieves greater effectiveness in the use of the water's edge for water-dependent industrial and other water-dependent use. The reconfigured zone must be adjacent to the waterfront. In no case will a reconfigured WDUZ that results in an area separated from the waterfront or in a net loss of WDUZ be allowed.

Regulatory Provision	Chapter 91 Standard	Proposed Substitution	Proposed Offsetting Measure
310 CM 9.51(3)(d): Conservation of Capacity for Water- Dependent Use (Lot Coverage)	<i>At least one square foot of the project site at ground level (exclusive of areas lying seaward of a project shoreline) shall be preserved as open space for every square foot of tideland area within the combined footprint of buildings containing nonwater-dependent use on the project site</i>	Applicable to the portions of the Acushnet River Focus Area within the City of New Bedford (see Figure 5-7): Allow up to 60% lot coverage.	For developments exceeding 50% lot coverage, one of the following open space improvements or public amenities must be provided: • A non-motorized vessel launch and storage area of adequate size and available directly to the transient public on a regular basis, or at which advantages of use are otherwise open on essentially equal terms to the public at large, to offset a total proposed expansion in lot coverage of up to 5,000 square feet; • A publicly accessible floating dock and access area to offset a total proposed expansion in lot coverage of between 5,000 and 10,000 square feet; • A publicly accessible pile-supported pier and access area to offset a total proposed expansion in lot coverage of greater than 10,000 square feet. The offset provided must be no less than one square foot in area for every five square feet of expanded lot coverage. An alternative amenity may be provided instead of the above-described measures if it is determined to be an equal or more effective offset by MassDEP during the licensing process. This amenity must be provided and licensed at the project site. This offsetting measure must be met independently of the offsetting measures for any other substitute provision utilized by the development.

Regulatory Provision	Chapter 91 Standard	Proposed Substitution	Proposed Offsetting Measure
310 CMR 9.51(3)(e): Conservation of Capacity for Water- dependent Use (Building Height)	<i>New or expanded buildings for nonwater-dependent use shall not exceed 55 feet in height if located over the water or within 100 feet landward of the high-water mark; at greater landward distances, the height of such buildings shall not exceed 55 feet plus ½ foot for every additional foot of separation from the high water mark.</i>	Applicable to the portions of the Acushnet River Focus Area within the City of New Bedford (see Figure 5-7): Allow new or expanded buildings for nonwater-dependent use to be built to a uniform building height of 80 feet within the project site.	The maximum height of any proposed structure within the project site is limited to 80 feet and must result in decreased building volume compared to what is allowed under the Chapter 91 standard. In the context of this MHP, building volume is defined as the three-dimensional space enclosed by a building within a project site (i.e., within Chapter 91 jurisdiction), measured in cubic units. Any applicant for a Chapter 91 license that uses this substitution and offsetting measure will be required to demonstrate that in general, new or expanded buildings for nonwater-dependent use will be relatively modest in size, in order that wind, shadow, and other conditions of the ground level environment will be conducive to water-dependent activity and public access associated therewith. As deemed appropriate by the Department, additional offsetting measures may be required and will be prescribed as part of the licensing process.

Regulatory Provision	Chapter 91 Standard	Proposed Substitution	Proposed Offsetting Measure
310 CMR 9.52(1)(b).: Utilization of Shoreline for Water-dependent Purposes (Pedestrian Access Network)	<i>A pedestrian access network of a kind and to a degree that is appropriate for the project site and the facility(ies) provided in 310 CMR 9.52(1)(a); at a minimum, such network shall consist of:</i> <i>1. walkways and related facilities along the entire length of the water-dependent use zone; wherever feasible, such walkways shall be adjacent to the project shoreline and, except as otherwise provided in an Approved Municipal Harbor Plan, shall be no less than ten feet in width; and</i> <i>2. appropriate connecting walkways that allow pedestrians to approach the shoreline walkways from public ways or other public access facilities to which any tidelands on the project site are adjacent. Such pedestrian access network shall be available to the public for use in connection with fishing, fowling, navigation, and any other purposes consistent with the extent of public rights at the project site.</i>	Applicable Planning Area-wide: In locations where existing physical and environmental restrictions are present, the required pedestrian walkway dimensions may be modified to a minimum width of eight feet clear, provided offsetting measures result in an overall net increase in total contiguous walkway area.	This substitution can only be applied to those project sites where it is shown that existing physical and environmental restrictions conflict with the ten-foot minimum walkway width required under the Chapter 91 standards. To offset the loss in pathway area due to reduced width, an expansion in the walkway width must be provided elsewhere on the project site at a ratio of two square feet in expanded walkway area for every one square foot in reduced walkway area. The expansion area must be located with the WDUZ and contiguous with the shoreline pedestrian walkways.

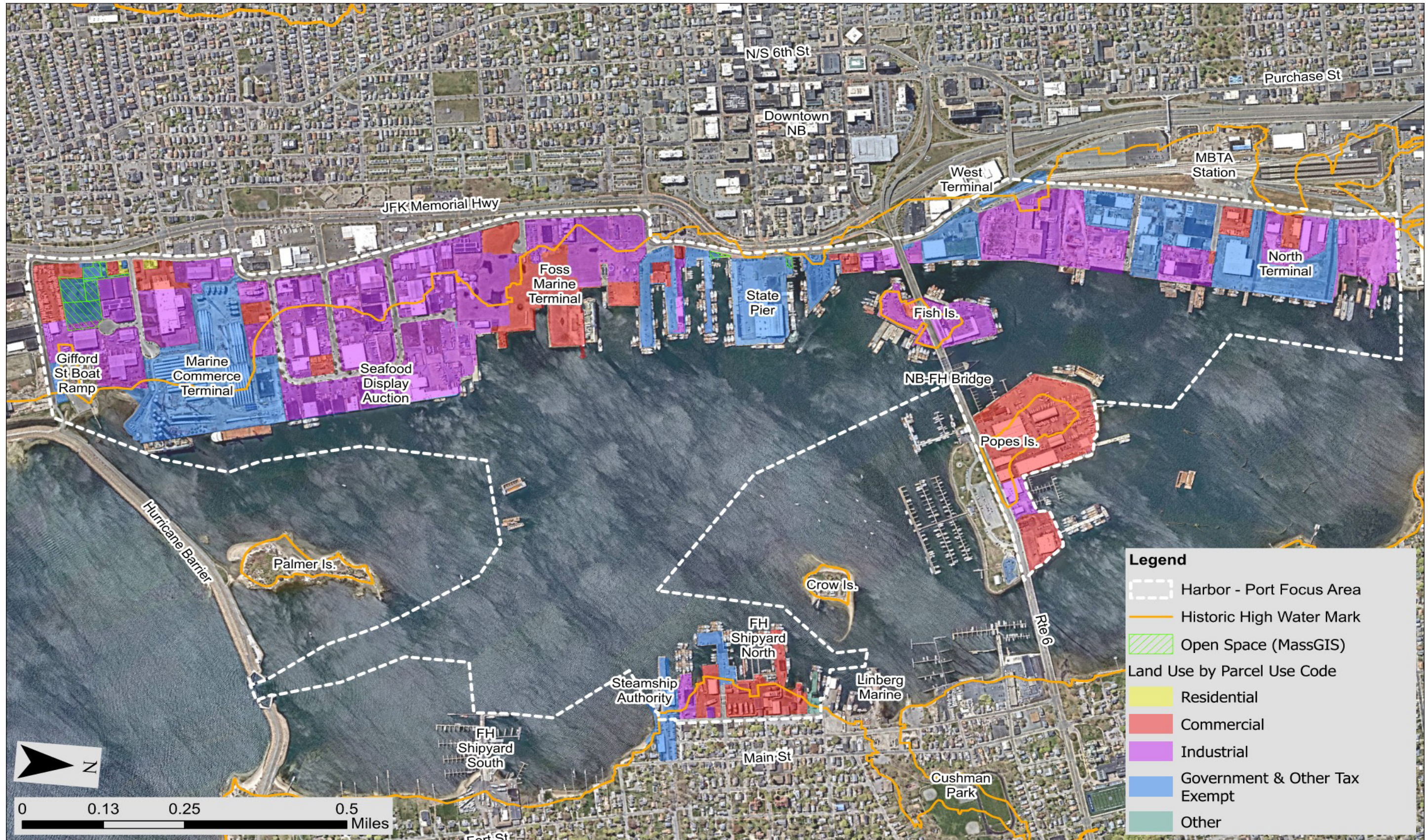
Regulatory Provision	Chapter 91 Standard	Proposed Substitution	Proposed Offsetting Measure
310 CMR 9.51(3)(b): Conservation of Capacity for Water-dependent Use, (Facilities of Public Accommodation)	<i>310 CMR 9.51(3)(b): Facilities of Public Accommodation, but not nonwater-dependent Facilities of Private Tenancy, shall be located on any pile-supported structures on flowed tidelands and at the ground level of any filled tidelands within 100 feet of a project shoreline. The Department may allow any portion of the equivalent area of a Facility of Public Accommodation to be relocated within the building footprint, or in other buildings owned, controlled or proposed for development by the applicant within the Development Site if the Department determines the alternative location would more effectively promote public use and enjoyment of the Project Site.</i>	Applicable to the portions of the Acushnet River Focus Area within the City of New Bedford (see Figure 5-7): Allow Facilities of Private Tenancy (including Upper Floor Accessory Services) on up to 75% of the ground floor of new buildings within 100 feet of the Project Shoreline. The remaining 25% must be devoted to Facilities of Public Accommodation (may not include Upper Floor Accessory Services).	A freestanding structure (e.g., public bathrooms, support structure for community water-based activities, or other approved structure determined during the licensing process in coordination with MassDEP) shall be provided at a ratio of one square foot in area for every five square feet of expanded Facility of Private Tenancy space. This structure must be provided and licensed at the project site. The required area of the offsetting structure shall be calculated based on the total reduction in Facilities of Public Accommodation resulting from the application of substitutions to both 310 CMR 9.51(3)(b) and 310 CMR 9.53(2)(c). A single offsetting structure may satisfy the requirements for both substitutions; however, the required offsetting area shall be based on the aggregate reduction in Facilities of Public Accommodation and shall not be applied more than once to satisfy multiple requirements. The square footage of the offsetting structure shall not generate or be construed to create any additional Facilities of Public Accommodation requirements, as it shall be designed as a water-dependent or water-dependent accessory use structure that serves solely to fulfill the offsetting obligation.

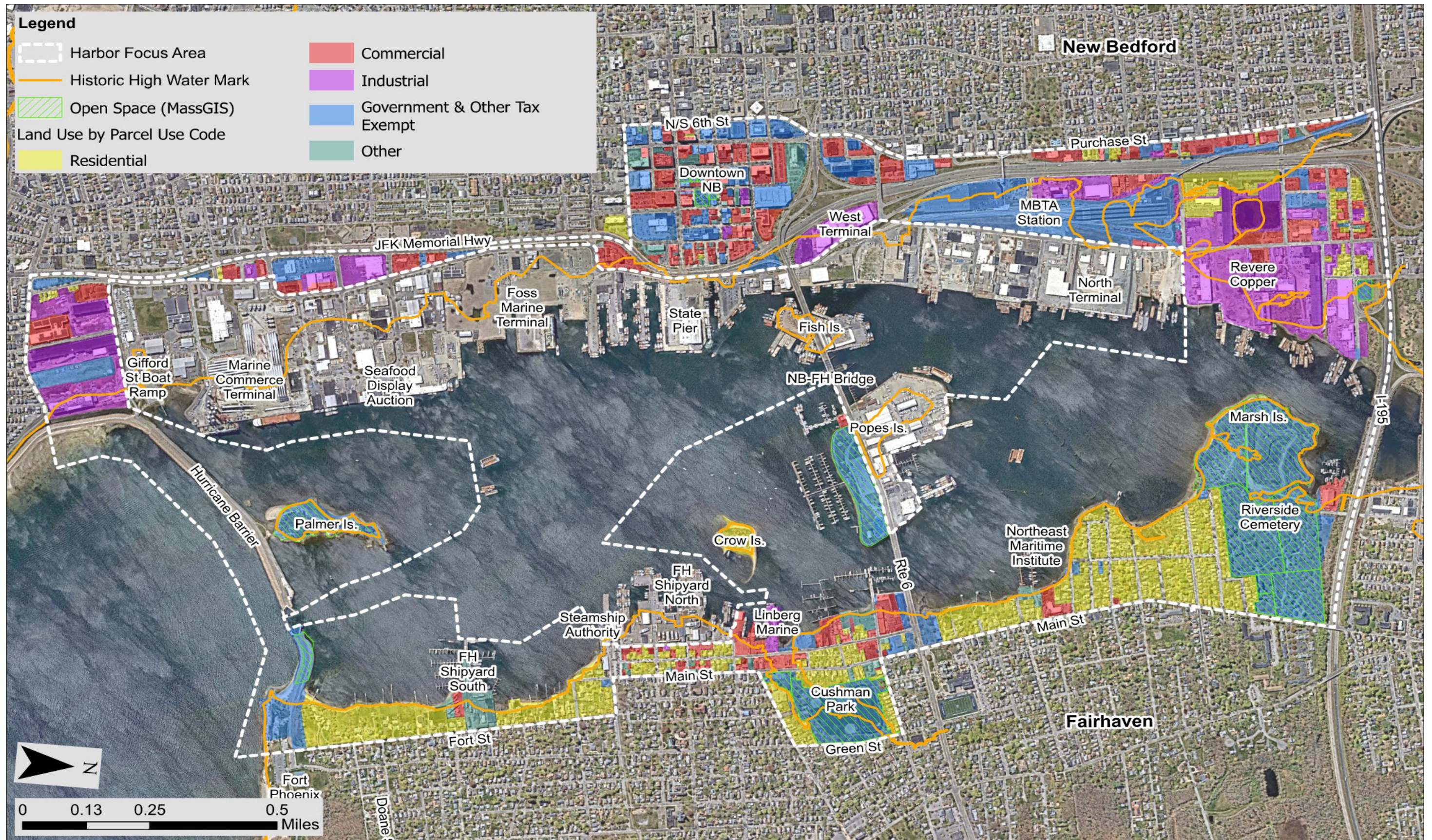
310 CMR 9.53(2)(c): Activation of Commonwealth Tidelands for Public Use (Facilities of Public Accommodation)	<i>310 CMR 9.53(2)(c): The project shall devote interior space to facilities of public accommodation, other than public parking, with special consideration given to facilities that enhance the destination value of the waterfront by serving significant community needs, attracting a broad range of people, or providing innovative amenities for public use; such public interior space shall be located at the ground level of all buildings containing nonwater-dependent facilities of private tenancy, unless the Department determines that an alternative location would more effectively promote public use and enjoyment of the project site or is appropriate to make ground level space available for water-dependent use or upper floor accessory services; the extent of such interior space shall be determined in accordance with 310 CMR 9.53(2)(c)1. through 2. 1. such space shall be at least equal in amount to the square footage of all Commonwealth tidelands on the project site within the footprint of buildings</i>	Applicable to the portions of the Acushnet River Focus Area within the City of New Bedford (see Figure 5-7): Allow facilities of private tenancy (including Upper Floor Accessory Services) on up to 75% of the ground floor of new buildings on filled Commonwealth tidelands. The remaining 25% must be devoted to Facilities of Public Accommodation (may not include Upper Floor Accessory Services).	A freestanding structure (e.g., public bathrooms, support structure for community water-based activities, or other approved structure determined during the licensing process in coordination with MassDEP) shall be provided at a ratio of one square foot in area for every five square feet of expanded Facility of Private Tenancy space. This structure must be provided and licensed at the project site. The required area of the offsetting structure shall be calculated based on the total reduction in Facilities of Public Accommodation resulting from the application of substitutions to both 310 CMR 9.51(3)(b) and 310 CMR 9.53(2)(c). A single offsetting structure may satisfy the requirements for both substitutions; however, the required offsetting area shall be based on the aggregate reduction in Facilities of Public Accommodation and shall not be applied more than once to satisfy multiple requirements. The square footage of the offsetting structure shall not generate or be construed to create any additional Facilities of Public Accommodation requirements, as it shall be designed as a water-dependent or water-dependent accessory use structure that serves solely to fulfill the offsetting obligation. The Department shall evaluate whether proposed programming/use of the freestanding structure will serve specific community needs, attract a broad range of people, or provide innovative amenities for public use per the
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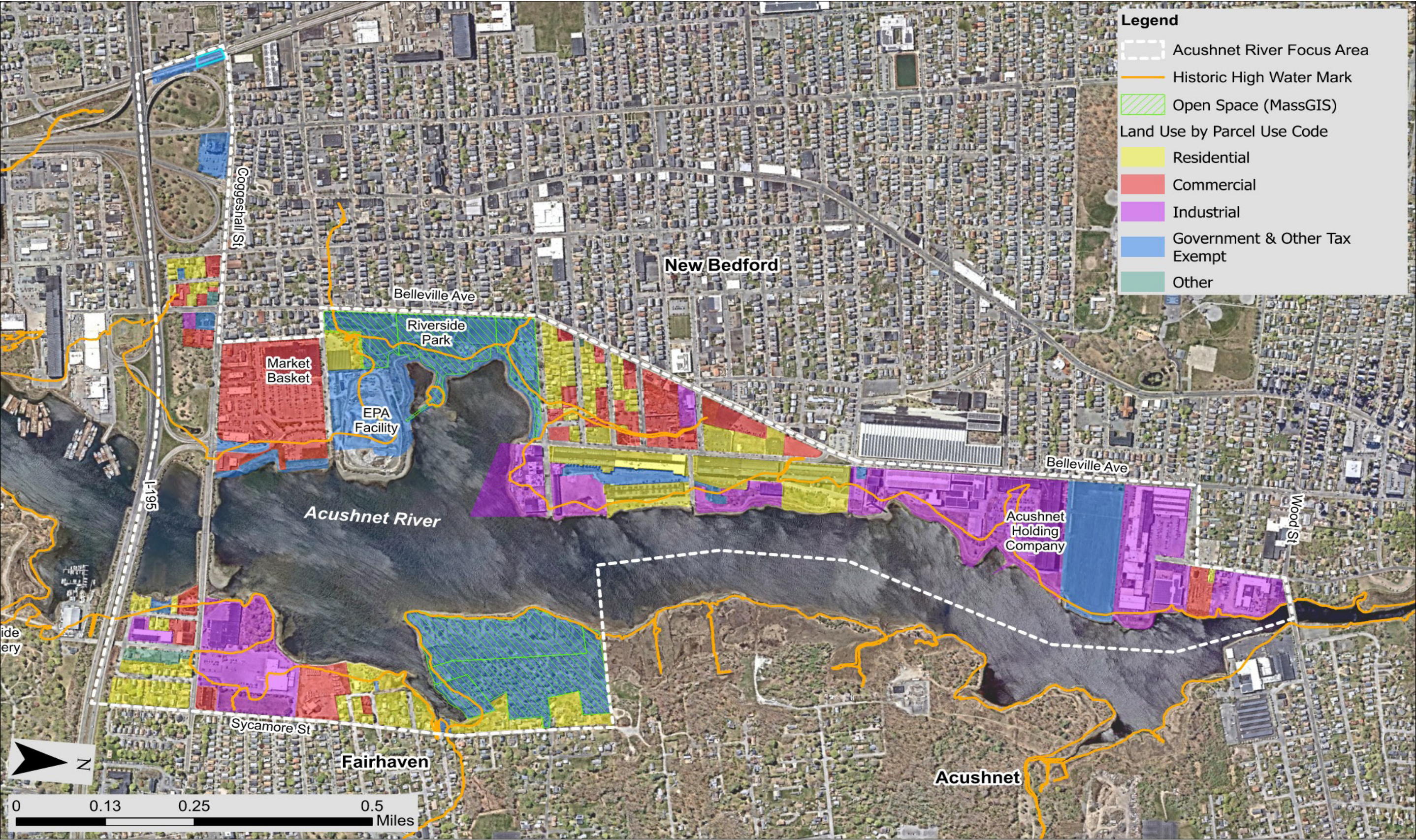
Regulatory Provision	Chapter 91 Standard	Proposed Substitution	Proposed Offsetting Measure
	<i>containing nonwater-dependent facilities of private tenancy; 2. as provided in 310 CMR 9.34(2)(b)1., the Department shall waive the requirements of 310 CMR 9.34(2)(c)1., if the project conforms to an Approved Municipal Harbor Plan which, as determined by the Secretary in the approval of said plan, and by the Department through the adoption of substitute provisions in said plan, specifies alternative requirements for interior facilities of public accommodation that will establish the project site as a year-round locus of public activity in a comparable and highly effective manner...</i>		requirements for Facilities of Public Accommodation at 310 CMR 9.53(2)(c). As deemed appropriate by the Department, additional offsetting measures may be required and will be prescribed as part of the licensing process.

Table 5-6: Chapter 91 Amplification Recommendation

Regulatory Provision	Chapter 91 Standard	Proposed Amplification
310 CMR 9.52(1)(b).: Utilization of Shoreline for Water-dependent Purposes (Pedestrian Access network)	<i>A pedestrian access network of a kind and to a degree that is appropriate for the project site and the facility(ies) provided in 310 CMR 9.52(1)(a); at a minimum, such network shall consist of:</i> <i>1. walkways and related facilities along the entire length of the water-dependent use zone; wherever feasible, such walkways shall be adjacent to the project shoreline and, except as otherwise provided in an Approved Municipal Harbor Plan, shall be no less than ten feet in width; and</i> <i>2. appropriate connecting walkways that allow pedestrians to approach the shoreline walkways from public ways or other public access facilities to which any tidelands on the project site are adjacent. Such pedestrian access network shall be available to the public for use in connection with fishing, fowling, navigation, and any other purposes consistent with the extent of public rights at the project site.</i>	Applicable to the portions of the Acushnet River Focus Area within the City of New Bedford (see Figure 5-7): For any project that requires a pedestrian access network, MassDEP will consult with the City of New Bedford prior to making a determination of what is appropriate for the project site to confirm whether pedestrian access facilities are designed to be consistent with the City of New Bedford RiverWalk design criteria to the extent practicable, including but not limited to: • 10-foot-wide bituminous concrete path; • ADA-accessible along its entire length; • Minimum path elevation of El. 6.0 feet NAVD88, except where a lower elevation is required to maintain accessibility, tie-in to existing public amenities, or to minimize wetland resource areas impacts; and • Additional public amenities including seating, scenic overlooks, interpretive signage, or other amenities are encouraged.







New Bedford and Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Figure 5-3
Acushnet River Focus Area Land Use Map
Fort Point Associates, Inc., 2025

NEW BEDFORD RIVERWALK MASTER PLAN



Legend

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Proposed Riverwalk Phase 1 |  Public Access Point |
|  Proposed Riverwalk Phase 2 |  Destination |
|  Proposed Future Riverwalk |  Secondary Amenity Area |

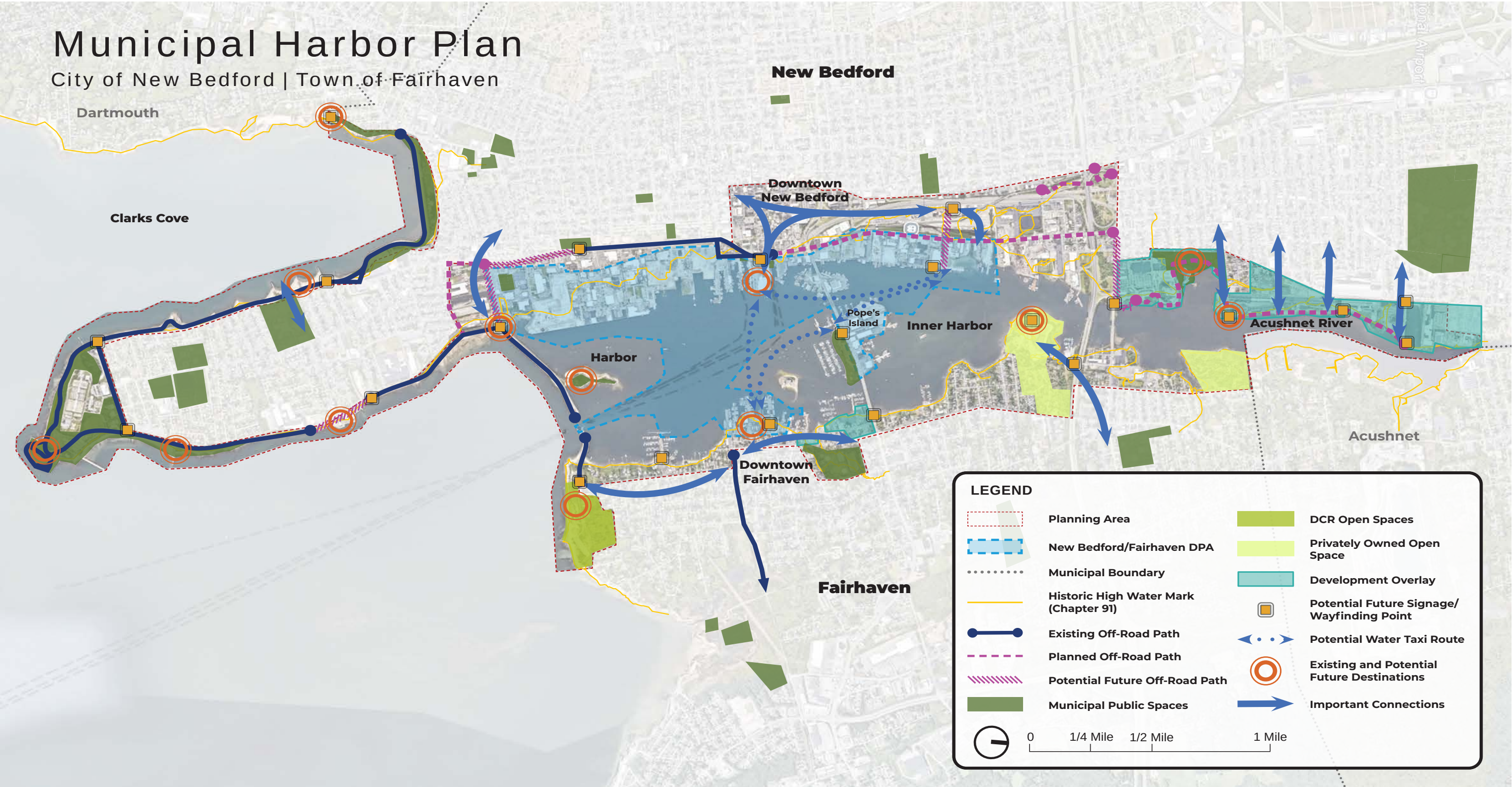
Design Parameters

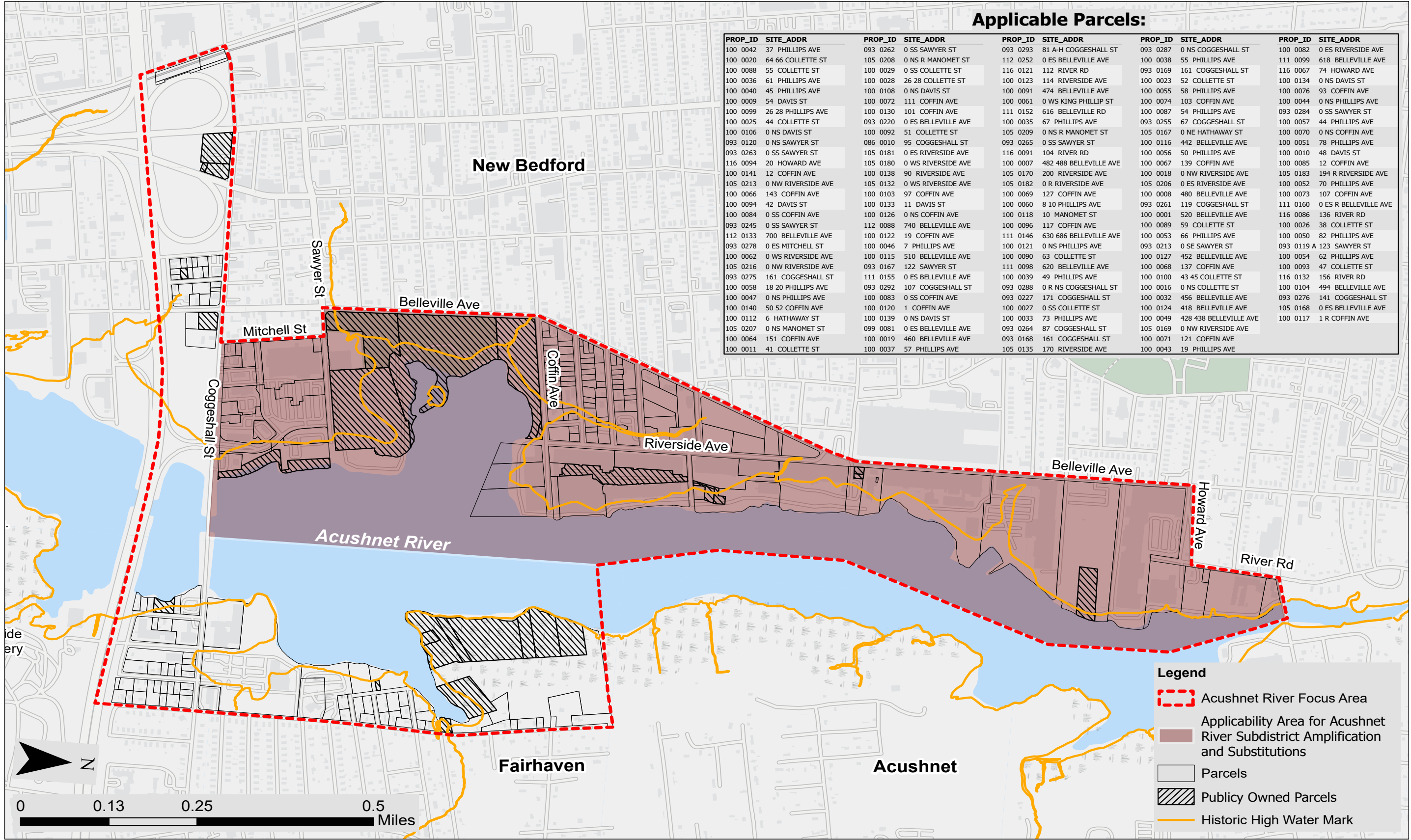
- The RiverWalk will be a 10' wide bituminous concrete path (8' minimum).
- The RiverWalk will be accessible along its entire length.
- The minimum RiverWalk elevation will be 6.0' NAVD88.



New Bedford and Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Figure 5-5
Buzzards Bay Focus Area Land Use Map
Fort Point Associates, Inc., 2025





New Bedford and Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Figure 5-7
Applicability of Acushnet River Focus Area Regulatory Recommendations
Fort Point Associates, Inc., 2026

CHAPTER 6: DPA MASTER PLAN

6.1 OVERVIEW

The 597-acre New Bedford-Fairhaven DPA is the heart of the working port and a major economic engine for the region. With significant marine infrastructure for berthing commercial vessels, seafood processing facilities, support services including shipyards and provisioners, the DPA collectively represents one of the only full-service ports in New England and makes it an attractive locale for traditional maritime sectors such as commercial fishing and newer industries such as offshore energy and blue tech. See Figure 6-1, New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA.

While the Port of New Bedford is often held up as a DPA success story, it is not without its challenges. A shortage of vessel berthing space, aging coastal infrastructure, and insufficient funds to support upgrades are persistent challenges for both publicly and privately owned parcels in the DPA. This chapter addresses the elements of the DPA Master Plan required under 301 CMR 23.05(2)(e), and consistency with those requirements is discussed in Chapter 8. Many of the recommendations discussed in the previous chapter are specific to DPA issues and their benefits to the DPA are further summarized in Section 6.6.

Development of the DPA Master Plan was guided by overarching objectives #1 and #2 for the 2026 MHP, which are:

1. *Develop and sustain the prominent industries of the Harbor, including commercial fisheries, seafood processing, ship repair and fabrication, and terminals to support water transportation, cargo, and offshore construction; and*
2. *Support expanding maritime industrial uses and other waterfront development opportunities, including emerging ocean technologies and redevelopment of the State Pier and remediated sites along the Acushnet River.*

6.2 EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS

The New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA is unique in Massachusetts in terms of the sheer scale and predominance of Water Dependent Industrial Uses (WDIUs) across its extent. Commercial fishing berthing space is complemented by seafood processing facilities, auction houses, and fuel, ice, and fishing equipment provisioning services. Shipyards, including the longstanding Fairhaven Shipyard, provide facilities for maintenance of vessels of all types. Recently constructed marine terminals associated with the clean energy sector have activated long-vacant industrial parcels along the waterfront, facilitating the transfer between ship and shore of largescale cargoes and construction equipment and materials. Water transportation centered on the New Bedford State Pier brings visitors to the Harbor and provides employment opportunities to local residents.

Table 6-1 below presents a summary DPA-related metrics.

Table 6-1: DPA Metrics

Metric	Area
DPA Total Area	597 acres
DPA Total Tidelands	499 acres
DPA Flowed Tidelands	322 acres
DPA Filled Tidelands	177 acres
DPA Uplands	98 acres
DPA Parcel Area (excludes roadways)	240 acres

As required under 301 CMR 23.05(2)(e)1., a parcel-by-parcel accounting of land use was conducted to inform development of the DPA Master Plan and identify the current extent of WDIUs therein. This evaluation is based on parcel area across the entire DPA (both filled tidelands and uplands) and is informed by a review of Chapter 91 licenses, property ownership data, aerial imagery, Google Street View images, and site visits to determine current uses. For the several properties that contain a mix of WDIU and nonwater-dependent uses, the parcel area was allocated between these designations on a 50/50 basis. The results of the land use analysis are presented in Table 6-2 below, and indicate the WDIUs are predominant in the DPA, totaling approximately 209 acres or 87% of total parcel area in the DPA.

Table 6-2: DPA Land Use

Land Use Category	Area	Percent
WDIU	209 acres	87%
Non-WDIU ¹	31 acres	13%
Total	240 acres	100%

¹Includes, commercial/industrial, utility, and open space uses. Non-WDIU commercial/industrial only is approximately 23 acres, or 10% of the total DPA parcel area.

6.3 WATER-DEPENDENT INDUSTRIAL USES

Water-dependent industrial uses, as defined at 310 CMR 9.12(2)(b), are prominent across DPA lands and watershed in New Bedford and Fairhaven; as identified above, such uses occupy approximately 87% of the DPA land area. The vibrant mix of these uses, including but not limited to commercial fishing, seafood processing, offshore construction, ship repair and fabrication, and vessel provisioning services, along with supporting landside and coastal infrastructure, collectively contribute to New Bedford/Fairhaven Harbor's attractive environment for maritime business wherein most typical operational and support needs can be met locally. Further enhancing this unique Harbor characteristic is a top priority of the MHP and DPA Master Plan and is embodied in the Plan's overarching objectives.

As noted in Chapter 4, Economic Market Trends, continuation of the commercial fishing sector in the Harbor can be complemented by growth in the offshore construction market. Capture of these opportunities through reuse of the large waterfront terminals recently constructed to service the offshore wind market is a strong opportunity with multiple benefits, including keeping these facilities operational during potential downtime in offshore wind farm construction projects and providing work opportunities for commercial fishermen during the fishing offseason. While some allowances are made below for licensing of Supporting DPA and Temporary Uses, preservation of the DPA as a center of predominantly maritime industrial economic activity is the City of New Bedford and Town of Fairhaven's principal focus related to the 2026 MHP and DPA Master Plan.

6.4 SUPPORTING DPA USES

Supporting DPA Uses are industrial or commercial uses in a DPA that provide WDIUs in the DPA with direct economic or operational support. In general, such uses are required to be compatible with activities characteristic of a working waterfront and are limited to not more than 25% of filled tidelands on a project site. In the New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA, a common type of Supporting DPA Use is waterfront seafood restaurants, which complement the DPA by providing space wherein the public can safely view maritime activity along the industrial waterfront. The City of New Bedford and Town of Fairhaven support the continuation of existing Supporting DPA Uses and their expansion where appropriate, provided all licensing conditions for Supporting DPA Uses are met. For establishment of such uses in the future, direct economic or operational support related to repairs of aging coastal infrastructure is strongly supported to help address longstanding funding challenges in the New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA. No alternative site coverage ratios are recommended in this DPA Master Plan in order to preserve DPA filled tidelands primarily for WDIUs.

As required under 301 CMR 23.05(2)(e)3., Table 6-3 below presents a list of Supporting DPA Uses allowed (as-of-right or by Special Permit) under the City of New Bedford and Town of Fairhaven zoning ordinances (New Bedford Code of Ordinances, Chapter 9 – Comprehensive Zoning⁴ and Fairhaven Bylaws Part II Chapter 198 - Zoning⁵, respectively). The New Bedford portion of the DPA spans three separate zoning districts – Waterfront Industrial (WI), Industrial B (IB), and Industrial A (IA) – while in Fairhaven it consists solely of the Industrial (I) district. Irrespective of this list, licensing of such uses under Chapter 91 is subject to determination by MassDEP that they are consistent with the definition of Supporting DPA Uses at 310 CMR 9.02 and meet all applicable Chapter 91 standards.

⁴ See Appendix A – Table of Principal Use Regulations at https://library.municode.com/ma/new_bedford/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH9COZO_APXATAPR_USRE

⁵ See §198-16 – Use Regulation Schedule at <https://ecode360.com/10399656#10399673>

Table 6-3: List of Supporting DPA Uses⁶

New Bedford Supporting DPA Uses	Fairhaven Supporting DPA Uses
Commercial: • Convenience Store • Caterer/Wholesale Food Production • Neighborhood Café • Restaurant • Restaurant, Fast-Food or Take Out • Commercial Structured Parking Facility • Commercial Surface Parking Facility	Commercial: • Auto, boat sales, rental service • Printing shop • Restaurant • Retail sales or service • Wholesaling without storage • Wholesaling with storage • Nonaccessory signs • Drive-through window • Museum • Large-scale ground-mounted SPEF • Wind facility – utility scale
Industrial: • Freight Terminal • Heavy Materials Sales and Distribution • Transportation Terminal • Warehouse, Wholesale Trade & Distribution • Warehouse • Biotechnology Facilities • Manufacturing • Manufacturing, Light • Medical Devices Manufacturing • Research, Development or Testing Laboratories and Facilities	Industrial: • Manufacturing, processing, research • Bulk storage • Contractor's yard • Transportation terminal • Warehouses • Radio transmission
Civic and Institutional: • Wireless Communications Facilities • Municipal Facilities • Public Utility Facility • Public Utility Services	Institutional: • Municipal use • Educational uses • Public utility with service area • Public utility without service area • Passenger station • Artist studio/gallery
N/A	Other Principal Uses: • Temporary structures • Historic site reuse

⁶ Irrespective of the list in Table 6-3, licensing of such uses under Chapter 91 is subject to determination by MassDEP that they are consistent with the definition of Supporting DPA Uses at 310 CMR 9.02 and meet all applicable Chapter 91 standards. Consultation with the MassDEP Chapter 91 Program is recommended prior to project planning/development.

6.5 TEMPORARY USES

The DPA Master Plan recognizes the role Temporary Use licensing can play in the New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA. As defined at 310 CMR 9.02, Temporary Uses are “warehousing, trucking, parking, and other industrial and transportation uses which occupy vacant space or facilities in a Designated Port Area, for a maximum term of ten years as specified in 310 CMR 9.15(1)(3), and without significant structural alteration of such space or facilities. Temporary uses may be licensed only if marketing efforts have failed to identify any prospective water-dependent industrial tenant, and if the license is conditioned to require further solicitation of such tenancy upon expiration of the license term.” In many DPAs, Temporary Uses have facilitated productive use of filled tidelands on an interim basis, while also supporting future return of WDIU through license conditions to, for example, maintain coastal infrastructure. In the New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA, the strong demand for waterfront industrial facilities has resulted in a limited presence of Temporary Uses. To the extent Temporary Use licensing is undertaken for properties in the New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA, the City of New Bedford and Town of Fairhaven affirm the requirement to first solicit tenancy from WDIUs, and incorporation of requirements to market this space to WDIUs into license conditions. Applicants considering Temporary Uses in the DPA are encouraged to contact the New Bedford Port Authority to help identify potential WDIUs prior to seeking a Chapter 91 license for such projects. Documentation of adequate and appropriate marketing efforts will be required to accompany any Chapter 91 application for a Temporary Use.

6.6 STRATEGIES & PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE DEVELOPMENT IN THE DPA

This section identifies strategies and principles to guide ongoing promotion of WDIUs by the City of New Bedford and Town of Fairhaven, state agencies including MassDEP and CZM, and the federal government, as required pursuant to 301 CMR 23.05(2)(e)4. The list below outlines guidelines identified in the 2026 MHP for applicants to consider when proposing specific development projects in the DPA. Table 6-4 follows with a discussion of how the 2026 MHP’s economic development recommendations (further presented in Chapter 5) create a benefit to the DPA.

- WDIU projects that include repairs to aging coastal infrastructure and/or expansion of commercial fishing berthing space are strongly encouraged;
- Applicants proposing Supporting DPA Uses are encouraged to consider improvements to aging coastal infrastructure to satisfy the direct economic or operational support requirements for licensing of such uses under Chapter 91;
- Applicants proposing Temporary Uses are encouraged to contact the New Bedford Port Authority to support marketing of this space to WDIUs; and

- Public point access in the DPA is encouraged where such facilities will not preempt or conflict with WDIUs.

Table 6-4: Benefits of the 2026 MHP Recommendations to the DPA

2026 MHP Plan Element	Benefit to DPA
<i>Objective #1 - Develop and sustain the prominent industries of the Harbor, including commercial fisheries, seafood processing, ship repair and fabrication, and terminals to support water transportation, cargo, and offshore construction.</i>	
1.1 Truck Routes - Coordination during I-195 Reconstruction project and overall truck route planning study	Preserves and enhances freight access to maritime industrial properties.
1.2 NB Harbor Line - Study revision of State Harbor Line along NB waterfront	Enables potential waterward expansion of coastal infrastructure to address shortage of berthing space in the Harbor.
1.3 Dredging - USACE Dredged Materials Management Plan	Improves waterside access to maritime industrial properties.
1.4 Bridge Infrastructure – Replacement of New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge Structure	Improves waterside access to maritime industrial properties north of the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge, and creates flexibility for future modifications as conditions may require.
1.5 Funding for Aging Coastal Infrastructure – Increased funding for coastal infrastructure improvements	Captures financial assistance to repair, replace, and improve aging coastal infrastructure for maritime industrial use.
1.6 Permitting for Aging Coastal Infrastructure - Streamlined regulatory process	Shortens permitting timelines and reduces costs for coastal infrastructure improvements.
1.7 Vessel Berthing – Near-term measures to increase berthing space	Provides a short-term intervention to address shortage of vessel berthing space while longer term measures are considered.
1.8 Channel Delineations – Review by USGS	Provides safe and clearly understandable navigational aids for commercial vessels in the Harbor.
1.9 Offshore Clean Energy Projects - Federal Lease Areas	Supports employment opportunities for local residents and maintains recently redeveloped waterfront properties for their intended offshore energy-related use.
1.10 Support of Vineyard Wind I Offshore Facility - Repair and maintenance support services	Supports employment opportunities for local residents and maintains recently redeveloped waterfront properties for their intended offshore energy-related use.
1.11 Existing Rail Infrastructure – Study enhancing use of freight rail	Facilitates connections from the Harbor to the regional freight rail network and supplements existing road-based freight operations.

2026 MHP Plan Element	Benefit to DPA
1.12 Navigation of Hurricane Barrier - Improvements to Barrier opening	Improves navigational safety through the Hurricane Barrier opening and creates flexibility for a broader range of vessel types to enter the Harbor.
1.13 DPA Boundary Review - Initiate CZM review of DPA	Aligns DPA boundaries to incorporate longstanding maritime industrial properties into the DPA while providing nonwater-dependent development opportunities in limited, targeted locations with no direct water access.
1.14 Vessel Management - Mechanisms to remove derelict and inactive boats -	Addresses shortage of commercial fishing vessel berthing space.
1.15 Under-Utilized Parcels - Support cargo uses on large inactive parcels	Creates siting opportunities for potential maritime growth industries.
1.16 Fisheries Regulations – Increased agency presence in port	Facilitates coordination between state and federal resource agencies and the local commercial fishing industry.
1.17 Coastal Resiliency – balance port operations, Barrier closures, resiliency in low-lying areas	Reduces the risk of coastal flooding to DPA properties and creates opportunities to mitigate potential increase in the frequency of Hurricane Barrier closures.
<i>Objective #2 - Support expanding maritime industrial uses and other waterfront development opportunities, including emerging ocean technologies and redevelopment of the State Pier and remediated sites along the Acushnet River.</i>	
2.1 Electrical Power - Support tie-ins to existing grid along NB waterfront	Creates opportunities to leverage clean energy for maritime industry and reduce air quality impacts.
2.2 Harbor Cleanup - Advocate for outcome to support redevelopment	Not applicable – this recommendation centers on portions of the Planning Area outside of the DPA.
2.3 State Pier South and East Wharves – Urgent repair/replacement	Reestablishes displaced uses on an expedited timeframe.
2.4 Commercial Vessel Berthing – Homer’s Wharf project	Addresses shortage of vessel berthing space in the Harbor.
2.5 Marine Technology – Location such as North Terminal for new marine tech	Creates siting opportunities for potential maritime growth industries.
2.6 Compensatory Flood Storage – Update USACE hydrology study	Supports expansion of solid fill coastal infrastructure such as wharfs for vessel berthing.



CHAPTER 7: IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to 301 CMR 23.05(4), the 2026 MHP must, *“include enforceable implementation commitments to ensure that, among other things, all measures will be taken in a timely and coordinated manner to offset the effect of any [Municipal Harbor Plan] requirement less restrictive than that contained in 310 CMR 9.00”*. As such, Chapter 7: Implementation is a comprehensive list of the clear ways that the 2026 MHP will be implemented by local and state partners. Responsibility for implementation of the economic and regulatory recommendations of the 2026 New Bedford/Fairhaven MHP and DPA Master Plan varies depending upon the specific recommendation as listed in Section 7.2, but will generally include the following:

1. Any future changes to local zoning will be reviewed for consistency with the plan to support the 2026 MHP goals of:
 - a. Maintaining and supporting existing water-dependent industrial uses, and encouraging new and expanded uses in suitable locations;
 - i. Water-dependent industrial uses are prioritized in the DPA, whereas the 2026 MHP supports a broader set of residential, commercial, and mixed uses outside of the DPA that facilitate activation of the waterfront for public use.
 - b. Providing clarity in permitting and licensing of commercial and industrial supporting uses to encourage their siting in areas where they will neither alter nor introduce incompatibilities in areas of maritime industrial use and will promote redevelopment of under-utilized parcels; and
 - c. Encouraging and managing the use of DPA land area outside of Chapter 91 jurisdictional land (flowed and filled tidelands) for commercial and industrial development for purposes of expanding the local economy, tax base, and job opportunities.
2. Improvements to public access and development of new public access such as the New Bedford Riverwalk will be required as part of the city’s permitting process. The DEP licensing process will implement standards for improvements to and development of public access in accordance with the regulations at 310 CMR 9.00, and any applicable MHP substitutions and amplifications.
3. Pursuit of grant funding and financing to maintain aging coastal infrastructure within the Harbor.

4. Ensure implementation of MHP recommendations are sequenced to align with priorities of the existing NBPA Maritime Development Plan, the New Bedford Citywide Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Fairhaven Master Plan and other planning documents.
5. Subject to regulations under 310 CMR 9.00; MassDEP Waterways' Chapter 91 licensing process will implement portions of this plan associated with:
 - a. promoting water-dependent industrial uses on tidelands
 - b. modifying the dimensions of the WDUZ, as appropriate
 - c. enforcing offsetting measures relative to the height of structures, lot coverage, and Facilities of Public Accommodation, as appropriate

7.2 IMPLEMENTATION OVERSIGHT & FUNDING APPROACH

Responsibility for implementation of significant portions of the 2026 MHP in New Bedford falls to the NBPA and in Fairhaven to the Planning Department and Harbormaster, as appropriate. Joint projects that involve the City and the Town should be conducted under a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) if shared resources or legal matters are involved that require binding participation. Cooperation between these communities around the Harbor has been a hallmark of the progress that has been made in the Harbor to date, and the 2026 MHP supports continued cooperation needed to realize the implementation of its recommendations going forward.

Table 7-1: Matrix of 2026 MHP Implementation Oversight and Funding Approach details the anticipated primary responsible partner for the recommendations provided in the 2026 MHP.

Table 7-1: Matrix of 2026 MHP Implementation Oversight and Funding Approach

2026 MHP Plan Element	Primary Coordinating Party	Additional Participants/ Stakeholders	Potential Funding Programs & Other Mechanisms
<i>Objective #1 - Develop and sustain the prominent industries of the Harbor, including commercial fisheries, seafood processing, ship repair and fabrication, and terminals to support water transportation, cargo, and offshore construction.</i>			
1.2 Truck Routes - Coordination during I-195 Reconstruction project and overall truck route planning study	NBPA, New Bedford Department of Public Infrastructure (DPI)	MassDOT, SPREDD	USDOT Port Infrastructure Development Program Grant
1.2 NB Harbor Line - Study revision of State Harbor Line along NB waterfront	NBPA	New Bedford Waterfront Property Owners	NBPA funds

2026 MHP Plan Element	Primary Coordinating Party	Additional Participants/ Stakeholders	Potential Funding Programs & Other Mechanisms
1.3 Dredging - USACE Dredged Materials Management Plan	USACE	NBPA, USCG, EPA, MassDEP	United States Army Corps of Engineers federal funds
1.4 Bridge Infrastructure – Replacement of New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge Structure	MassDOT	USDOT, NBPA, New Bedford Planning Department and DPI, Town of Fairhaven	USDOT, MassDOT funds
1.5 Funding for Aging Coastal Infrastructure – Increased funding for coastal infrastructure improvements	Commonwealth of MA, USACE, MassDEP, EPA	NBPA, New Bedford DPI, New Bedford/ Fairhaven Waterfront Property Owners	Seaport Economic Council Grants, USDOT Port Infrastructure Development Program Grant, Additional future opportunities under Mass Ready legislation
1.6 Permitting for Aging Coastal Infrastructure - Streamlined regulatory process	Commonwealth of MA, USACE, MassDEP, EPA	NBPA, New Bedford/Fairhaven Conservation Commissions, New Bedford Department of Environmental Stewardship, New Bedford/ Fairhaven Waterfront Property Owners	Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Federal Agencies funds
1.7 Vessel Berthing – Near-term measures to increase berthing space	NBPA, New Bedford and Fairhaven Harbormasters, New Bedford/ Fairhaven Waterfront Property Owners	Commonwealth of MA, USCG	Seaport Economic Council Grants, USDOT Port Infrastructure Development Program Grant, Additional future opportunities under Mass Ready legislation

2026 MHP Plan Element	Primary Coordinating Party	Additional Participants/ Stakeholders	Potential Funding Programs & Other Mechanisms
1.8 Channel Delineations – Review by USGS	USCG	USACE, New Bedford and Fairhaven Harbormasters	United States Coast Guard federal funds
1.9 Offshore Clean Energy Projects - Federal Lease Areas	US Government Agencies	Commonwealth of MA	Federal agencies funds
1.10 Support of Vineyard Wind I Offshore Facility - Repair and maintenance support services	New Bedford and Fairhaven Waterfront Property Owners	NBPA	Private funds, MassCEC 2030 Fund investments
1.11 Existing Rail Infrastructure – Study enhancing use of freight rail	MassDOT	NBPA, New Bedford DPI, MCRR, New Bedford Waterfront Property Owners	MassDOT Industrial Rail Access Program (IRAP) grants
1.12 Navigation of Hurricane Barrier - Improvements to Barrier opening	USACE	NBPA, USCG	United States Army Corps of Engineers federal funds
1.13 DPA Boundary Review - Initiate CZM review of DPA	MA Office of Coastal Zone Management	NBPA, New Bedford and Fairhaven Planning Departments	CZM state funds
1.14 Vessel Management - Mechanisms to remove derelict and inactive boats -	NBPA	Town of Fairhaven	NBPA funds
1.15 Under-Utilized Parcels - Support cargo uses on large inactive parcels	NBPA	New Bedford Planning Department	Local funds
1.16 Fisheries Regulations – Increased agency presence in port	NOAA and other federal agencies	NBPA	Federal funds
1.17 Coastal Resiliency – balance port operations, Barrier closures, resiliency in low-lying areas	USACE, NBPA, City of New Bedford, Town of Fairhaven	New Bedford and Fairhaven Waterfront Property Owners	Federal, state, and local, and private funds

2026 MHP Plan Element	Primary Coordinating Party	Additional Participants/ Stakeholders	Potential Funding Programs & Other Mechanisms
Objective #2 - Support expanding maritime industrial uses and other waterfront development opportunities, including emerging ocean technologies and redevelopment of the State Pier and remediated sites along the Acushnet River.			
2.1 Electrical Power - Support tie-ins to existing grid along NB waterfront	New Bedford Waterfront Property Owners	NBPA	Private funds, MassCEC 2030 Fund investments, USDOT Port Infrastructure Development Program Grant
2.2 Harbor Cleanup - Advocate for outcome to support redevelopment	New Bedford Department of Environmental Stewardship	New Bedford and Fairhaven Planning Departments	Local funds, state and federal Brownfields grants and tax credits
2.3 State Pier South and East Wharves – Urgent repair/replacement	MassDevelopment, DCR	Commonwealth of MA, NBPA, City of New Bedford	Commonwealth of MA funds
2.4 Commercial Vessel Berthing – Homer’s Wharf project	NBPA	New Bedford and Fairhaven Waterfront Property Owners	USDOT Port Infrastructure Development Program Grant
2.5 Marine Technology – Location such as North Terminal for new marine tech	NBPA	New Bedford and Fairhaven Waterfront Property Owners	MassCEC 2030 Fund investments
2.6 Compensatory Flood Storage – Update USACE hydrology study	USACE	MassDEP, New Bedford/Fairhaven Conservation Commissions, NBPA	Federal funds
Objective #3 - Expand tourism, cultural activities, and recreation including increased waterfront public access, harbor activation, and water transportation, expanded cruise ship dockings, preservation of historic assets, and expansion of recreational rowing and boating.			
3.1 Activate Western Edge of State Pier – Near-Term Plan for Commercial Use	MassDevelopment	New Bedford Planning Department and DPI, Private Sector Commercial Tenant(s)	Commonwealth of MA funds, private funds
3.2 Cruise Ship Visits – Increase Cruise Ship Visits to the Port	NBPA	MassDevelopment	State and local funds, private funds

2026 MHP Plan Element	Primary Coordinating Party	Additional Participants/ Stakeholders	Potential Funding Programs & Other Mechanisms
3.3 Wayfinding Signage - Increase Harbor signage, advance implementation of the New Bedford RiverWalk	City of New Bedford, Town of Fairhaven	NBPA	MA Downtown Initiative (MDI) grants, state and local funds
3.4 Fairhaven Harbor Line - Study revision of State Harbor Line along Fairhaven waterfront	Town of Fairhaven	Fairhaven Waterfront Property Owners	Town of Fairhaven and/or private sector funds
3.5 Transient Slips – Increase slips available for transient use	NBPA	Town of Fairhaven	US Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program, National Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Grant Program
3.6 Northern Harbor Public Safety – Review response/ deployment approaches	New Bedford and Fairhaven Harbormasters	City of New Bedford and Town of Fairhaven Emergency Services Depts	US Department of Homeland Security federal grants
3.7 Water Quality – Enhance Harbor water quality	City of New Bedford, Town of Fairhaven	MassDEP, Town of Acushnet, Town of Dartmouth, Non-Profit Partners	MA State-Revolving Loan Fund (SRF), MA CZM Coastal Pollutant Remediation (CPR) grant program, EPA Southeast New England Program (SNEP) Watershed Implementation Grants, CWA 604b and 319 Grants, Buzzards Bay National Estuaries Program Mini Grants
3.8 Federal Navigation Channel along Fairhaven Waterfront – Support deauthorization of portion of existing channel(s)	Town of Fairhaven	Fairhaven Waterfront Property Owners	Town of Fairhaven and/or private sector funds

2026 MHP Plan Element	Primary Coordinating Party	Additional Participants/ Stakeholders	Potential Funding Programs & Other Mechanisms
3.9 State Pier North Wharf Repairs – Support near-term repair project	MassDevelopment, DCR	Commonwealth of MA	Commonwealth of MA funds
3.10 Harbor Launch – Pursue funding for additional launch	NBPA	Town of Fairhaven	MA Seaport Economic Council

7.3 SUMMARY OF SCHEDULE & SEQUENCING

The recommendations of the 2026 MHP are categorized into near-term (1 to 3 years), mid-term (3 to 5 years), and longer-term (5-10 years) initiatives. The following list highlights the recommendations within each of these implementation periods:

Short-term Plans (2026-2028)

- Work with EPA and MassDEP to implement Phase VI dredging program under the SER and advocate for continued environmental remediation and replacement of aging coastal infrastructure along the waterfront.
- Advocate for urgent comprehensive repair or replacement of State Pier south and east wharfs, which are critical to key users at the State Pier and overall maritime industrial operations in the Harbor.
- Continue to advocate for a Harbor cleanup outcome that supports redevelopment of New Bedford's Acushnet River waterfront in a manner that is not prohibitive of a wide range of land uses, public amenities and coastal infrastructure along the Acushnet River or leads to additional costs due to legacy environmental contaminant cleanup/disposal.
- Near-term activation of the New Bedford State Pier through redevelopment of the land along the western edge with restaurant use and/or other commercial uses.
- Study revision and/or elimination of portions of the State Harbor Line along the New Bedford waterfront to support reasonable expansion of waterside coastal infrastructure while maintaining safe and efficient vessel navigation within the Harbor.
- Build coalitions of multiple stakeholders in pursuit of federal/state low-interest loans and/or grant funding applications for coastal infrastructure that supports multiple properties/industries in accessing capital for privately-owned coastal infrastructure investments.
- Work with MassDevelopment to limit impacts to water transportation operators and other users/businesses on the State Pier while crucial repairs are made to the North Wharf bulkhead.

Mid-term Plans (2029-2031)

- Install/upgrade shore power services on wharves and piers and develop a grant-supported program for fishing vessel conversions to increase uptake in available shore power by fishing vessels while in port.
- Encourage additional cruise ship visits to the Port of New Bedford by ACL and explore other regional cruise lines that could add landings in the Harbor

Longer-term Plans (2032-2036)

- Support deauthorization of portions of existing federal navigation channels and modification of the State Harbor Line to expand recreational marina uses along the Fairhaven waterfront.
- Coordination on the replacement of the New Bedford-Fairhaven bridge structure.

7.4 POTENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

Potential partners to implement this work include the following entities:

- Fairhaven Harbormaster
- Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)
- Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
- MassDevelopment
- New Bedford Harbormaster
- New Bedford Port Authority (NBPA)
- Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD)
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- United States Coast Guard (USCG)
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
- Massachusetts Coastal Railroad (MCRR)

CHAPTER 8: REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This section outlines the 2026 MHP's consistency with the Standards for Municipal Harbor Plan Approval at 301 CMR 23.05.

8.2 CONSISTENCY WITH CZM PROGRAM POLICIES

Pursuant to 301 CMR 23.05(1), the MHP must be consistent with all applicable CZM policies. The MHP meets this requirement, as summarized in Table 8-1 below.

Table 8-1 Consistency with CZM Program Policies

CZM Policy	Consistency
Coastal Hazards Policy #1: Preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the beneficial functions of storm damage prevention and flood control provided by natural coastal landforms, such as dunes, beaches, barrier beaches, coastal banks, land subject to coastal storm flowage, salt marshes, and land under the ocean.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP supports continued restoration and enhancement of coastal wetland resource areas, particularly related to ongoing Harbor cleanup efforts. Storm damage prevention and flood control is provided by natural coastal landforms in conjunction with the Hurricane Barrier.
Coastal Hazards Policy #2: Ensure that construction in water bodies and contiguous land areas will minimize interference with water circulation and sediment transport. Flood or erosion control projects must demonstrate no significant adverse effects on the project site or adjacent or downcoast areas.	Consistent – projects recommended in the 2026 MHP will be subject to applicable environmental reviews such as the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act to ensure that inference with water circulation and sediment transport is avoided or minimized.
Coastal Hazards Policy #3: Ensure that state and federally funded public works projects proposed for location within the coastal zone will: • Not exacerbate existing hazards or damage natural buffers or other natural resources. • Be reasonably safe from flood and erosion-related damage. • Not promote growth and development in hazard-prone or buffer areas, especially in velocity zones and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP's coastal resiliency analysis will inform design of public infrastructure projects with respect to current and future coastal hazards. Much of the Planning Area is within the Hurricane Barrier, which protects the Harbor from severe coastal flooding events. The coastal resiliency analysis provides design guidelines to help mitigate future flooding that may occur in low-lying areas when the Hurricane Barrier is open. To address conditions when the Hurricane Barrier is closed, the 2026 MHP recommends an update of the 1987 USACE flood study to

CZM Policy	Consistency
Not be used on Coastal Barrier Resource Units for new or substantial reconstruction of structures in a manner inconsistent with the Coastal Barrier Resource/Improvement Acts.	evaluate available compensatory flood storage.
Coastal Hazards Policy #4: Prioritize acquisition of hazardous coastal areas that have high conservation and/or recreation values and relocation of structures out of coastal high-hazard areas, giving due consideration to the effects of coastal hazards at the location to the use and manageability of the area.	Consistent – while no specific site acquisitions for conservation or recreational purposes are proposed, the 2026 MHP supports such improvements in appropriate Harbor locations, including the recently completed phase of Marsh Island restoration, the New Bedford RiverWalk, and other potential projects discussed in Chapter 5. The majority of the Planning Area is within the Hurricane Barrier and coastal properties within the Buzzards Bay Focus Area are already predominantly owned by state and municipal entities and subject to existing conservation or recreational uses.
Energy Policy #1: For coastally dependent energy facilities, assess siting in alternative coastal locations. For non-coastally dependent energy facilities, assess siting in areas outside of the coastal zone. Weigh the environmental and safety impacts of locating proposed energy facilities at alternative sites.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP provides land use and coastal resiliency analyses that support the environmentally sensitive and safe siting of energy facilities within the Planning Area, as applicable.
Energy Policy #2: Encourage energy conservation and the use of renewable sources such as solar and wind power in order to assist in meeting the energy needs of the Commonwealth.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP supports continued use of Harbor facilities for offshore wind-related purposes and recommends electrical grid upgrades and establishment of shore power services to facilitate vessel cold-ironing.
Growth Management Policy #1: Encourage sustainable development that is consistent with state, regional, and local plans and supports the quality and character of the community.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP provides a framework for supporting and expanding maritime uses; environmental quality and resiliency; and waterfront public access, recreation and tourism. It is informed by and consistent with other state, regional, and local plans including but not limited to the New Bedford’s Citywide Comprehensive Plan (2025) and Fairhaven 2040 (2018), the Town’s comprehensive plan and CZM’s ResilientCoasts plan (2025).

CZM Policy	Consistency
Growth Management Policy #2: Ensure that state and federally funded infrastructure projects in the coastal zone primarily serve existing developed areas, assigning highest priority to projects that meet the needs of urban and community development centers.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP advocates for locally critical infrastructure projects within existing developed areas of the New Bedford and Fairhaven waterfronts.
Growth Management Policy #3: Encourage the revitalization and enhancement of existing development centers in the coastal zone through technical assistance and financial support for residential, commercial, and industrial development.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP advocates for projects in existing development centers to support the maritime economy and other local development priorities.
Habitat Policy #1: Protect coastal, estuarine, and marine habitats—including salt marshes, shellfish beds, submerged aquatic vegetation, dunes, beaches, barrier beaches, banks, salt ponds, eelgrass beds, tidal flats, rocky shores, bays, sounds, and other ocean habitats—and coastal freshwater streams, ponds, and wetlands to preserve critical wildlife habitat and other important functions and services including nutrient and sediment attenuation, wave and storm damage protection, and landform movement and processes.	Consistent – projects recommended in the 2026 MHP will be subject to applicable environmental reviews such as the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act to ensure compliance with wetland resource area performance standards.
Habitat Policy #2: Advance the restoration of degraded or former habitats in coastal and marine areas.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP supports continued restoration and enhancement of coastal wetland resource areas, particularly related to ongoing Harbor cleanup efforts.
Ocean Resources Policy #1: Support the development of sustainable aquaculture, both for commercial and enhancement (public shellfish stocking) purposes. Ensure that the review process regulating aquaculture facility sites (and access routes to those areas) protects significant ecological resources (salt marshes, dunes, beaches, barrier beaches, and salt ponds) and minimizes adverse effects on the coastal and marine environment and other water-dependent uses.	Not applicable.

CZM Policy	Consistency
Ocean Resources Policy #2: Except where such activity is prohibited by the Ocean Sanctuaries Act, the Massachusetts Ocean Management Plan, or other applicable provision of law, the extraction of oil, natural gas, or marine minerals (other than sand and gravel) in or affecting the coastal zone must protect marine resources, marine water quality, fisheries, and navigational, recreational and other uses.	Not applicable.
Ocean Resources Policy #3: Accommodate offshore sand and gravel extraction needs in areas and in ways that will not adversely affect marine resources, navigation, or shoreline areas due to alteration of wave direction and dynamics. Extraction of sand and gravel, when and where permitted, will be primarily for the purpose of beach nourishment or shoreline stabilization.	Not applicable.
Ports and Harbors Policy #1: Ensure that dredging and disposal of dredged material minimize adverse effects on water quality, physical processes, marine productivity, and public health and take full advantage of opportunities for beneficial re-use.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP builds off the progress made under ongoing EPA and MassDEP-led Harbor cleanup efforts, which provides for appropriate management and oversight of dredging and dredged material disposal.
Ports and Harbors Policy #2: Obtain the widest possible public benefit from channel dredging and ensure that Designated Port Areas and developed harbors are given highest priority in the allocation of resources.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP builds off the progress made under ongoing EPA and MassDEP-led Harbor cleanup efforts, which includes remedial and navigational dredging of channels within the DPA and benefits the maritime economy.
Ports and Harbors Policy #3: Preserve and enhance the capacity of Designated Port Areas to accommodate water-dependent industrial uses and prevent the exclusion of such uses from tidelands and any other DPA lands over which an EEA agency exerts control by virtue of ownership or other legal authority.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP includes a host of recommendations to preserve, enhance, and expand the capacity of the DPA to accommodate WDIUs.

CZM Policy	Consistency
Ports and Harbors Policy #4: For development on tidelands and other coastal waterways, preserve and enhance the immediate waterfront for vessel-related activities that require sufficient space and suitable facilities along the water's edge for operational purposes.	Consistent – The 2026 MHP prioritizes the immediate waterfront for vessel-related activities, particularly in the DPA where fishing and other commercial vessels require berthing and landside staging space. Potential expansion of the DPA to capture areas currently under WDIU is contemplated to further support these activities. The substitution pertaining to reconfiguration of the WDUZ may only be implemented when it is demonstrated that the configuration achieves greater effectiveness in the use of the water's edge for water-dependent industrial and other water-dependent use.
Ports and Harbors Policy #5: Encourage, through technical and financial assistance, expansion of water-dependent uses in Designated Port Areas and developed harbors, re-development of urban waterfronts, and expansion of physical and visual access.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP promotes enhancement and expansion of WDIUs and pursuit of technical and financial assistance to achieve this goal.
Protected Areas Policy #1: Preserve, restore, and enhance coastal Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, which are complexes of natural and cultural resources of regional or statewide significance.	Not applicable.
Protected Areas Policy #2: Protect state designated scenic rivers in the coastal zone.	Not applicable.
Protected Areas Policy #3: Ensure that proposed developments in or near designated or registered historic places respect the preservation intent of the designation and that potential adverse effects are minimized.	Consistent – Where applicable, projects recommended in or near designated or registered historic places will undergo Massachusetts Historical Commission review pursuant to state and federal statutes and regulations.
Public Access Policy #1: Ensure that development (both water-dependent or nonwater-dependent) of coastal sites subject to state waterways regulation will promote general public use and enjoyment of the water's edge, to an extent commensurate with the Commonwealth's interests in flowed and filled tidelands under the Public Trust Doctrine.	Consistent – a priority of the 2026 MHP is implementation of the New Bedford RiverWalk and other waterfront public access projects. The 2026 MHP facilitates these efforts through Chapter 91 amplification and substitution provisions that balance nonwater-dependent development with public access to filled and flowed tidelands.

CZM Policy	Consistency
Public Access Policy #2: Improve public access to existing coastal recreation facilities and alleviate auto traffic and parking problems through improvements in public transportation and trail links (land- or water-based) to other nearby facilities. Increase capacity of existing recreation areas by facilitating multiple use and by improving management, maintenance, and public support facilities. Ensure that the adverse impacts of developments proposed near existing public access and recreation sites are minimized.	Consistent – completed and ongoing projects addressed in the 2026 MHP including the New Bedford MBTA station and the New Bedford RiverWalk improve access to recreation sites via alternative transportation modes. An extensive list of economic development and regulatory recommendations are included in the 2026 MHP, many of which are expressly focused on improving existing recreation facilities, creating new ones, and minimizing potential impacts from nearby developments.
Public Access Policy #3: Expand existing recreation facilities and acquire and develop new public areas for coastal recreational activities, giving highest priority to regions of high need or limited site availability. Provide technical assistance to developers of both public and private recreation facilities and sites that increase public access to the shoreline to ensure that both transportation access and the recreation facilities are compatible with social and environmental characteristics of surrounding communities.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP supports expansion of recreational and shoreline public access facilities, especially with respect to ongoing the Harbor cleanup-enabled RiverWalk project in New Bedford.
Water Quality Policy #1: Ensure that point-source discharges and withdrawals in or affecting the coastal zone do not compromise water quality standards and protect designated uses and other interests.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP sets a framework for pursuit of funding sources for ongoing CSO reduction efforts and advocates for continuation of such projects to improve water quality.
Water Quality Policy #2: Ensure the implementation of nonpoint source pollution controls to promote the attainment of water quality standards and protect designated uses and other interests.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP includes recommendations to address nonpoint source pollution including through implementation of programs to address water quality issues related to commercial vessel bilgewater.
Water Quality Policy #3: Ensure that subsurface waste discharges conform to applicable standards, including the siting, construction, and maintenance requirements for on-site wastewater disposal systems, water quality standards, established Total Maximum Daily Load limits, and prohibitions on facilities in high-hazard areas.	Not applicable.

8.3 CONSISTENCY WITH STATE TIDELANDS POLICY OBJECTIVES

Pursuant to 301 CMR 23.05(2), the MHP must be consistent with state tidelands policy objectives and the associated regulatory principles at 310 CMR 9.00. The MHP meets this requirement, as summarized in Table 8-2 below.

Table 8-2: Consistency with State Tidelands Policy Objectives

State Tidelands Policy	Consistency
1. To ensure that development of all tidelands complies with other applicable environmental regulatory programs of the Commonwealth as provided in 310 CMR 9.33: Environmental Protection Standards, and is especially protective of aquatic resources within coastal Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, as provided in 310 CMR 9.32(1)(e): Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs).	Consistent – Projects recommended in the 2026 MHP and/or within the Planning Area will be subject to all applicable environmental regulatory programs. No ACECs are present within the Planning Area.
2. To preserve any rights held by the Commonwealth in trust for the public to use tidelands for lawful purposes, and to preserve any public rights of access that are associated with such use, as provided in 310 CMR 9.35: Standards to Preserve Water-related Public Rights.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP recommendations will preserve vessel- and pedestrian-based public use of tidelands and public rights of access associated with such use. The Plan prioritizes expansion of public access to tidelands, particularly in the Acushnet River Focus Area, through supporting measures such as the New Bedford RiverWalk.
3. To preserve the availability and suitability of tidelands that are in use for water-dependent purposes, or that are reserved primarily as locations for maritime industry or other specific types of water-dependent use, as provided in 310 CMR 9.32(1)(b): Tidelands Within Designated Port Areas (DPAs) and 9.36: Standards to Protect Water-dependent Uses.	Consistent – The 2026 MHP prioritizes preservation and expansion of water-dependent uses, with particular focus on WDIUs in the DPA. It also recommends potential initiation of a DPA boundary review to incorporate adjacent WDIU properties paired with an increase in state-level funding for coastal infrastructure projects.
4. To ensure that all licensed fill and structures are structurally sound and otherwise designed and built in a manner consistent with public health and safety and with responsible environmental engineering practice, especially in coastal high hazard zones and other areas subject to flooding or sea-level rise, as provided in 310 CMR 9.37: Engineering and Construction Standards.	Consistent – The 2026 MHP identifies projects that address critical maintenance/repair needs, including at the New Bedford State Pier. Projects recommended in the 2026 MHP and/or within the Planning Area will be subject to compliance with the applicable Engineering and Construction Standards at 310 CMR 9.37, as part of Chapter 91 licensing.

State Tidelands Policy	Consistency
5. To ensure patronage of public recreational boating facilities by the general public and to prevent undue privatization in the patronage of private recreational boating facilities, as provided in 310 CMR 9.38: Use Standards for Recreational Boating Facilities; and to ensure that fair and equitable methods are employed in the assignment of moorings to the general public by harbormasters, as provided in 310 CMR 9.07: Activities Subject to Annual Permit.	Consistent – All public recreational boating facilities within the Planning Area are, when undergoing Chapter 91 licensing, required to demonstrate compliance with 310 CMR 9.38. Assignment of moorings to the general public by harbormasters, including any expansion of mooring fields during the effective period of the 2026 MHP, will be required to be undertaken in a fair and equitable manner in accordance with the provisions of 310 CMR 9.07.
6. To ensure that marinas, boatyards, and boat-launching ramps are developed in a manner that is consistent with sound engineering and design principles, and include such pumpout facilities and other mitigation measures as are appropriate to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on water quality, physical processes, marine productivity, and public health, as provided in 310 CMR 9.39: Standards for Marinas/Boatyards/Boat Ramps.	Consistent – marinas, boatyards, and boat-launching ramps within the Planning Area are, when undergoing Chapter 91 licensing, required to demonstrate compliance with 310 CMR 9.39. In addition, the 2026 MHP recommends reinstitution of the MassDEP “Clean Bilge” program and development of a public/private partnership to evaluate construction of a commercial fishing vessel bilge pump-out facility to improve water quality in the Harbor.
7. To ensure that dredging and disposal of dredged material is conducted in a manner that avoids unnecessary disturbance of submerged lands and otherwise avoids or minimizes adverse effects on water quality, physical processes, marine productivity, and public health, as provided in 310 CMR 9.40: Standards for Dredging and Dredged Material Disposal.	Consistent – projects in the Planning Area subject to Chapter 91 licensing are required to comply with the Chapter 91 standards for dredging and disposal of dredged material.

State Tidelands Policy	Consistency
8. To ensure that nonwater-dependent use projects do not unreasonably diminish the capacity of any tidelands to accommodate water-dependent use, as provided in 310 CMR 9.51: Conservation of Capacity for Water-dependent Use.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP prioritizes water-dependent uses and particularly WDIUs in the DPA, while also recognizing that nonwater-dependent projects can play a positive role in the Harbor’s future. The MHP includes substitutions applicable Planning Area-wide that allows for reconfiguration of the WDUZ and pedestrian access network (the latter available only in narrow circumstances where existing restrictions are present), which will provide flexibility in redevelopment of waterfront sites while ensuring no net loss of WDUZ or walkway area. The remaining substitution provisions and proposed amplification to the standards at 310 CMR 9.51 relate to New Bedford’s shoreline parcels within the Acushnet River Focus Area. Their primary goal is to help facilitate construction of the New Bedford RiverWalk by exchanging development density for enhanced public access. All projects that propose to make use of these provisions will be subject to DEP’s determination during Chapter 91 licensing that the appropriate offsetting measures are employed, as discussed in Section 8.5.
9. To ensure that nonwater-dependent use projects on any tidelands devote a reasonable portion of such lands to water-dependent use, including public access in the exercise of public rights in said lands, as provided in 310 CMR 9.52: Utilization of Shoreline for Water-dependent Purposes.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP strongly supports expansion of shoreline public access, particularly through implementation of the New Bedford RiverWalk, as part of licensing of nonwater-dependent use projects. As discussed above, regulatory amplifications and substitutions adopted under this MHP are intended to facilitate this pedestrian access network.
10. To ensure that nonwater-dependent use projects on Commonwealth tidelands, except in DPAs, promote public use and enjoyment of such lands to a degree that is fully commensurate with the proprietary rights of the Commonwealth therein, and that ensures that private advantages of use are not primary but merely incidental to the achievement of public purposes, as provided in 310 CMR 9.53: Activation of Commonwealth Tidelands for Public Use.	Consistent – the 2026 MHP supports Activation of Commonwealth tidelands for public use, with particular focus on activation of exterior spaces through the proposed substitution provision to 310 CMR 9.53(2)(c) and associated offset related to enhanced public amenities.

8.4 CONSISTENCY WITH STANDARDS FOR AMPLIFICATIONS

8.4.1 PUBLIC PEDESTRIAN ACCESS NETWORK AMPLIFICATION (310 CMR 9.52(1)(b) – APPLICABLE TO NEW BEDFORD PORTION OF ACUSHNET RIVER FOCUS AREA

Pursuant to 301 CMR 23.05(2)(b), MHP provisions that amplify upon any discretionary requirement of 310 CMR 9.00 must be complementary in effect with the regulatory principles underlying such discretionary requirement. As detailed in Section 5.5, the 2026 MHP proposes one amplification relating to consistency with design standards for the New Bedford RiverWalk (applicable to the Acushnet River Focus Area only). This amplification's consistency with 301 CMR 23.05(2)(b) is summarized in Table 8-3 below.

Table 8-3: Consistency with Standards for Amplification to 310 CMR 9.52(1)(b)

Standard	Consistency
1. The provisions in question do not contradict the corresponding provisions of 310 CMR 9.00: Waterways; for example, the MHP may not require that which is prohibited nor prohibit that which is required in 310 CMR 9.00: Waterways.	Consistent - the proposed RiverWalk amplification does not contradict the base Chapter 91 standards at 310 CMR 9.52(1)(b), but rather specifies additional design standards consistent with the City of New Bedford's vision for the project.
2. The provisions in question do not significantly alter the substantive nature of the requirement, narrow the range of factors that may be considered, or otherwise unreasonably affect the ability of DEP to exercise discretion in the interpretation and application of all relevant provisions of 310 CMR 9.00: Waterways.	Consistent – the proposed amplification does not narrow the range of factors that may be considered in implementation of the New Bedford RiverWalk. It affords MassDEP discretion by allowing determination that public access facilities are consistent with the RiverWalk standards “to the extent practicable.”
3. The provisions in question must be consistent with the provisions of any memoranda of understanding with other state agencies that, as provided in 310 CMR 9.00: Waterways, may govern the manner in which DEP licenses and permits will incorporate the requirements of other statutes and regulations that preserve public rights in waterways and otherwise promote state tidelands policy objectives.	Not applicable.

8.5 CONSISTENCY WITH STANDARDS FOR SUBSTITUTIONS

The 2026 MHP includes six substitutions and associated offsets that modify the base Chapter 91 dimensional standards (two applicable Planning Area-wide, four applicable to the New Bedford portion of the Acushnet River Focus Area only). Consistency with the provision-specific conditions at 301 CMR 23.05(2)(c) are presented in the following subsections for each substitution, and consistency with the overall standards for approval are presented in Table 8-4 that follows.

8.5.1 WDUZ SUBSTITUTION (310 CMR 9.51(3)(c)) – APPLICABLE PLANNING AREA-WIDE

The Standards for Municipal Harbor Plan approval at 301 CMR 23.05(2)(c)3. state:

As provided in 310 CMR 9.51(3)(c), governing the establishment of a water-dependent use zone, the MHP must specify alternative setback distances and other requirements that ensure that new or expanded buildings for nonwater-dependent use are not constructed immediately adjacent to a project shoreline, in order that sufficient space along the water's edge will be devoted exclusively to water-dependent use and public access associated therewith, as appropriate for the harbor in question.

Compliance: The reconfigured WDUZ substitution requires maintaining a minimum width of 25 feet along the project shoreline and the ends wharves and piers and 10 feet along the sides of wharves and piers in order to ensure that new or expanded buildings for nonwater-dependent use are not constructed immediately adjacent to a project shoreline. Applicants are required to demonstrate that application of the Chapter 91 standard would result in an inefficient siting of uses in the WDUZ, and that the WDUZ reconfiguration achieves greater effectiveness in the use of the water's edge of water-dependent industrial and other water-dependent use. Furthermore, the substitution requires that there be no net loss of WDUZ area within Chapter 91 jurisdiction so that an appropriate amount of space is maintained for water-dependent use.

8.5.2 LOT COVERAGE SUBSTITUTION (310 CMR 9.51(3)(d)) – APPLICABLE TO NEW BEDFORD PORTION OF ACUSHNET RIVER FOCUS AREA

The Standards for Municipal Harbor Plan approval at 301 CMR 23.05(2)(c)4. state:

As provided in 310 CMR 9.51(3)(d), governing the combined footprint of certain buildings, the MHP must specify alternative site coverage ratios and other requirements that ensure that, in general, buildings for nonwater-dependent use will be relatively condensed in footprint, in order that an amount of open space commensurate with that occupied by such buildings will be available to accommodate water-dependent activity and public access associated therewith, as appropriate for the harbor in question.

Compliance: The lot coverage substitution allows for building footprints to occupy up to 60% of filled tidelands on a project site, compared to the 50% limit established under the base standard at 310 CMR 9.51(3)(d). This modest expansion of allowed lot coverage is appropriately offset by requiring enhanced public amenities in exterior spaces (beyond those required under 310 CMR 9.52(1)(b)), thereby resulting in additional activation of the waterfront in a manner that will complement the New Bedford RiverWalk. In order to maximize water-related public benefits that result from this substitution, the offsetting measure details specific types of public amenities to be provided (e.g., nonmotorized vessel launch, floating dock, pile-supported pier), with amenities of greater public benefit required to offset larger areas of expanded lot coverage.

8.5.3 BUILDING HEIGHT SUBSTITUTION (310 CMR 9.51(3)(e)) – APPLICABLE TO NEW BEDFORD PORTION OF ACUSHNET RIVER FOCUS AREA

The Standards for Municipal Harbor Plan approval at 301 CMR 23.05(2)(c)5. state:

As provided in 310 CMR 9.51(3)(e), governing the height of certain buildings, the MHP must specify alternative height limits and other requirements that ensure that, in general, new or expanded buildings for nonwater-dependent use will be relatively modest in size, in order that wind, shadow, and other conditions of the ground level environment will be conducive to water-dependent activity and public access associated therewith, as appropriate for the harbor in question.

Compliance: The building height substitution establishes an allowed uniform building height of 80 feet and is appropriately offset by requiring that developments have reduced overall building volume compared to what is allowed under the base Chapter 91 standard. Use of this substitution requires new or expanded buildings for nonwater-dependent use to be relatively modest in size, in order that wind, shadow, and other conditions of the ground level environment will be conducive to water-dependent activity and public access associated therewith. Additional offsetting measures may be required, as deemed appropriate by DEP during the licensing process. The 80-foot building height is consistent with the City of New Bedford’s vision for activation of underutilized parcels and development of residential and mixed-use projects in the Acushnet River Focus Area. Following the vision set forth in New Bedford’s 2025-2035 Citywide Comprehensive Plan, the City is adopting a zoning overlay that reflects this allowed building height and applies to project sites both within and outside of Chapter 91 jurisdiction.

8.5.4 PUBLIC PEDESTRIAN ACCESS NETWORK SUBSTITUTION (310 CMR 9.52(1)(b)) – APPLICABLE PLANNING AREA-WIDE

The Standards for Municipal Harbor Plan approval at 301 CMR 23.05(2)(c)3. state:

As provided in 310 CMR 9.52(1)(b)1., governing the provision of a pedestrian access network, the MHP may specify a minimum walkway width other than ten feet, provided that the alternative width is appropriate given, among other things, the size and configuration of the water-dependent use zone and the nature and extent of water-dependent activity and public uses that may be accommodated therewith.

The minimum walkway width allowed under the substitution to 310 CMR 9.52(1)(b) would be eight feet and is only available in the narrow circumstances where existing physical restrictions are present. For example, along significant stretches of the waterfront, recently established wetlands may be closely proximate to historic structures and could pose challenges to meeting the base Chapter 91 standards' 10-foot minimum walkway width without resulting in undesirable resource area impacts.

In no case may this substitution be used in circumstances where physical restrictions are created by new construction. The substitution is appropriately offset by requiring an expansion in walkway width elsewhere in the WDUZ at a ratio of two square feet in expanded walkway area to one square foot in reduced walkway area. This offset improves the usability of the pedestrian access network by creating an overall net increase in walkway area compared to the base Chapter 91 standard.

8.5.5 FACILITIES OF PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION SUBSTITUTIONS (310 CMR 9.51(3)(b) AND 310 CMR 9.53(2)(c)) – APPLICABLE TO NEW BEDFORD PORTION OF ACUSHNET RIVER FOCUS AREA

The Standards for Municipal Harbor Plan Approval at 301 CMR 23.05(2)(c)2. state:

As provided in 310 CMR 9.51(3)(b), governing the location of certain facilities of private tenancy, the MHP must specify alternative limitations and other requirements that ensure that no significant privatizing of waterfront areas immediately adjacent to the water-dependent use zone will occur for nonwater-dependent purposes, in order that such areas will be generally free of uses that conflict with, preempt, or otherwise discourage water-dependent activity or public use and enjoyment of the water-dependent use zone, as appropriate for the harbor in question.

The Standards for Municipal Harbor Plan approval at 301 CMR 23.05(2)(c)5. state:

As provided in 310 CMR 9.53(2)(b) and (c), governing provision of water-related public benefits by certain nonwater-dependent use projects, the MHP must specify alternative requirements for public outdoor recreation facilities and for interior facilities of public accommodation that will establish the project site as a year-round locus of public activity in a comparable and highly effective manner.

Compliance: The substitutions to 310 CMR 9.51(3)(b) and 310 CMR 9.53(2)(c) allow for a reduction in FPA and an increase in FPT space. The need for these substitutions was determined based on the location of the Acushnet River Focus Area, which is disconnected from New Bedford's downtown and receives significantly less foot traffic from residents and visitors. Prior redevelopment projects in this area have struggled to generate sufficient visitation to justify a significant set-aside of retail or interior community spaces. Additionally, sites across the Focus Area are subject to Activity and Use Limitations and other development restrictions that increase cost of redevelopment and pose challenges for beneficial reuse under traditional real estate investment practices. The decrease in the overall supply of FPA space created by this substitution is intended to reduce the likelihood of retail vacancies and other underutilized space and instead support alternative community benefits such as expanded housing opportunities, consistent with New Bedford's goals for the Acushnet River Focus Area.

The reduction in FPA space is appropriately offset by requiring enhanced amenities consisting of freestanding structures for public use such as restrooms or support structures for water-based activities, thereby resulting in additional activation of the waterfront in a manner that will complement the New Bedford RiverWalk. Additional offsetting measures may be required, as deemed appropriate by DEP during the licensing process.

Table 8-4: Consistency with Standards for Approval of Substitution Provisions (301 CMR 23.05(2)(d))

Standard (301 CMR 23.05(2)(d))	Consistency
1. The planning analysis and data presented therewith shall be organized in a manner that clearly identifies the substitute provisions proposed and establishes the nature and extent of differential effects that any less restrictive requirements will have with respect to the tidelands policy objectives in question; generally, the appropriate level of such analysis will depend on the degree to which the Waterways requirements are relaxed, the significance of benefits associated with proposed offsetting measures, and other relevant circumstances such as the characteristics of the built environment in the area in question.	Consistent – the base Chapter 91 standards, substitution provisions, and offsetting measures are clearly presented in Table 5-5 and are supported by the planning analyses and additional information provided in Chapter 5 and throughout the 2026 MHP. All substitutions include appropriate corresponding offsetting measures to ensure that comparable or greater effectiveness in promoting the state tidelands policy objectives is achieved.

Standard (301 CMR 23.05(2)(d))	Consistency
2. Generally, offsetting measures should be applied within reasonable proximity of the locus of adverse effects that need to be offset, in order to avoid or minimize inequity in the distribution of public benefits and detriments.	Consistent – the offsetting measures for all proposed substitutions must be provided/implemented within the project site.
3. A special permit, site plan review, or design review process may be acceptable as a means of establishing the particulars of mitigation on a case-by-case basis, provided that the MHP itself sufficiently defines the parameters within which such process will operate, so that a reasonable assessment of likely effects under varying circumstances can be made.	Not applicable – consistency with the substitutions and offsetting requirements are to be evaluated and confirmed by MassDEP during Chapter 91 licensing.

CONSISTENCY WITH DPA MASTER PLAN REQUIREMENTS

The DPA Master Plan included in the 2026 MHP is consistent with the standards for DPA Master Plan approval at 301 CMR 23.05(2)(b), as summarized in Table 8-8 below.

Table 8-5: Consistency with DPA Master Plan Requirements

DPA Master Plan Requirement (301 CMR 23.05(2)(e))	Consistency
1. The Master Plan shall ensure that an extensive amount of the total DPA land area in close proximity to the water will be reserved for water-dependent industrial uses, provided that Temporary Use may also be allowed on such reserved lands if the Master Plan establishes guidelines for solicitation of a maritime industrial tenant as a pre-condition of the temporary occupancy; the Master Plan shall further ensure that commercial uses and any accessory uses thereto will not, as a general rule, occupy more than 25% of the total DPA land area covered by the Master Plan.	Consistent – the DPA Master Plan prioritizes WDIUs and includes marketing requirements and other guidance related to licensing of Temporary Uses. The DPA Master Plan quantifies the existing balance between WDIUs and other uses in the DPA and finds that approximately 87% of DPA filled tidelands are currently subject to WDIU. New Bedford and Fairhaven planning staff will monitor nonwater-dependent uses within the DPA to ensure no more than 25% of its total land area is subject to such uses and report this assessment to MassDEP and CZM upon request. The Municipalities will also review development proposals in the DPA to ensure they do not conflict with or discourage present or future WDIUs. No provisions that would allow Supporting DPA Uses to occupy more than 25% of any one project site are proposed.

DPA Master Plan Requirement (301 CMR 23.05(2)(e))	Consistency
2. The Master Plan shall set forth reasonable arrangements, as required in 310 CMR 9.36: Standards to Protect Water-dependent Uses, to prevent commitments of any space or facilities that would significantly discourage present or future water-dependent industrial activity, especially on waterfront sites; the arrangements shall include, but are not limited to, appropriate limits on the type, location, density, scale, duration, operation, or other relevant aspects of commercial uses, in order to ensure that such uses will mix compatibly with and not significantly alter the predominantly maritime industrial character of the DPA; the Master Plan may also specify reasonable limitations on any uses in the DPA, if necessary to mitigate undue conflict with existing residential uses on properties abutting the DPA.	Consistent – as discussed below, the DPA Master Plan identifies uses allowed under the New Bedford and Fairhaven zoning ordinances that are allowed as Supporting DPA Uses and eligible to be determined to be compatible with existing and future water-dependent industrial uses. Such uses will be subject to MassDEP’s determination during Chapter 91 licensing that they are consistent with the definition of Supporting DPA Uses at 310 CMR 9.02 and consistent with all applicable regulatory standards. Zoning districts encompassing the total land area of the DPA prioritize industrial and commercial land uses that are consistent and compatible with maritime industrial land use patterns. The New Bedford-Fairhaven DPA is largely separated from residential neighborhoods by public roadways and other physical barriers which provide adequate buffer between WDIUs and existing residential uses.
3. The Master Plan shall identify any industrial or commercial uses allowable under the municipal zoning code that shall qualify as a Supporting DPA Use, provided such uses comply with the provisions of the definition set forth in 310 CMR 9.02: Definitions and any associated written guidelines of DEP; if the Master Plan includes provisions to allow for supporting uses on piers over flowed tidelands, the Master Plan shall specify limitations and other requirements that ensure that supporting uses do not decrease the functionality of the working waterfront.	Consistent – the DPA Master Plan identifies uses within New Bedford and Fairhaven’s DPA zoning districts that are allowed as Supporting DPA Uses and stipulates that licensing of such uses is subject to MassDEP’s determination that they are consistent with the definition of Supporting DPA Use at 310 CMR 9.02 and all applicable regulatory standards. No provisions to allow for Supporting DPA Uses on piers over flowed tidelands are proposed.

DPA Master Plan Requirement (301 CMR 23.05(2)(e))	Consistency
4. The Master Plan shall set forth a strategy to guide the on-going promotion of water-dependent industrial use by appropriate municipalities, state agencies, and federal government; the strategy shall include, but is not limited to: a. recommendations for capital improvements or other economic or operational benefits to be provided by projects involving Supporting DPA Uses, in accordance with municipal goals and priorities for development of water-dependent industrial uses on the project sites in question; b. recommendations to preserve or enhance the infrastructure of navigation channels, truck routes and rail lines, and other transportation facilities for providing user access to the working waterfront and its backlands from both the water and the land sides; and c. commitments to maintain a surrounding land-development pattern that provides an appropriate buffer between industrial uses in the DPA and community uses that require separation therefrom in order to avoid significant operational conflict.	Consistent – as described in Section 6.6, the DPA Master Plan, while not establishing specific requirements, recommends and prioritizes repair of coastal infrastructure as the preferred format of direct operational support to be provided by Supporting DPA Uses. The overall 2026 MHP has several recommendations related to landside and waterside infrastructure to support WDIUs in the DPA, including but not limited to advocating for continued navigational dredging under the SER, appropriate design for the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge replacement project, and study of/investment in freight rail infrastructure to service port facilities. New Bedford and Fairhaven’s zoning combined with DPA land use restrictions and existing public roadways support an appropriate buffer between WDIUs in the DPA and community uses.
5. If the Master Plan identifies proposed new sites for recreational boating facilities of nine slips or less pursuant to 310 CMR 9.32(1)(b)7., the Secretary must determine that all of the following additional criteria are met...	Not applicable.

8.7 COMPATIBILITY WITH PLANS & PLANNED ACTIVITIES OF STATE AGENCIES

In accordance with 301 CMR 23.05(3), Table 8-6 below summarizes the 2026 MHP's compatibility with plans and planned activities of State Agencies within the Planning Area.

Table 8-6: Compatibility with Plans & Planned Activities of State Agencies

Agency	Plan or Planned Activity	Compatibility
CZM	ResilientCoasts Final Plan (2025)	The 2026 MHP contemplates the impacts of current and projected future coastal flood risks and includes a technical study outlining adaptation strategies that balance closures of the Hurricane Barrier with the operational needs of maritime uses in the Harbor.
DCR	New Bedford State Pier	The 2026 MHP recognizes the criticality of the New Bedford State Pier and strongly advocates for accelerated emergency repairs to the South and East Wharfs to ensure this space can continue to support WDIUs. The 2026 MHP also supports the vision of introducing commercial uses along the landward edge of the State Pier property to better connect this site to downtown New Bedford.
	Popes Island Marina	The 2026 MHP recognizes that replacing deteriorating docks at Popes Island Marina is an important priority for supporting the Harbor as a recreational boating destination.
MassCEC	Expansion of the Marine Commerce Terminal	The Marine Commerce Terminal expansion project is currently underway, and as a WDIU project in the DPA is not impacted by and regulatory amplifications or substitutions proposed in the 2026 MHP.
MassDEP	SER	The SER has been a key driver of navigational dredging and other port improvements since the 2010 MHP. The 2026 MHP strongly supports extending the SER to enable streamlined permitting for a Phase VI navigational dredging program.

Agency	Plan or Planned Activity	Compatibility
Mass-Development	New Bedford State Pier Improvements	The 2026 MHP recognizes the criticality of the New Bedford State Pier and strongly advocates for accelerated emergency repairs to the South and East Wharfs to ensure this space can continue to support WDIUs. The 2026 MHP also supports the vision of introducing commercial uses along the landward edge of the State Pier property to better connect this site to downtown New Bedford.
MassDOT	Transportation infrastructure projects – New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge Replacement, I-195 Improvements	The 2026 MHP supports MassDOT's ongoing projects to reconstruct the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge (design phase) and improve I-195 (construction phase), and emphasizes the importance of local/state collaboration to mitigate impacts on local road- and water-based travel.
MBTA	Not applicable - the MBTA opened passenger rail service to New Bedford in 2025. The Project Team is not aware of any additional MBTA plans or planned activities in the 2026 MHP Planning Area at this time.	Not applicable.

8.8 IMPLEMENTATION

No actions on the part of the City of New Bedford, NBPA, or Town of Fairhaven are needed in order for the 2026 MHP to take effect. In accordance with 301 CMR 23.05(4), implementation strategies for the recommendations of the 2026 MHP, including participant parties, potential funding sources, and scheduling/sequencing are provided in Chapter 7.

Attachment A

NOTICE TO PROCEED



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114 • (617) 626-1200

April 28, 2025

Gordon Carr
Executive Director of New Bedford Port Authority
123 MacArthur Drive,
New Bedford, MA 02740

George Samia
Fairhaven Acting Town Administrator
40 Center Street
Fairhaven, MA 02719

RE: New Bedford/Fairhaven Municipal Harbor Plan and Designated Port Area Renewal and Amendment

Dear Mr. Carr and Mr. Samia,

Pursuant to 301 CMR 23.03, the Municipal Harbor Plan (MHP) Regulations, the City of New Bedford and Town of Fairhaven submitted a Request for Notice to Proceed (RNTP) for the renewal and amendment of the state-approved 2010 MHP and Designated Port Area Master Plan for New Bedford/Fairhaven Harbor on February 18, 2025. Notice of this request was published in the Environmental Monitor on March 7, 2025 and public comments were accepted for a thirty-day period ending on April 7, 2025. CZM received one comment letter, related to the need for a dockside pump out facility to reduce bilge oil discharges into New Bedford Harbor.

Based on a review of the request and on the comment received, I am pleased to issue the following Notice to Proceed for the New Bedford/Fairhaven Municipal Harbor Plan and Designated Port Area Renewal and Amendment

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Overview

The MHP Regulations (301 CMR 23.00) establish a voluntary procedure by which municipalities may obtain approval of MHPs from the Secretary, promoting long-term, comprehensive, municipally-based planning of harbors and other waterways that fully incorporates state policies governing stewardship of trust lands. Additionally, approved plans guide and assist the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Wetlands and Waterways Division in making regulatory decisions pursuant to MGL Chapter 91 and the Waterways Regulations (310 CMR 9.00) that are responsive to harbor specific conditions and other local and regional circumstances. As promulgated, the Waterways Regulations provide a uniform statewide framework for regulating tidelands projects and developments. Municipal Harbor Plans present communities with an opportunity to adopt a vision that modifies these uniform standards through the amplification of the discretionary requirements of the Waterways Regulations or through the



adoption of provisions, which if approved, are intended to substitute for the minimum use limitations or numerical standards of 310 CMR 9.00. While the municipal plan may embody the vision for the development of its waterfront, the scope of an MHP is generally limited to the modification of certain Chapter 91 standards to fulfill the local planning goals. Project specific issues such as traffic and broader environmental impacts will be described, analyzed, and assessed during any requisite reviews by the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office (MEPA) or the local planning and zoning boards.

I. Municipal Harbor Planning Area

The harbor planning area (Figure 1) identified in the RNTP is based on the Planning Area used in the 2010 MHP, with minor refinements to reflect properties with direct connections to the Harbor. It includes the Acushnet River, the islands therein, and the New Bedford and Fairhaven waterfronts on either side of it. Additionally, the planning area extends to outside of the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier to encompass the adjacent waterfront districts of Clarks Point in New Bedford and Fort Phoenix in Fairhaven. In recognition of the geographic diversity and varying uses throughout the overall Planning Area, the MHP will be developed with respect to the planning area subdistricts (Figure 2) summarized below.

Acushnet River Subdistrict: This subdistrict includes the portion of the Acushnet River and the adjacent waterfront north of the Interstate 195 bridge. On the New Bedford side, it contains a mix of historic mill buildings, newer commercial development, and public open space. The Fairhaven side includes undeveloped wetlands, commercial properties, and residential neighborhoods. Due to navigation constraints created by the bridge and insufficient water depth, there is limited vessel activity in the subdistrict and waterfront land uses are predominantly non-water dependent.

Harbor – Port Subdistrict: This subdistrict encompasses the lands and watersheet within the boundaries of the New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA, including the majority of New Bedford's waterfront south of Interstate 195 and a portion of Fairhaven's waterfront between Washington Street and South Street. In general, these areas are developed with and under use by a variety of water-dependent industrial uses and form the economic engine of New Bedford Harbor.

Harbor Subdistrict: This subdistrict includes the Acushnet River and adjacent shoreline south of the Interstate 195 bridge that falls outside of the New Bedford/Fairhaven DPA boundary. In New Bedford, this waterfront is public open space and a marina on Popes Island. On the Fairhaven side, land use is primarily residential and also includes open space and several marinas. The subdistrict extends landward to encompass portions of both communities' downtowns and adjacent neighborhoods, in recognition of the inherent links between them and the Harbor.

Buzzards Bay Subdistrict: This subdistrict includes New Bedford and Fairhaven's Buzzards Bay shorelines, generally south of the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier at the mouth of New Bedford Harbor. On the New Bedford side, the subdistrict consists of the entire shoreline of Clarks Point, which includes portions of the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier, public beaches, historic Fort Tabor and Fort Rodman, and some residential buildings. The Fairhaven side consists of the public open space and beaches of historic Fort Phoenix.

For consideration as you develop your MHP renewal and amendment, I call particular attention to the provisions of 301 CMR 23.04, Review Procedures, and 301 CMR 23.05, Standards for Approval. The MHP should contain a clear and detailed discussion of the relationship between the harbor planning area and land subject to Chapter 91 jurisdiction. Pursuant to 301 CMR 23.02, a harbor planning area should include all areas that are relevant to the functional use and management of the harbor or other waterway segment in question. Functional use refers to those activities that have the potential to promote or impair water-dependent activity or public use or enjoyment of waterways or shorelines. At a minimum, the landward boundary of any harbor planning area subject to these regulations shall encompass all filled tidelands subject to the jurisdiction of DEP pursuant to 310 CMR 9.04.

To facilitate review of the MHP and future implementation, at a minimum, the MHP should contain one or more maps that present a well-defined boundary of the proposed MHP and its approximate relationship to Chapter 91 jurisdictional tidelands. Pursuant to 301 CMR 23.03(4) for planning purposes, the MHP should depict the boundaries of such tidelands based on guidance for historic tidelands delineation provided by MassDEP's Waterways Program.

II. Substitution Guidance

A state-approved MHP can allow greater flexibility in the application of certain Waterways requirements in that it may include provisions that substitute for certain Chapter 91 limitations or numerical standards as long as the substitute provisions are at least as effective at meeting the state tidelands policy objectives as those stated in the corresponding Chapter 91 provisions and certain specific conditions are met. When a project conforms to a state-approved MHP, MassDEP will apply the use limitations or numerical standards specified in the MHP as a substitute for the respective limitations or standards contained in 310 CMR 9.00 as part of the licensing process.

Substitutions as described above will be allowed only if the municipality demonstrates, in the MHP, that the substitution provisions will promote state tidelands objectives with comparable or greater effectiveness than the corresponding provision of 310 CMR 9.00. Substitute provisions may be less restrictive than the requirements of 310 CMR 9.00 only if the plan includes other requirements that adequately offset adverse effects on public-related interests. In determining whether comparable or greater effectiveness is achieved by the substitute offsets in the MHP, the Secretary will consider the following general provisions:

- a. The planning analysis and data must be organized to clearly identify the substitute provisions proposed and the relative effects of the less restrictive provisions on the related tidelands policy objectives.
- b. Offsetting measures should be applied within reasonable proximity to the locus of adverse effects to ensure a balance in the distribution of public benefits and potential detriments.

III. Amplification Guidance

A state approved MHP can also allow greater flexibility to the application of certain requirements of 310 CMR 9.00 in that it may amplify upon any discretionary waterways requirement, as long as such provisions are complementary in effect with the regulatory principle(s) underlying

the amplified requirement. When a project conforms to a state approved MHP, MassDEP will apply the amplification as approved to the maximum extent possible in the licensing process.

Amplifications as described above will be allowed only if the municipality demonstrates in the MHP that the amplification provisions do not require that which is prohibited or prohibit that which is allowed by 310 CMR 9.00, do not significantly alter the substantive nature of the requirement, narrow the range of factors that may be considered, or otherwise unreasonably affect the ability of DEP to exercise discretion in the interpretation and application of all relevant provisions of 310 CMR 9.00, and are consistent with the provisions of any memoranda of understanding with other state agencies that may govern the way DEP licenses and permits incorporate the requirements of other statutes and regulations that preserved the public rights in the waterways and otherwise promote state tidelands policy objectives.

IV. MHP Planning Guidance

The MHP renewal and amendment should clearly articulate the goals and recommendations of the 2010 Plan that have been achieved, how the communities goals and objectives for the harbor planning area have changed since the submittal of the 2010 Plan, and any changes in policies that have been established to guide development and other activity, including patterns, phasing, and limits, and other relevant characteristics on the waterfront. Similarly, any proposed changes to approved provisions or newly proposed substitutions or amplifications should be clearly described and analyzed to demonstrate compliance with standards for approval in the MHP.

The communities should assess carefully how any proposed changes to supporting use requirements may affect the ability of the DPA to support water-dependent industrial uses long-term, including how any necessary commitments to denser water-dependent industrial uses may need to be documented to ensure that the MHP continues to preserve and enhance the capacity for the DPA to accommodate water-dependent industrial uses.

For those areas outside of the DPA, but within jurisdiction, that were not fully described or analyzed in the 2010 Plan, current characteristics, uses, and activities should be clearly defined, and the goals and opportunities for these areas should be fully described. Any analysis for substitutions proposed in this district should ensure that any necessary offsets are proposed in the same area as the proposed substitution, to avoid any loss of public benefits in a particular area.

The planning process used to inform and develop this MHP renewal and amendment should ensure that alternatives and priorities to meet the vision, goals, and objectives of the MHP are developed through the iterative and inclusive public participation process. This iterative process should be clearly documented within the MHP, including opportunities for public engagement, how alternatives were considered and vetted, and how preferred alternatives were selected. According to the Request for Notice to Proceed dated February 7, 2025, on behalf of the City of New Bedford and Town of Fairhaven, the overarching objectives of the MHP Renewal and Amendment are:

- Develop and sustain the prominent industries of New Bedford and Fairhaven's waterfronts, including commercial fishing, seafood processing, vessel provisioning and repair services, marine construction, break/bulk shipping, and ferry services.

- Support expanding maritime industrial uses and other waterfront development opportunities including clean energy construction, “blue technology,” and aquaculture.
- Expand opportunities in the Harbor for tourism, moorings, cultural activities, and other recreational uses to strengthen physical and economic links between the Harbor and downtowns of New Bedford and Fairhaven.

In assessing the risks associated with sea level rise and climate change, the most recently available climate change data at the time of analysis should be used to determine vulnerabilities and analyze appropriate approaches to address them. Understanding the implications of existing and future closure operations for the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier, needed investments in the barrier, and preparedness measures to address critical infrastructure asset vulnerability in the Harbor should the barrier closure not be viable in all storm events will be a focus of the MHP amendment. CZM and EEA can provide technical assistance and data as needed for this task.

V. DPA Master Plan

Requirements for the DPA are specific and differ from the general requirements of both the MHP and waterways regulations and the DPA Master Plan (master plan) should address this. The master plan should preserve and enhance the capacity of the DPA to accommodate water-dependent industrial use and prevent substantial exclusion of those uses by other allowable DPA uses. To meet this standard, the master plan must include several criteria.

To ensure that the water-dependent industrial capacity of the DPA is preserved and enhanced, an extensive amount of the DPA land area close to the water must be reserved for water-dependent industrial use. Though temporary uses may be allowed, the master plan must include a provision that water-dependent industrial use is solicited first before these are permitted. In addition, the master plan should demonstrate that commercial uses will generally be limited to no more than 25 percent of the total DPA land area.

The master plan should establish reasonable arrangements to prevent use of space/facilities that would significantly discourage present or future water-dependent industrial activity, especially on the waterfront. These should include appropriate limits on the parameters of commercial uses to assure compatibility with DPA uses as well as reasonable limits on the types of commercial uses allowed, if necessary, to avoid conflict with DPA uses.

The master plan should identify industrial or commercial uses that are allowed under local zoning that the municipalities wish to qualify as supporting DPA uses. These uses should be carefully considered to ensure that they comply with the provisions of 310 CMR 9.00.

Finally, the master plan should include a strategy to guide continuing promotion of water-dependent industrial use, including, at a minimum, recommendations for capital improvements or other economic/operational benefits to water-dependent industrial uses to be provided by supporting uses on a property; recommendations to preserve or enhance transportation infrastructure (channels, truck routes, etc.) for access to properties in the DPA on both land and

water side; and commitments to maintain a pattern of development that provides an appropriate buffer between DPA uses and certain community uses to avoid significant operational conflict. Any changes to these criteria proposed in the master plan since the 2010 Plan should be clearly articulated and supported.

V. MHP Renewal

Pursuant to 301 CMR 23.06(2)(a), the MHP should include a discussion recommending the period of time for which the MHP shall be in effect. Approved MHPs expire on the date specified in the Secretary's Approval Decision and must be renewed periodically to ensure continuing use by MassDEP in its licensing decisions.

VI. Public Participation

The RNTP describes the role of the Harbor Planning Renewal Committee (HPRC) in the harbor planning process, and states that they anticipate holding a minimum of four in-person public meetings during the planning period, as well as at least two virtual listening sessions for key stakeholders. Representatives from the HPRC will attend regularly scheduled meetings of local boards, commissions, and neighborhood organizations to provide project updates.

Informational materials about the MHP update will be provided to New Bedford and Fairhaven staff for distribution at local events. The Project Team anticipates holding in-person site walks and boat tours for attendance by interested members of the public to compliment the four formal public meetings and provide an opportunity to experience the harbor firsthand.

To reflect the diversity of local residents, the public meetings will include live interpretation services for Cape Verdean Kriolu, Portuguese, and Spanish, and the same services will be offered for the listening sessions upon request. As further described below, the Project Team will also participate in existing community groups and gatherings associated with the robust Cape Verdean and Azorean populations that reside or work in the New Bedford Harbor area.

The MHP should contain a detailed discussion of the harbor planning process, document the public participation to date and the continued public planning process, and detail the public input solicited and included in the MHP recommendations and actions. The MHP should also identify and summarize any controversial issues and discuss how these were resolved through the process.

VII. Compatibility with State Agency Responsibility

The MHP must demonstrate that the communities have worked with all relevant state agencies to maximize compatibility of the MHP with the plans or planned activities of all state agencies owning real property or responsible for the development/implementation of plans or projects in the harbor planning area.

VIII. Implementation Strategy

It is essential that the MHP include enforceable implementation commitments to ensure that all measures will be taken in a timely and coordinated manner to offset the effect of any MHP requirement that is less restrictive than that contained in 310 CMR 9.00.

EEA and CZM look forward to working collaboratively with the City and Town in this MHP planning process. Pursuant to 301 CMR 23.04, the submission deadline will be May 7, 2027. As you develop the New Bedford/Fairhaven MHP and DPA Master Plan amendment and renewal, we look forward to consultation with your municipalities to provide guidance to ensure that the process is meaningful, efficient, and productive.

In closing, I extend my sincere thanks to you and your staff for your continuing support for the pro-active management of our coastal resources. I encourage your staff to continue working closely with CZM and our Southcoast Regional Coordinator on the development of the amendment and renewal of the New Bedford/Fairhaven Municipal Harbor Plan and Designated Port Area Master Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alison Brizius', is positioned above the printed name.

Alison Brizius
Director

Cc:

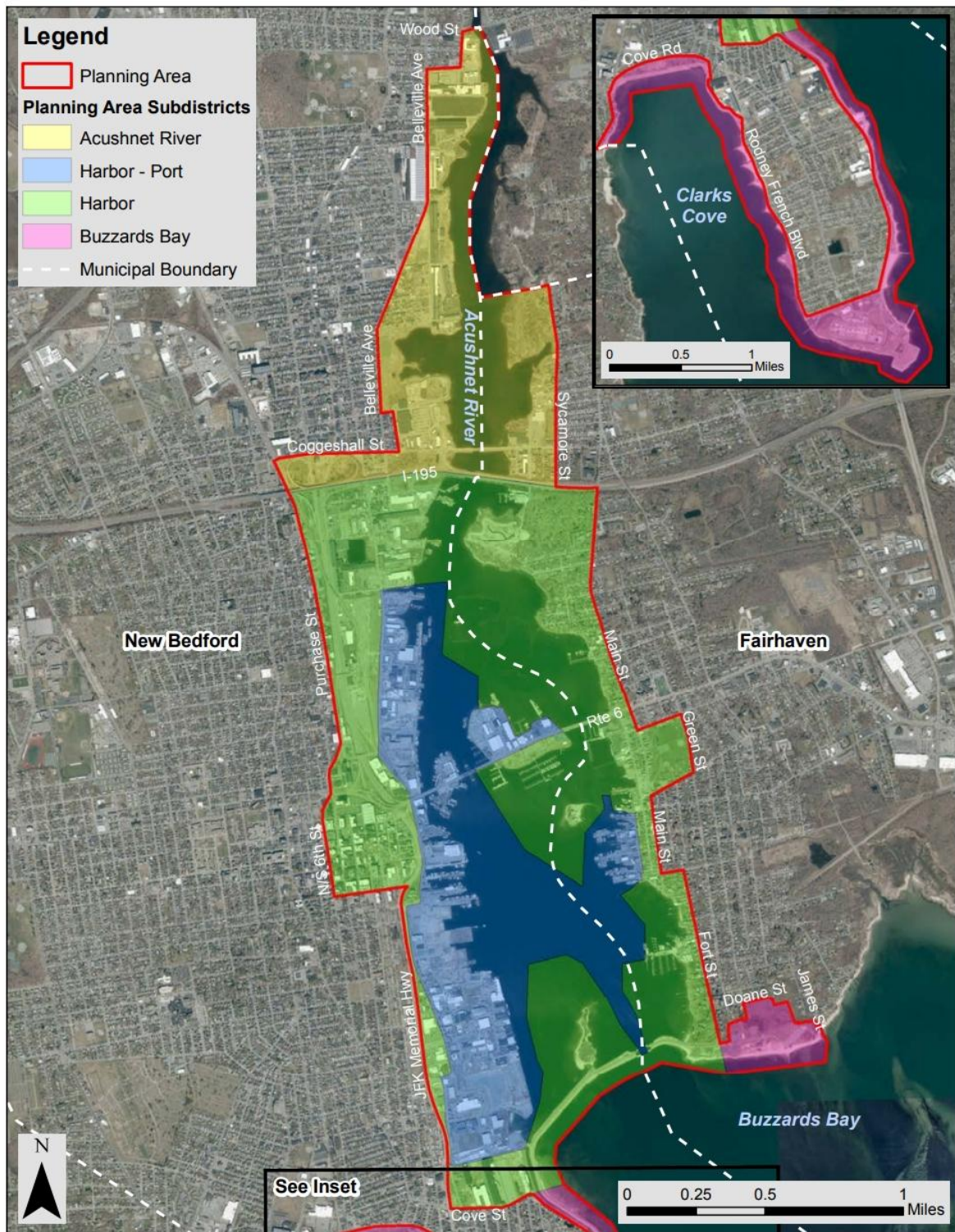
Stephanie Fidalgo, Fairhaven Planning Administrator
Jennifer Carloni, New Bedford Director of City Planning
Katie Moniz & Natty King, Fort Point Associates, Inc
Daniel Padien & Christine Hopps, MassDEP Waterways



New Bedford, Massachusetts
Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Figure 1
Planning Area

Source: Fort Point Associates, Inc., 2025; MassGIS, 2023; CZM, 2011



New Bedford, Massachusetts
Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Figure 2
Planning Area Subdistricts
Source: Fort Point Associates, Inc., 2025; MassGIS, 2023

Attachment B

COMMUNITY SURVEY FORM
AND RESULTS

New Bedford/Fairhaven Municipal Harbor Plan Update

COMMUNITY SURVEY

1. What is your connection to the harbor? (select all that apply)

☐

I live near the waterfront

☐

I work in a marine-related industry (fishing, marine trades, shipping, transportation, etc.)

☐

I work on/near the waterfront (non-marine industry)

☐

I own/operate a waterfront business

☐

I visit the waterfront for recreation or events

☐

I rarely/never visit the harbor

2. When you visit the harbor, what do you most often do there? (select all that apply)

☐

Work

☐

Walking, biking, or exercise

☐

Boating (commercial or fishing)

☐

Recreational boating

☐

Visiting parks/open space

☐

Dining and shopping

☐

Other: _____

3. Which factor has the biggest impact on your quality of life near the harbor? (select all that apply)

☐

Flooding and storm damage

☐

Aging utilities and infrastructure

☐

Number/location of safe crossings or connections for walking or biking

☐

Amount of community spaces near the water

☐

Impacts from industrial uses (noises/odors/etc.)

☐

Other: _____

New Bedford/Fairhaven Municipal Harbor Plan Update

COMMUNITY SURVEY

4. Which factors do you feel could limit the experience of the harbor to a visitor? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Limited or unclear wayfinding and waterfront access points
- ☐ Lack of amenities, including seating, shade, or restrooms
- ☐ Flooding or storm impacts
- ☐ Safety or infrastructure concerns
- ☐ Limited transportation options (walking, biking, or boating)
- ☐ Unclear or unwelcoming feeling at waterfront due to industrial uses

5. Which of the following do you feel would increase visitation to the waterfront? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Additional wayfinding and waterfront access points
- ☐ Increased historical and cultural education
- ☐ Programming like festivals, tours, or events
- ☐ Increased access to amenities, including seating, shade, and restrooms

New Bedford/Fairhaven Municipal Harbor Plan Update

COMMUNITY SURVEY

6. What do you currently use the proposed RiverWalk area for? (select all that apply):

- ☐ Walking
- ☐ Biking
- ☐ Recreational boating
- ☐ Visting parks / open space
- ☐ Other: _____

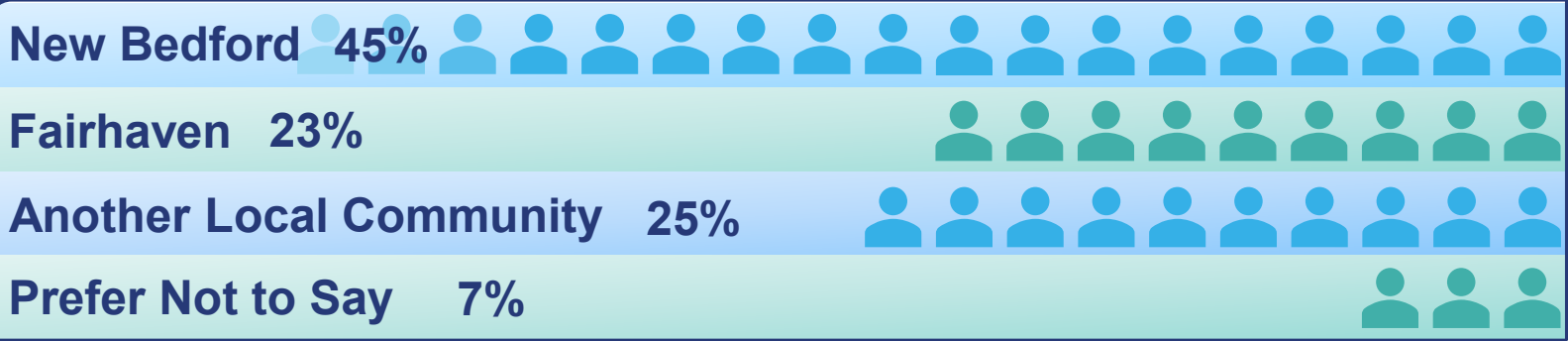
7. What uses would you like to see provided by the RiverWalk project? (select all that apply):

- ☐ Paved and accessible riverfront pathway
- ☐ Additional signage and clear access points to the river
- ☐ Seating areas with benches, picnic tables and planting
- ☐ Increased access to the Acushnet River through kayak launches or overlooks
- ☐ Other: _____

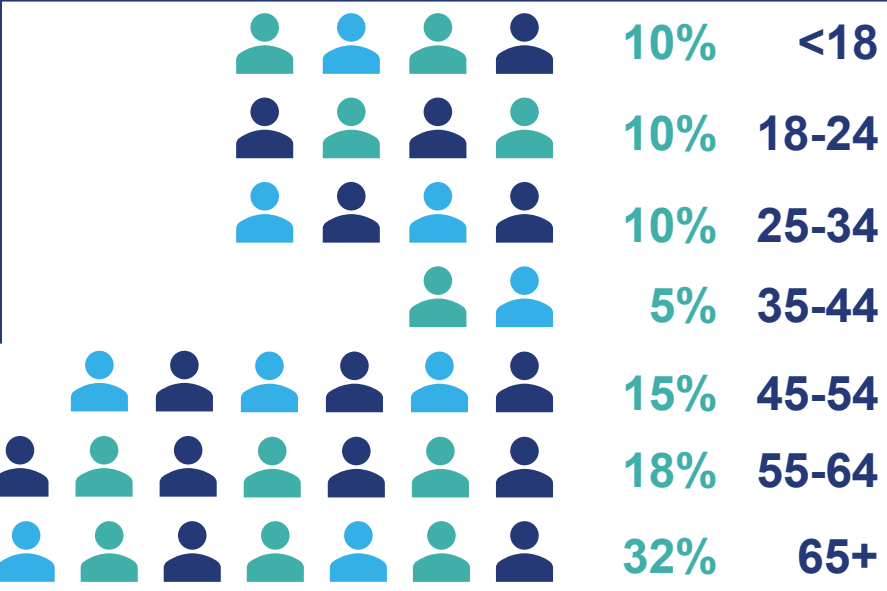
8. Which type of site improvements are most important to you as part of the RiverWalk Project (select all that apply):

- ☐ Benches
- ☐ Bike Racks
- ☐ Picnic Tables
- ☐ Trash and Recycling Receptacles
- ☐ Dog Waste Receptacles
- ☐ Wayfinding Signage
- ☐ Lighting

Respondents' Hometowns



Respondents' Ages



Harbor Positives

26%

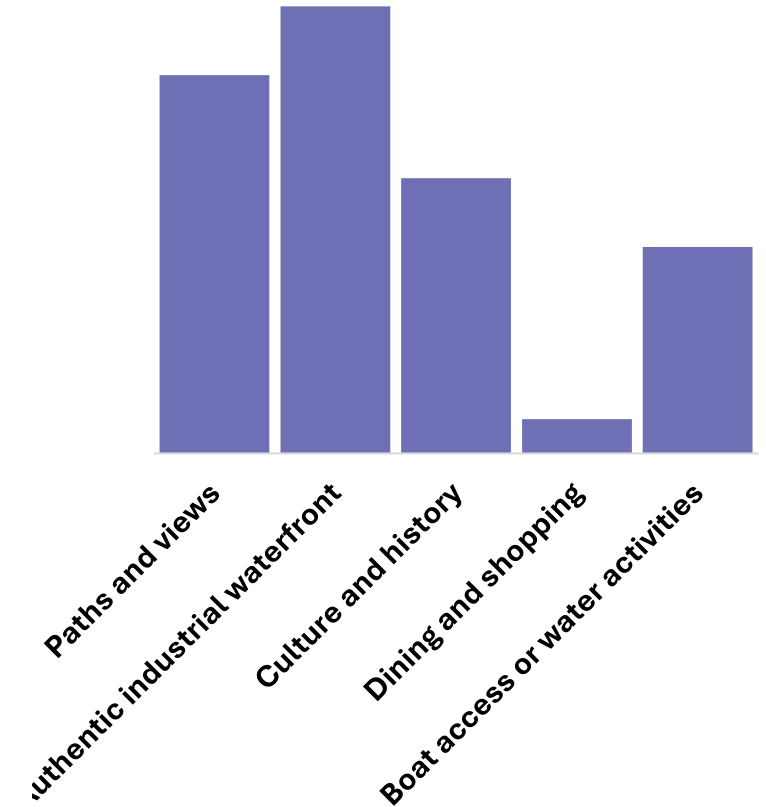
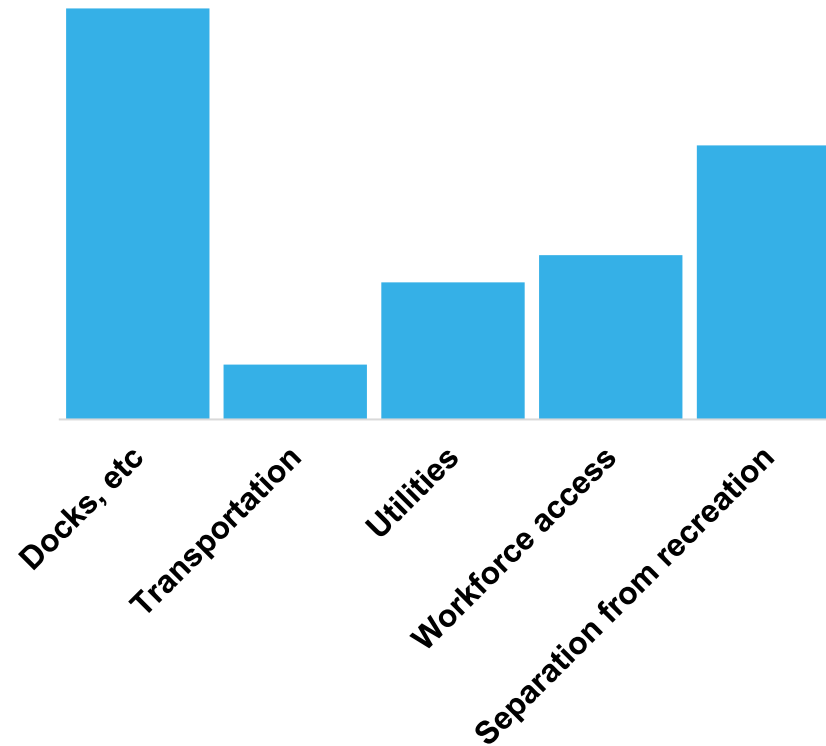
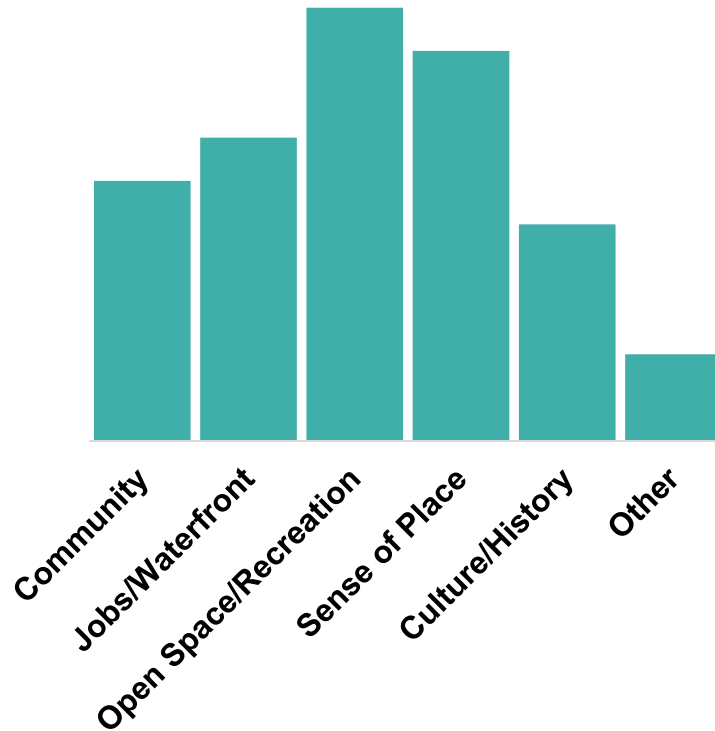
said **Open Space & Recreation** is what they value most about living near the harbor.

39%

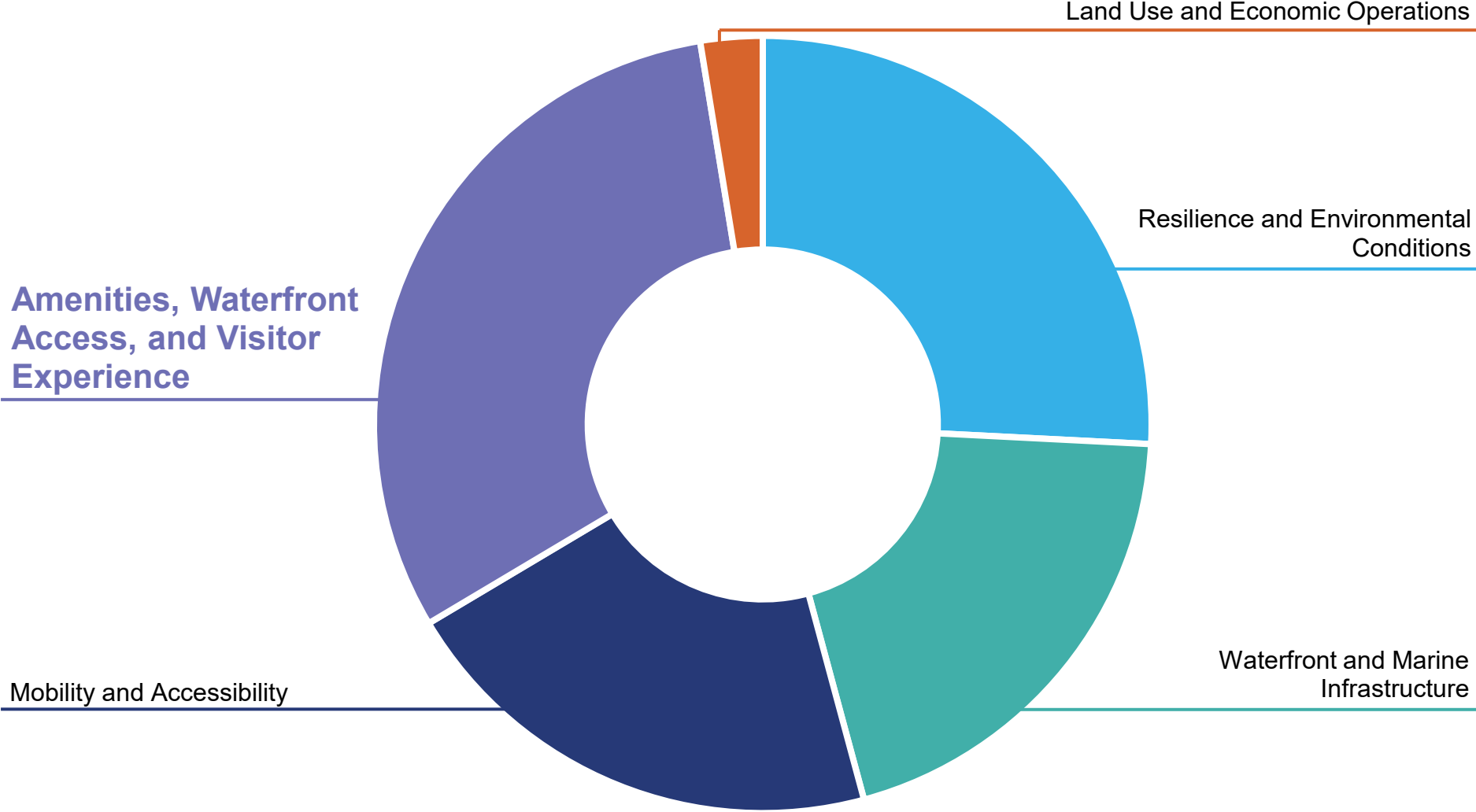
said waterfront business/industries are best served by the existing **Docks, Piers, & Bulkheads**.

33%

said **access to an authentic industrial waterfront** is the most appealing aspect of the harbor.



Opportunities for Improvement



Attachment C

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2010 MHP

Attachment C: Status of Recommendations from the 2010 MHP

2010 MHP Section	Recommendation	Status	Notes
7.2.1	Harbor Dredging (Harbor-wide Initiative)	Complete	Phase V Dredging Program was completed in 2024. Phase VI Dredging Program is in the preliminary stage of development within an Expression of Interest (EOI) issued to stakeholders in Fall 2025.
7.2.2	Bulkheads and Waterfront Development Shoreline Facilities (WDSF) – South Terminal Extension	Complete	New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal (formerly known as South Terminal) was completed in 2015 and has been used for marshalling the Vineyard Wind 1 offshore project.
7.2.2	Bulkheads and Waterfront Development Shoreline Facilities (WDSF) – State Pier Rehabilitation	Not Complete	As of November 2025, State Pier is currently closed due to a state of disrepair on the east and south wharf portions of the site. Previously scheduled repairs to the north wharf are set for 2026.
7.2.2	Bulkheads and Waterfront Development Shoreline Facilities (WDSF) – North Terminal	Partially Complete	Substantial extension of bulkhead completed in 2024 (approximately 650 linear feet). Additional authorized extension length of bulkhead facilities remains but will require additional funding.
7.2.2	Bulkheads and Waterfront Development Shoreline Facilities (WDSF) – Popes Island Marine Terminal	No Longer Applicable	MHP 2020 Clarification Plan eliminated this WDSF project.
7.2.2	Bulkheads and Waterfront Development Shoreline Facilities (WDSF) – Union Wharf Bulkhead	Partially Complete	Union Wharf bulkhead replacement project is in progress, but it is not utilized as a WDSF.
7.2.3	Commercial Fishing – Berthing Space by New Bedford Harbor Development Commission (HDC)	Complete	NBPA (formerly known as NB HDC) expanded and continues to prioritize the management of commercial vessel berthing space, including the addition of new space with the extension of Leonard's Wharf currently underway, as well as the federally funded pier repair and fendering improvement project completed in 2024.
7.2.3	Commercial Fishing – Berthing Space by Fairhaven	Complete	The Town of Fairhaven expanded and continues to prioritize the management of commercial vessel berthing space.
7.2.3	Commercial Fishing – Seafood Display Auction	Complete	The Seafood Display Auction continues to operate in the same location as in 2010.
7.2.3	Commercial Fishing – Hub Service Port	Complete	The Harbor continues to function as a fully functional commercial fishing hub service port.

7.2.4	Freight Operations (Harbor-wide Initiative)	Complete	Investments in large waterfront parcels and infrastructure support potential future expansion of freight operations in the Harbor.
7.2.5	Water Transportation (Harbor-wide Initiative)	Partially Complete	While NBPA operates a launch from Popes Island Marina, Harbor-wide water shuttle service for the public has not been implemented.
7.2.6	DPA Development (Harbor-wide Initiative)	Complete	See Chapter 6: DPA Master Plan for additional information on the status of the DPA.
7.2.7	Watersheet Management Plan (Harbor-wide Initiative)	Complete	Vessel traffic in the Harbor remains high and warrants continued evolution of a Watersheet Management Plan. NBPA is currently undertaking an effort to develop a digital Waterways Traffic Monitoring System utilizing the newly installed Artificial Intelligence-enabled camera system.
7.2.8	Port Governance and Management (Harbor-wide Initiative)	Not Complete	A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) still does not exist between the City of New Bedford and the Town of Fairhaven to define roles/responsibilities in management of the Harbor. There has not been an identified need for such an MOA since the 2010 Plan. Both communities have worked cooperatively and productively without an MOA in place.
7.2.9	Public Access/Waterfront Open Space – Upper Harbor Public Access	Partially Complete	The City of New Bedford is currently filing for state permits to initiate Phase I of the RiverWalk project in the Upper Harbor.
7.2.9	Public Access/Waterfront Open Space – Hurricane Barrier Boardwalk	Complete	Harbor Walk and Cove Walk are completed. For the 2026 MHP, a public site walk was conducted on the Harbor Walk.
7.2.9	Public Access/Waterfront Open Space – Clark’s Cove	Complete	The City of New Bedford continues to maintain and enhance public access at Clark’s Cove to enhance public recreation.
7.2.9	Public Access/Waterfront Open Space – Rodney French Blvd. Bike Path	Not Complete	The connection between Cove Street and Gifford Street has not been completed to date.
7.2.9	Public Access/Waterfront Open Space – Palmer’s Island	Not Complete	A formal connection from the Hurricane Barrier to Palmer’s Island does not exist currently.
7.2.9	Public Access/Waterfront Open Space – Marsh Island	Partially Complete	Restoration of Marsh Island, as led by the Buzzards Bay Coalition and the Fairhaven-Acushnet Land Preservation Trust, has successfully restored six of the 22-acre Marsh Island and reopened it to the public.
7.2.9	Public Access/Waterfront Open Space – Fairhaven Open Space Network/Bike Path	Partially Complete	The Town of Fairhaven continues to invest in enhancing open space and public access along the waterfront, including new sidewalks and improved bike paths.

7.2.9	Public Access/Waterfront Open Space – New Bedford Harbor Promenade/Waterfront Public Access	Partially Complete	The City of New Bedford and MassDOT continue to invest in enhancing pedestrian connectivity and amenities along Route 18, which separates the Harbor from downtown New Bedford. Significant improvements have been made to connecting downtown to the waterfront and along MacArthur Drive.
7.2.10	Tourism (Harbor-wide Initiative)	Complete	The tourism sector in the Harbor continues to thrive with a growing number of cruise ship calls annually. In 2024, intercity rail between Boston and New Bedford furthered connection to the Harbor for visitors.
7.2.11	Creative Economy and the Waterfront (Harbor-wide Initiative)	Complete	Arts and culture, including robust public programing and the presence of public art around the Harbor, continue to thrive.
7.2.12	Recreational Boating (Harbor-wide Initiative)	Complete	Recreational boating in the Harbor has grown significantly, including a strong mix of rowing clubs, sailing organizations, and motorized boaters. Demand for marina slips and moorings remains high and these recreational boating amenities have been expanded since 2010.
7.2.13	Environmental Stewardship – Storm- and Waste-Water Discharge Elimination	Partially Complete	The City of New Bedford Department of Public Infrastructure and the Town of Fairhaven Sewer Department manage required illicit discharge programs to identify and eliminate storm- and waste-water discharge under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program.
7.2.13	Environmental Stewardship – Vessel Sewage Discharge	Partially Complete	The Harbor participated in MassDEP’s “Clean Bilge” program to support proper vessel sewage discharge practices in the Harbor. MassDEP has suspended its funding of the program, and no permanent bilge pump-out facility has been sited at this time.
7.2.13	Environmental Stewardship – Discharge Elimination Education	Complete	Discharge elimination educational materials are available for commercial businesses and recreational boaters in the Harbor.
7.2.13	Environmental Stewardship – Natural Resources Protection and Pollution Prevention	Partially Complete	Restoration of Upper Harbor shoreline areas continues in coordination with the EPA- and MassDEP-led Harbor cleanup efforts.
7.2.13	Environmental Stewardship – Green Ports	Not Complete	While the NBPA continues to pursue grants to support energy efficiency measures and sustainability best practices on projects, a formal Green Ports program has not been established.

7.2.13	Environmental Stewardship – Combined Sewer Overflow	Partially Complete	The City of New Bedford is implementing its <i>Long Term CSO Control and Integrated Capital Improvements Plan</i> , which is subject to a consent order from EPA that outlines projects from 2017 through 2036 to address sewer separation projects and other wastewater and stormwater improvements throughout New Bedford’s North End and South End neighborhoods.
7.2.14	Passenger Rail Transportation	Complete	Intercity rail between Boston and New Bedford was completed in 2024.
7.2.14	Parking (Harbor-wide Initiative)	Complete	The NBPA manages parking demand on its assets along the waterfront.
7.3.1.1	Fish Piers Repair and Expansion (New Bedford Central Waterfront)	Partially Complete	A \$10 million pier repair and fendering replacement program on multiple piers, wharves and bulkheads was completed in 2024. A project is currently underway to reconstruct and expand Leonard’s Wharf. There is currently no timetable for a project at Homer’s Wharf, though a federal grant application is pending to fund its reconstruction.
7.3.1.2	State Pier Redevelopment/Revitalization (New Bedford Central Waterfront)	Not Complete	MassDevelopment released a near-term and long-term vision for the State Pier in 2024. However, the State Pier has since closed due to a state of disrepair on the east and south wharves.
7.3.1.3	JFK Memorial Highway Improvements (New Bedford Central Waterfront)	Complete	Improvements to JFK Memorial Highway were completed by MassDOT in 2018, dramatically improving the pedestrian connections between downtown New Bedford and the Harbor.
7.3.1.4	Reuse of Former Power Plant Site (New Bedford Central Waterfront)	Complete	The former NSTAR/Eversource/Sprague parcels that comprise the power plant site have now been redeveloped into the New Bedford Foss Marine Terminal and adjacent redevelopment activities.
7.3.1.5	Harbor Promenade/Gateway/Access (New Bedford Central Waterfront)	Partially Complete	See 7.2.9 - Public Access/Waterfront Open Space – New Bedford Harbor Promenade/Waterfront Public Access above.
7.3.1.6	Harbor Viewing Tower – Fisherman’s Wharf	No Longer Applicable	The existing support structure for the Route 18 pedestrian bridge was demolished by MassDOT in 2024 to remove the aging concrete structure from Route 18 right-of-way. A new pedestrian overpass has been constructed in coordination with the new intercity rail station in New Bedford.
7.3.1.7	Former Twin Piers Restaurant	Complete	This restaurant site operated as Waterfront Grille for many years. It is currently being successfully operated as Merrills on the Waterfront.

7.3.1.8	Hotel Development	Complete	Fairfield by Marriott Inn & Suites has been operating on the New Bedford waterfront since the 2010 MHP. It contains the Waypoint Event Center which includes conference, events, and meeting spaces. Public Meetings #1 and #4 for the 2026 MHP were held at the Waypoint Event Center. Additionally, a new hotel development, which will increase hotel space along the waterfront by 200-300 keys, has been proposed at 1 Pearl Street near the intercity rail station.
7.3.1.9	Transient Boater Facility/Tourism Welcome Center	Not Complete	A transient boat welcome center has not been developed. Transient boat slips are available at NBPA-operated properties, including Popes Island Marina.
7.3.1.10	Waterfront Access/Downtown Access/Streetscape Study	Not Complete	A waterfront access-specific plan for Water Street was not developed for the Town of Fairhaven. The Town of Fairhaven is currently updating its townwide Open Space and Recreation Plan.
7.3.1.11	Historic Structures and Areas – Downtown Fairhaven	Partially Complete	The Town of Fairhaven has invested in streetscape improvements throughout its downtown area, including a recent project completed along Ferry Street. Historic designation of additional waterfront properties was not pursued.
7.3.1.11	Historic Structures and Areas – Bourne Counting House	Complete	Bourne Counting House is home to Ground Floor Coffee shop with upper floor office space.
7.3.11	Historic Structures and Areas – Wharfinger Building/Visitors Center	Partially Completed	The Wharfinger Building is currently in use as a seasonal café. In 2022, the visitor's center within the building was closed.
7.3.2.1	Transportation Center (North Terminal/Hicks Logan)	Complete	In 2024, intercity rail between Boston and New Bedford was completed. It is served by a new rail station constructed by MBTA, as well as parking at the Whale's Tooth Parking Lot operated by the NBPA.
7.3.2.1	Commuter Rail and Bus Terminal (North Terminal/Hicks Logan)	Complete	In 2024, intercity rail between Boston and New Bedford was completed.
7.3.2.1	Freight Rail/Truck/Container Staging (North Terminal/Hicks Logan)	Not Complete	Intermodal (ship-to-rail for cargo or truck-to-rail for processed seafood) freight connections remain a substantial opportunity for the Harbor.
7.3.2.1	Freight Haul Road (North Terminal/Hicks Logan)	Not Complete	A designated haul road is not established to date and MassDOT I-195 construction is anticipated to cause disruption to typical haul routes.
7.3.2.1	Bus/Rail Repair/Layover (North Terminal/Hicks Logan)	Not Complete	The bus maintenance and storage garage remains in its original location.

7.3.2.2	Confined Disposal Facilities – EPA De-Sanding Facility (North Terminal/Hicks Logan)	Not Complete	The EPA and MassDEP-led Harbor cleanup continues, and this facility is still in use by the EPA. Once this land is transferred to the City of New Bedford, redevelopment activities will commence.
7.3.2.2	Confined Disposal Facilities – EPA De-Watering Facility (North Terminal/Hicks Logan)	Partially Complete	This parcel was transferred to the City of New Bedford in 2022. Planning efforts for redevelopment on this parcel are underway.
7.3.2.2	Confined Disposal Facilities – North Terminal Land Expansion (North Terminal/Hicks Logan)	Partially Complete	Substantial extension of bulkhead completed in 2024 (approximately 650 linear feet). Authorized extension length of bulkhead facilities remains but will require additional funding.
7.3.2.3	Hicks Logan Mixed Use Development/Industrial Park (North Terminal/Hicks Logan)	Partially Complete	Redevelopment within the Hicks Logan area continues, including investments at North Terminal and the former Revere Copper site.
7.3.3.1	Bulkhead Extensions (South Terminal/Hurricane Barrier)	Complete	Bulkhead extension for the New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal was completed in 2014.
7.3.3.2	Standard Times Field Development (South Terminal/Hurricane Barrier)	Complete	The Standard Times Field site was evaluated and remediated under the City's Brownfields pilot program and divided into ten parcels for sale and redevelopment by private parties. These sites currently operate in a wide range of industrial uses.
7.3.3.3	Commercial and Recreational Boat Service Center – Gifford Street Boat Lot (South Terminal/ Hurricane Barrier)	Not Complete	No modifications or improvements have been made to the Gifford Street Boat Lot.
7.3.3.3	Commercial and Recreational Boat Service Center – Palmer's Island/Hurricane Barrier (South Terminal/ Hurricane Barrier)	Not Complete	No modifications or improvements have been made to Palmer's Island. A formal connection from the Hurricane Barrier to Palmer's Island does not exist currently.
7.3.3.4	Public Access (South Terminal/ Hurricane Barrier)	Complete	Harbor Walk and Cove Walk are completed. For the 2026 MHP, a public site walk was conducted on the Harbor Walk.
7.3.3.5	Berkshire Hathaway Mill Complex (South Terminal/ Hurricane Barrier)	Partially Complete	Some buildings in this complex have been demolished, but full redevelopment of the complex has not been completed.
7.3.3.6	JFK Memorial Highway Improvements (South Terminal/ Hurricane Barrier)	Partially Complete	Improvements to JFK Memorial Highway adjacent to Downtown NB were completed by MassDOT in 2018. Continued improvements to JFK Memorial Highway further south could improve pedestrian connectivity to the waterfront from the South End and Gomes Street neighborhoods.

7.3.3.7	East Rodney French Blvd/Hurricane Barrier Improvements (South Terminal/Hurricane Barrier)	Complete	The Cove Walk is complete, and the City of New Bedford continues to maintain and enhance public access along East Rodney French Boulevard to enhance public recreation.
7.3.4.1	New Bedford/Fairhaven Bridge (Route 6) (Popes and Fish Island)	Partially Complete	MassDOT is currently designing a replacement structure for the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge, which is planned to be a vertical lift bridge.
7.3.4.2	New Harbor Terminal (Popes and Fish Island)	No Longer Applicable	MHP 2020 Clarification Plan eliminated this WDSF project.
7.3.4.3	HDC Offices and Municipal Boat Docks (Popes and Fish Island)	Complete	Pier 3 now serves as a central point for municipal/port vessels. The NBPA offices opened at a new location in 2021 providing office space, conference/meeting rooms, storage, and other space for NBPA operations.
7.3.5.1	Community/Waterfront Gateway (Fairhaven Central Waterfront)	Partially Complete	Improvements have been made to the Seaport Inn and Marina, however marina expansion and enhancement of pedestrian amenities have not been initiated at this time.
7.3.5.2	Recreational Waterfront – Middle Street (Fairhaven Central Waterfront)	Partially Complete	The Town of Fairhaven continues to invest in enhancing open space and public access along the waterfront.
7.3.5.2	Recreational Waterfront – Pease Park Boat Ramp (Fairhaven Central Waterfront)	Complete	The Pease Park Boat Ramp has been improved since 2010.
7.3.5.2	Recreational Waterfront – Mooring Field (Fairhaven Central Waterfront)	Complete	The Town of Fairhaven expanded and continues to prioritize the management of moorings in the Harbor.
7.3.5.2	Recreational Waterfront – Charter/Excursion Vessel Center/Berthing Area (Fairhaven Central Waterfront)	Complete	The north side of Union Wharf is now used for charter vessels and other vessel berthing to support the recreational waterfront. Demand remains high for this space at Union Wharf and along the Fairhaven Central Waterfront.
7.3.5.2	Recreational Waterfront- Linberg Marine (Fairhaven Central Waterfront)	No Longer Applicable	The Linberg Marine site was sold in 2025 and is anticipated to be put into commercial use by its new ownership group.
7.3.5.2	Recreational Waterfront – Park Motors (Fairhaven Central Waterfront)	Not Complete	The former Park Motors site at 67 Middle Street remains a vacant lot that has not been redeveloped.
7.3.5.3	Fairhaven DPA – Union Wharf (Fairhaven Central Waterfront)	Not Complete	Union Wharf bulkhead replacement project is in progress, but it is not utilized as a WDSF.
7.3.5.3	Fairhaven DPA – Fairhaven Shipyard (Fairhaven Central Waterfront)	Complete	Fairhaven Shipyard North Yard has become the primary shipyard facility for commercial fishing boats and other vessels in the Harbor.

7.3.5.3	Fairhaven DPA – Steamship Authority (Fairhaven Central Waterfront)	Complete	The Steamship Authority redeveloped this parcel in 2010 to establish a vessel repair and maintenance facility to support its fleet.
7.3.5.3	Fairhaven DPA – Expansion of Fishing Boat Berthing (Fairhaven Central Waterfront)	Complete	The Town of Fairhaven expanded and continues to prioritize the management of commercial vessel berthing space.
7.3.6.1	Marsh Island (Fairhaven Waterfront North & South)	Partially Complete	Restoration of Marsh Island, as led by the Buzzards Bay Coalition and the Fairhaven-Acushnet Land Preservation Trust, has successfully restored six of the 22-acre Marsh Island and reopened it to the public.
7.3.6.2	Mooring Area Expansion (Fairhaven Waterfront North & South)	Complete	The Town of Fairhaven expanded and continues to prioritize the management of moorings in the Harbor.
7.3.7	Upper Harbor Recommendations	Partially Complete	Restoration of Upper Harbor shoreline areas continues in coordination with the EPA- and MassDEP-led Harbor cleanup efforts. The City of New Bedford is currently filing for state permits to initiate Phase I of the RiverWalk project in the Upper Harbor.
7.3.8.1	Harbor Line – Program/Study	Not Complete	While Harbor Line Amendment(s) have been proposed in the period of the prior Harbor Plan, a comprehensive review of the Harbor Line has not been completed.
7.3.8.2	DPA - Program/Study	Not Complete	The DPA Boundary for the Port of New Bedford/Fairhaven has remained unchanged through the period of the prior Harbor Plan.
7.3.8.3	Waterfront Public Access Plan – Program/Study	Not Complete	While both communities have prioritized public access and initiated and completed projects to increase waterfront public access, a comprehensive waterfront access-specific plan for the Harbor has not been developed.
7.3.8.4	Comprehensive Green Port Strategy – Program/Study	Not Complete	While the NBPA continues to pursue grants to support energy efficiency measures and sustainability best practices on projects, a formal Green Ports program has not been established.

Attachment D

COASTAL FLOOD RESILIENCY
ANALYSIS



MEMORANDUM

TO: Katie Moniz, Fort Point Associates, Inc., A Tetra Tech Company
FROM: Joe Famely and Linnea Laux, Woods Hole Group
RE: New Bedford/Fairhaven Municipal Harbor Plan Update
Coastal Resiliency Analysis and Recommendations
DATE: December 19, 2025

Introduction

Woods Hole Group provides subject matter expertise regarding sea level rise due to climate change and coastal flood resilience to support the New Bedford/Fairhaven Municipal Harbor Plan Update. The Planning Area extends from Clarks Cove to Fort Taber Park in New Bedford and Fort Phoenix in Fairhaven to the Acushnet town line, as shown in Figure 1. This memorandum analyzes the potential impact of projected sea level rise on closures of the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier.

The New Bedford Hurricane Barrier (“Hurricane Barrier”) is maintained and operated by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). It has been certified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide a certain level of flood protection to areas landward of the barrier and berm. Areas inside the Hurricane Barrier are considered substantially protected from storm surge up to its crest elevation of 18.6ft North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD88). This elevation provides a significant protective benefit for storms in the present day and in future projections and is only overtopped by stillwater in extreme storms in the 2070-time horizon. The decision to close the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier takes in factors other than the real-time water surface elevation, but closures generally occur when the water level reaches 5.4’ Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW). In New Bedford, the USACE uses a conversion of -1.92’ to translate elevations from MLLW to NAVD88. Therefore, this analysis assumes that the barrier will be closed when the water level reaches 3.48’ NAVD88. However, closing the barrier during non-storm conditions is not ideal, as New Bedford Harbor cannot operate normally during a closure. Frequent closures due to tidal conditions and small storms would have a negative economic impact on the Harbor.

Woods Hole Group was asked to develop recommendations for coastal flood resilience in the Harbor Planning Area. For areas inside the Harbor, WHG analyzed the frequency of Hurricane Barrier closures under projected future conditions and conducted sensitivity analyses to inform recommendations for reducing closure frequency. Frequent closures impair Harbor function, impact water quality, and cause increased wear and tear that can impact infrastructural service life. Woods Hole Group developed recommended Design Flood Elevations (DFE) for areas inside the Hurricane Barrier that would decrease the frequency of closures. DFEs for areas outside of the Hurricane Barrier were also developed.

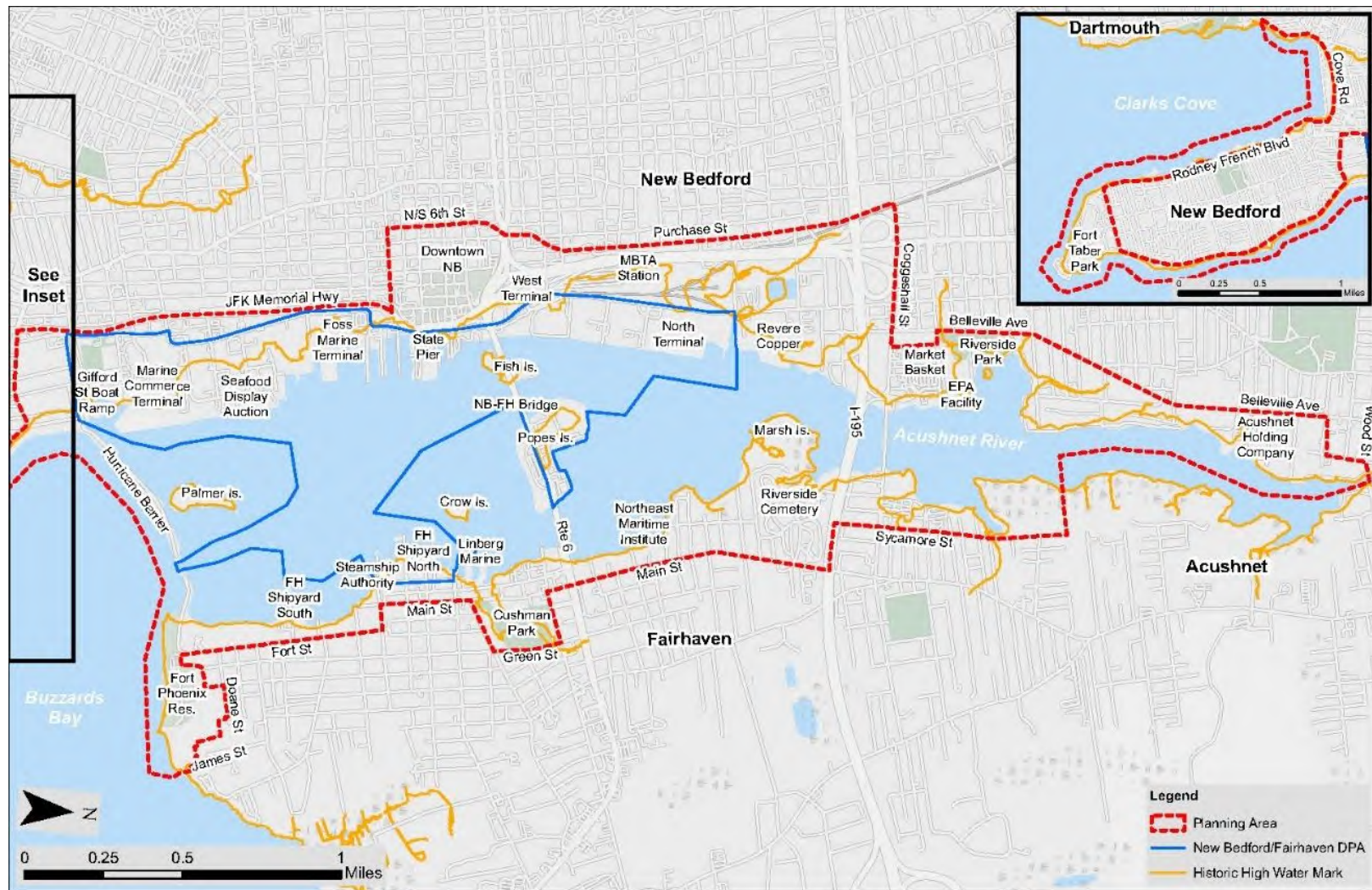


Figure 1: New Bedford Harbor Plan Project Area.

Sea Level Rise Scenarios

An analysis of annual closure frequency and time was performed using only projected tidal conditions. In other words, the closures projected here would occur during normal tidal conditions, and the impacts of weather (e.g. wind, storm surge, and barometric pressure) are not included in this analysis. Given that weather conditions were not included, the closures projected in this analysis would be expected to disrupt normal harbor operations. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) tidal predictions (water levels at 15-minute intervals) were downloaded for the years 2030, 2040, 2050, 2060, 2070, 2080, 2090, and 2100 for the New Bedford Harbor tide gauge (station 8447636).¹ Sea level rise (SLR) projections for Newport, Rhode Island were recorded for the NOAA Intermediate-Low, Intermediate, Intermediate-High, and High scenarios; as well as the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Intermediate, Intermediate-High, High, and Extreme scenarios.²³ The NOAA Low scenario was omitted because it implies a lower rate of sea level rise than is currently observed. The Newport tide gauge was chosen as a better proxy for New Bedford because of the complexity of hydrodynamics around the Woods Hole tide gauge, the other nearby station with available decadal sea level rise projections. Table 1 and Figure 2 show the Sea Level Rise scenarios used in this analysis.

Table 1: Sea level rise scenarios used in the closure analysis.

Scenario	SLR (ft) (from 2000 baseline) (Newport, RI)							
	2030	2040	2050	2060	2070	2080	2090	2100
NOAA Intermediate-Low	0.65	0.91	1.17	1.43	1.68	1.91	2.14	2.34
NOAA Intermediate	0.68	0.97	1.3	1.67	2.09	2.58	3.19	3.86
NOAA Intermediate-High	0.71	1.06	1.49	1.99	2.63	3.33	4.16	5.05
NOAA High	0.71	1.11	1.6	2.29	3.17	4.19	5.35	6.47
EEA Intermediate	0.7	1	1.6	1.9	2.4	2.9	3.5	4
EEA Intermediate-High	0.9	1.3	1.8	2.3	2.9	3.6	4.4	5.1
EEA High	1.3	1.8	2.4	3.2	4.2	5.2	6.5	7.7
EEA Extreme	1.5	2.2	3.1	4.2	5.5	6.9	8.5	10.3

¹<https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/noaatidepredictions.html?id=8447636&units=standard&bdate=20500911&edate=20500912&timezone=LST/LDT&clock=24hour&datum=MLLW&interval=15&action=dailychart>

² https://sealevel.nasa.gov/task-force-scenario-tool/?psmsl_id=351

³ <https://resilientma-mapcenter-mass-eoea.hub.arcgis.com/datasets/924bb43cdbc4da0ada8a3f0f94aba250/explore?location=42.095764%2C-70.914265%2C8.88&showTable=true>

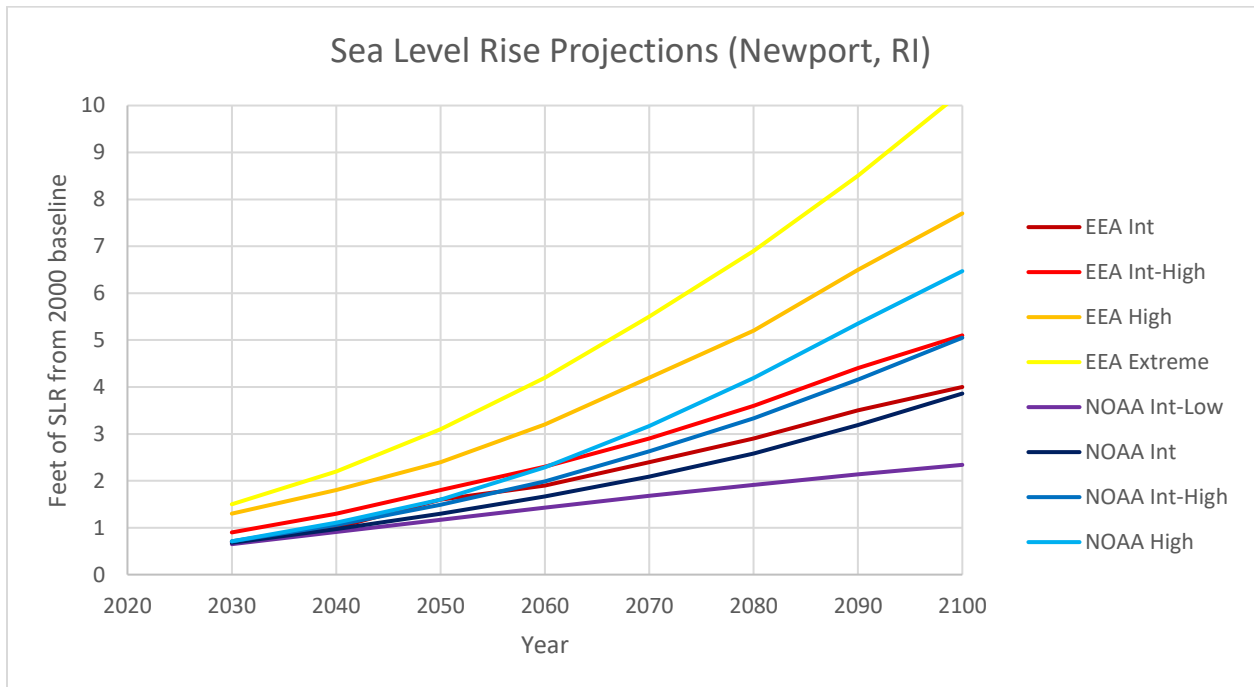


Figure 2: Sea level rise scenarios used in the closure analysis.

The EEA Scenarios generally predict faster rates of sea level rise than the NOAA scenarios. This can be observed by comparing the lightest blue line on Figure 2 (the NOAA High scenario) to the orange line just above it on Figure 2 (the EEA High scenario. The EEA High scenario assumes approximately 0.5' more of sea level rise between 2000 and 2030 and approximately 1.2' more of sea level rise between 2000 and 2100 than the NOAA High scenario. Sea level in the year 2000 is used as a baseline for all future sea level projections discussed in this memorandum. These differences in sea level rise between scenarios arise from differences in the confidence intervals and greenhouse gas emissions pathways used to derive them.

A confidence interval is a range of values with a specific probability that a parameter (such as the amount of sea level rise in a given year) lies within the range. For example, a weather forecaster might be 95% confident that tomorrow's high temperature will be lower than 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Each sea level rise scenario described in Table 1 has a corresponding level of confidence that it will not be exceeded for a given greenhouse gas scenario. NOAA uses the 50th percentile (middle) of the range of possible modeled sea level rise outcomes in a given greenhouse gas scenario for their final sea level rise projections, and EEA uses the 83rd percentile or higher (near the top) of the range of possible outcomes for their final sea level rise projections. This results in higher sea level rise projections and higher probabilities that they will not be

exceeded for given emissions pathways in the EEA scenarios.⁴⁵ This is why EEA sea level rise projections are often described as more conservative than NOAA sea level rise projections.

Future Flood Vulnerability

Massachusetts uses the sea level rise scenario known in the previous section as “EEA High” for statewide planning and modeling efforts. For nearby Newport, RI, this corresponds to 1.3 feet of sea level rise as soon as 2030, 2.4 feet as soon as 2050, and 4.2 feet as soon as 2070. Use of the High scenario is deliberately conservative and ensures that future sea levels are not underpredicted in large infrastructure and planning projects. This sea level rise projection is used to calculate local tidal datums for 2030, 2050, and 2070 planning horizons and is also incorporated into the Massachusetts Coast Flood Risk Model (MC-FRM). The choice to use the “High” scenario for MC-FRM flood modeling and MHW projection means that vulnerability and flooding predicted by these data products may occur later than their corresponding year. In interpreting results, 2030, 2050, and 2070 are generally treated as the soonest that corresponding flood probabilities could be projected, and a 20-year range is applied. In practice, 2030 projections are treated as occurring sometime between 2030 and 2050, and the same applies to 2050 and 2070.

The MC-FRM is a probabilistic hydrodynamic model that is used as the state standard for coastal climate change planning in Massachusetts.⁶ The MC-FRM considers a variety of factors such as sea level rise projections, historical and projected future tropical and extratropical systems, elevation data, and land cover data to provide an accurate representation of potential flood impacts along the state’s coast. The outputs of the model include storm surge flooding projections for three time horizons and a range of annual exceedance probabilities. The Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) of a point refers to that point’s probability of flooding at least once in a given year. A point with a 1% AEP is considered relatively unlikely to experience coastal flooding, while a point with a 100% AEP is expected to flood at least once each year. Figures 3-11 show the results of MC-FRM in the Planning Area.

⁴ https://eea-nescaum-dataservices-assets-prd.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/resources/production/MA%20Statewide%20and%20MajorBasins%20Climate%20Projections_Guidebook%20Supplement_March2018.pdf

⁵ https://earth.gov/sealevel/us/internal_resources/756/noaa-nos-techrpt01-global-regional-SLR-scenarios-US.pdf

⁶ https://eea-nescaum-dataservices-assets-prd.s3.amazonaws.com/cms/GUIDELINES/MC-FRM_FAQ_04-06-22.pdf



Figure 3: MC-FRM probability of flooding in the Planning Area as soon as 2030.

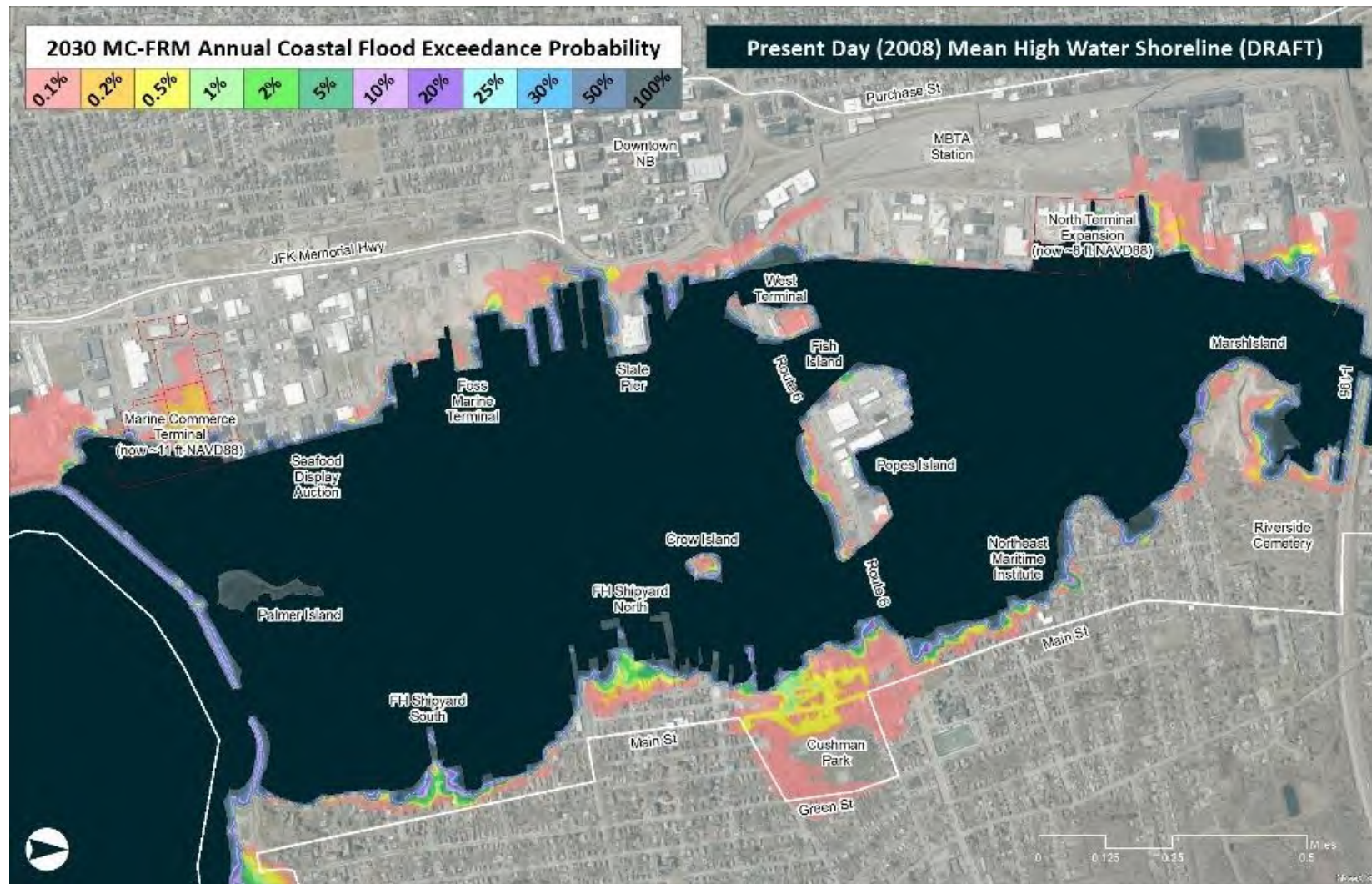


Figure 4: MC-FRM probability of flooding in the Planning Area as soon as 2030.

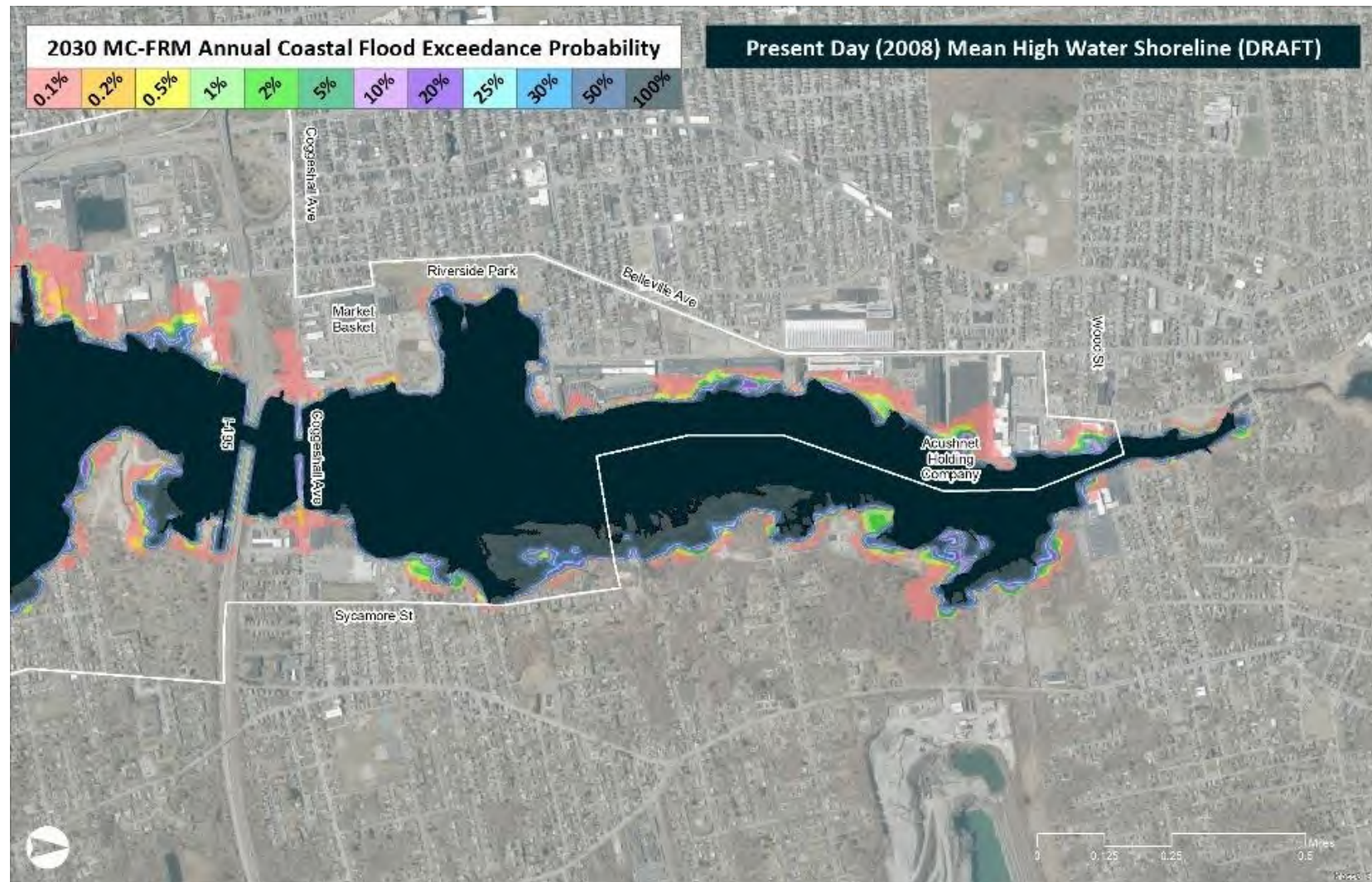


Figure 5: MC-FRM probability of flooding in the Planning Area as soon as 2030.



Figure 6: MC-FRM probability of flooding in the Planning Area as soon as 2050.

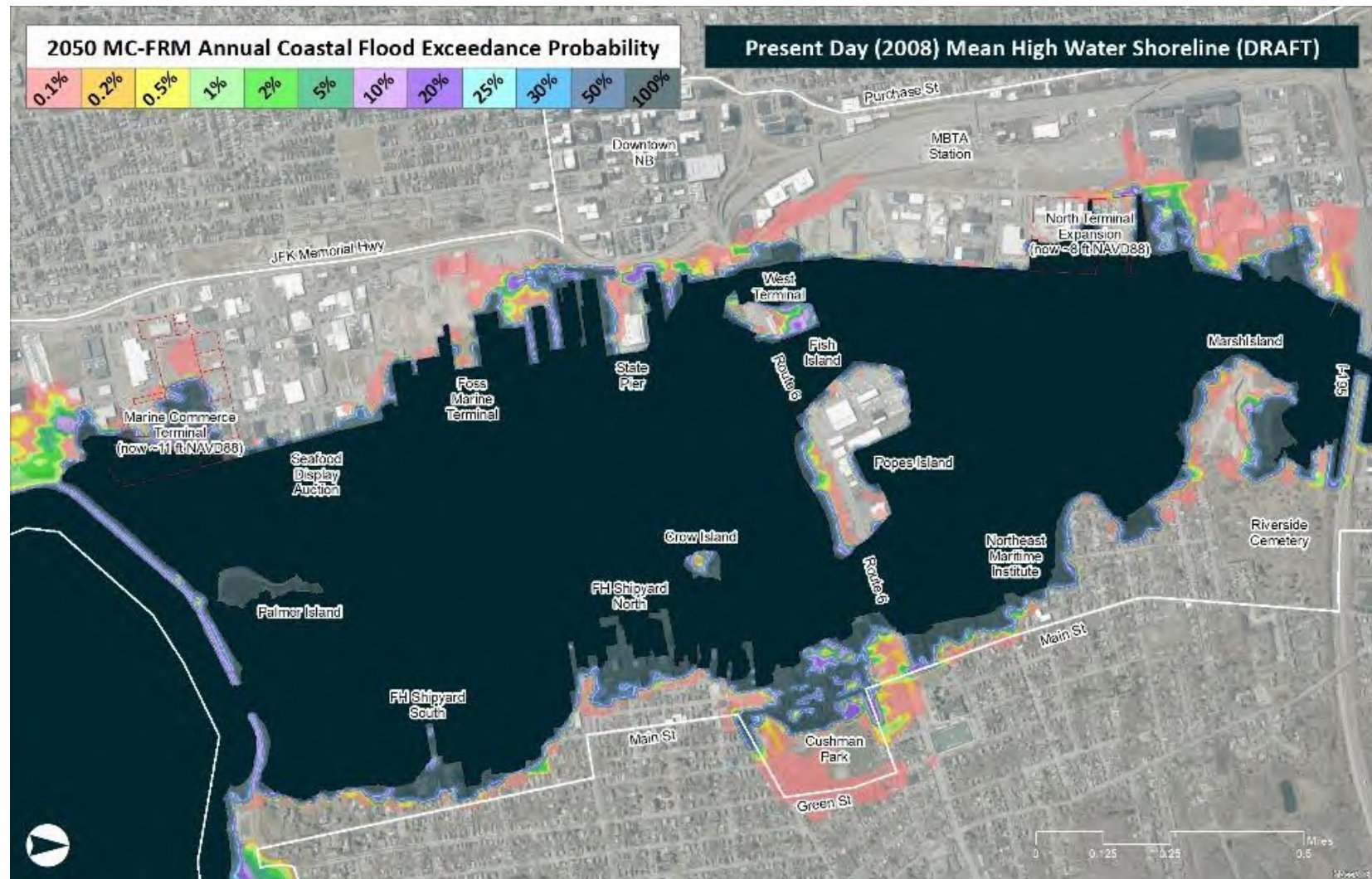


Figure 7: MC-FRM probability of flooding in the Planning Area as soon as 2050.

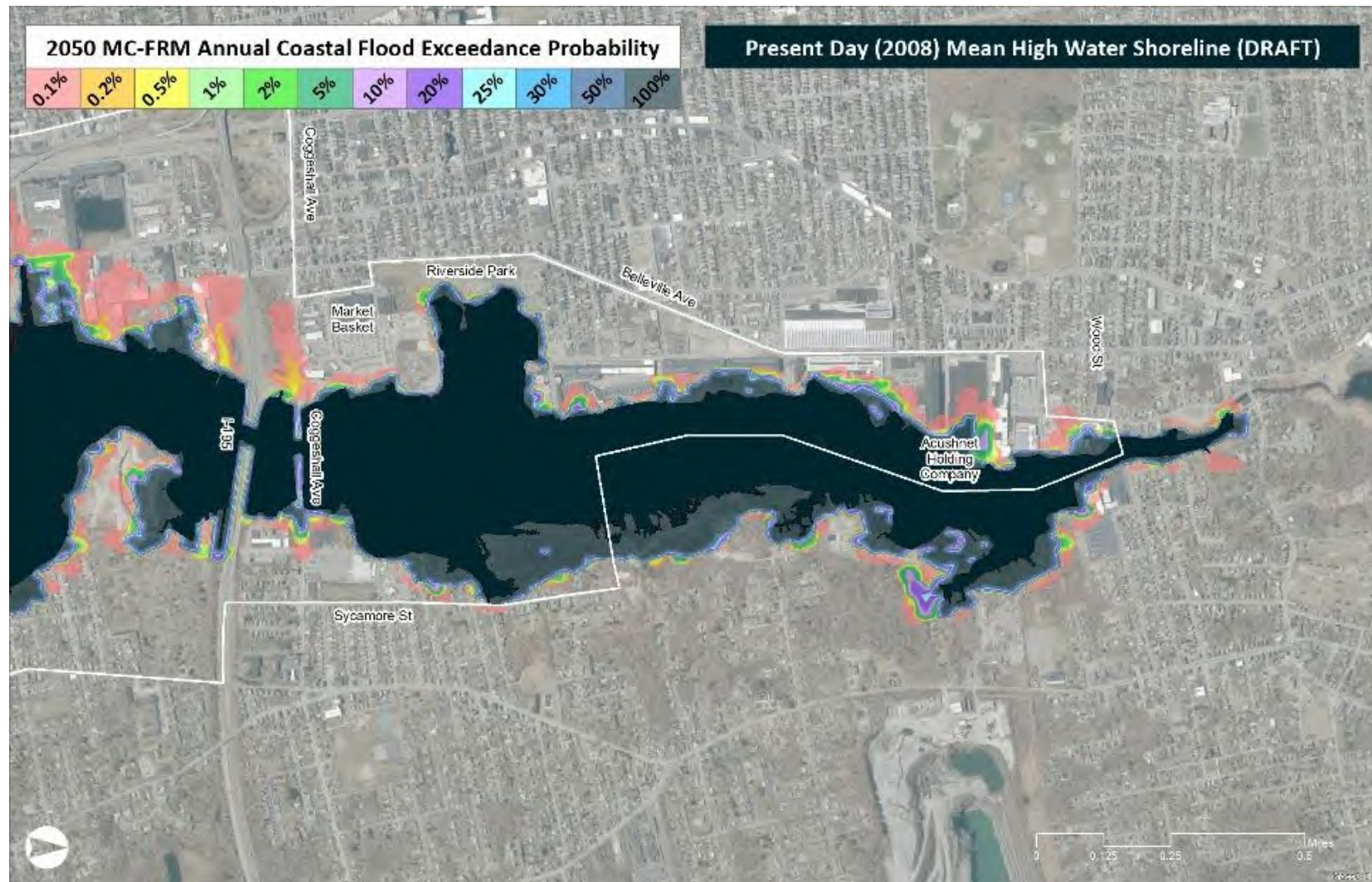


Figure 8: MC-FRM probability of flooding in the Planning Area as soon as 2050.



Figure 9: MC-FRM probability of flooding in the Planning Area as soon as 2070.

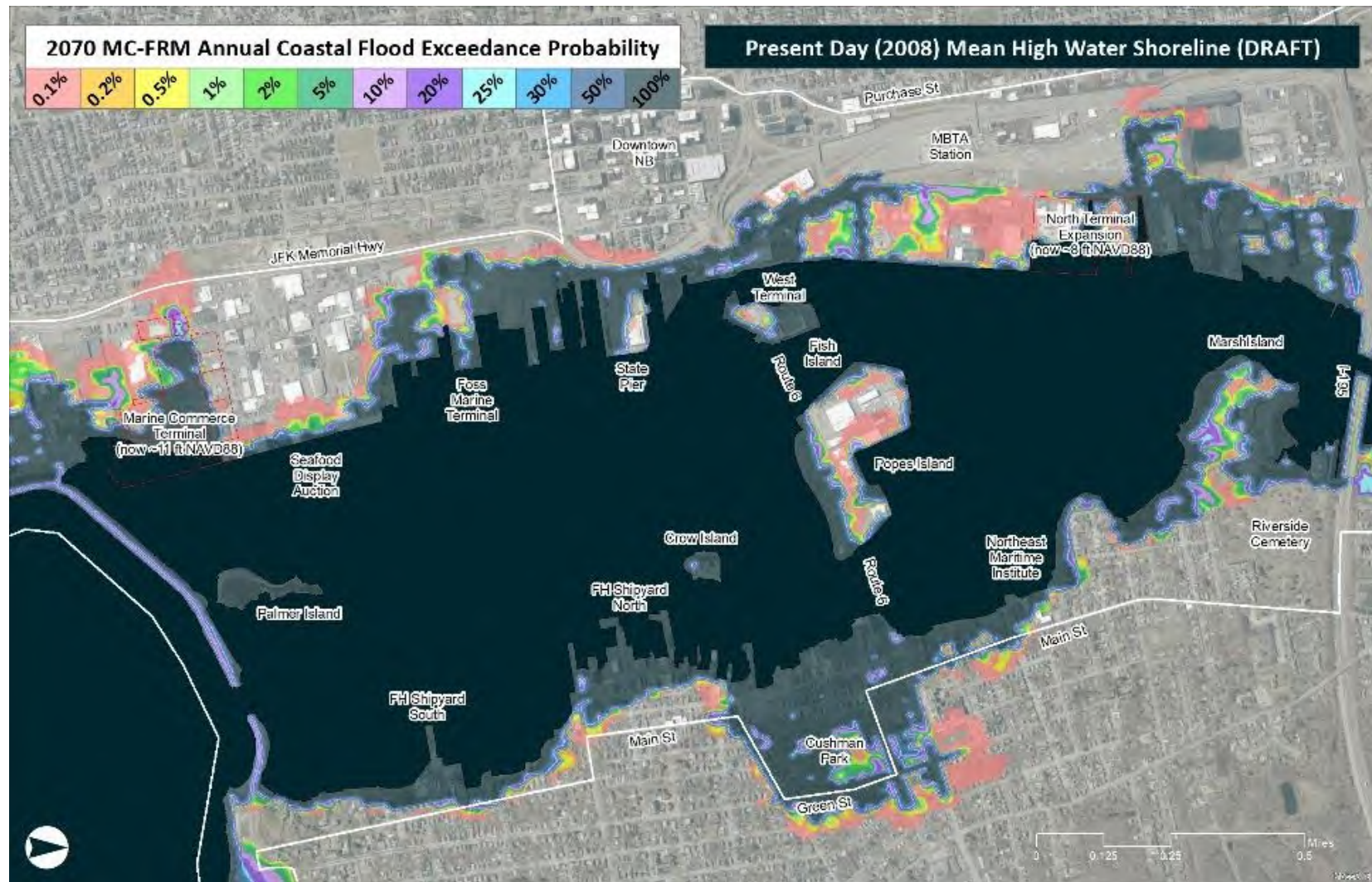


Figure 10: MC-FRM probability of flooding in the Planning Area as soon as 2070.

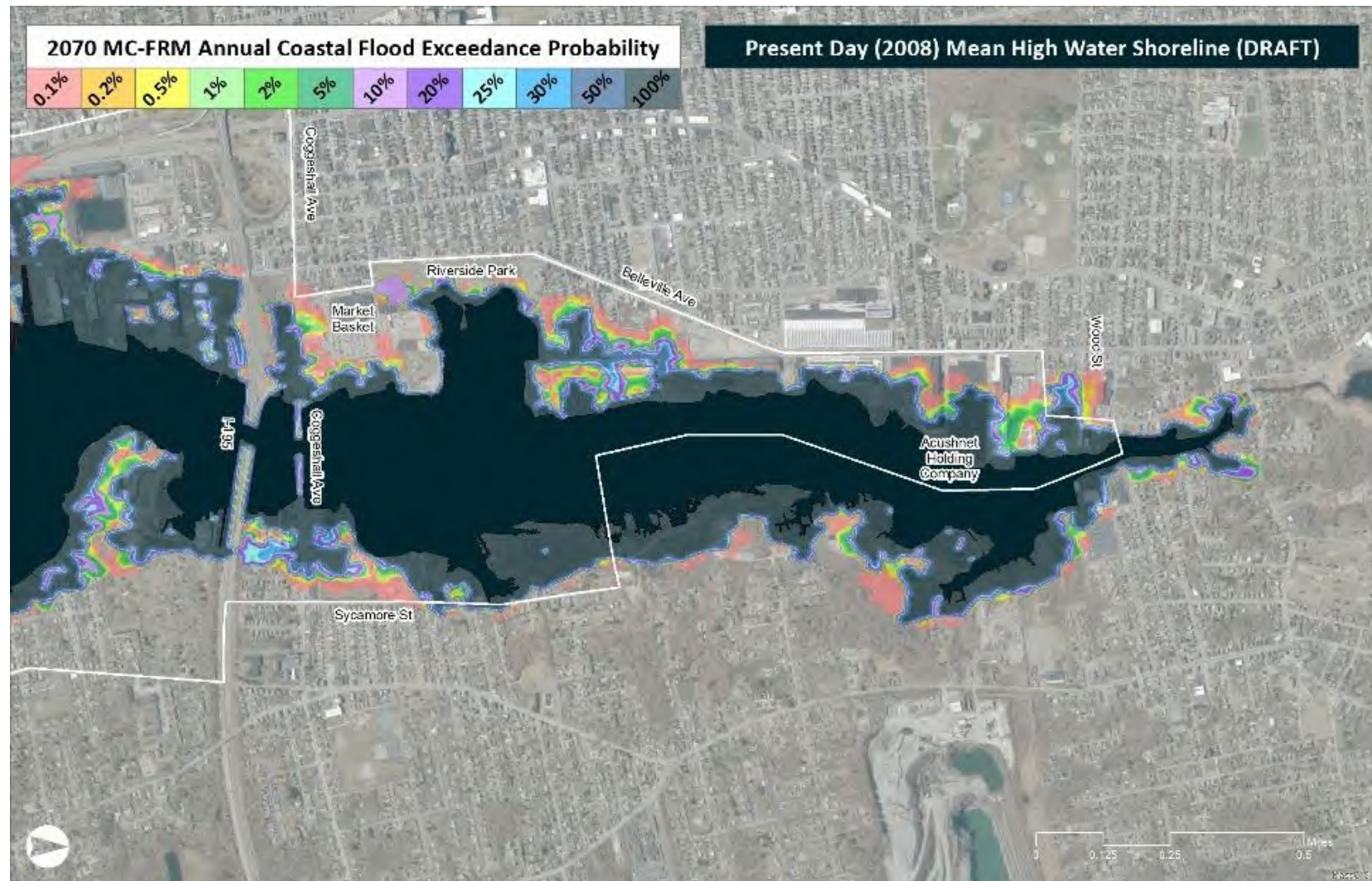


Figure 11: MC-FRM probability of flooding in the Planning Area as soon as 2070.

In 2023, the Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and ResilientMA contracted Woods Hole Group to develop statewide projected Mean High Water Shorelines for the 2030-, 2050-, and 2070- time horizons using the same sea level rise projections that were used for MC-FRM. Mean High Water (MHW) refers to the average of all high tides over a tidal epoch. Flooding during Mean High Water conditions is sometimes referred to as “nuisance” or “sunny day” flooding because it occurs regardless of weather conditions. The shorelines are visual representations of the projected future MHW extents for each local area and were developed by extracting corresponding elevation contours from the most current terrain elevation measurements available from the MassGIS LiDAR Terrain Data. LiDAR, which stands for Light Detection and Ranging, is a remote sensing technology that uses laser light to create highly accurate and detailed maps of the Earth’s surface. The projected MHW shorelines are in draft form as of December 2025 but changes are not expected to the project area. Figures 12-14 shows the Mean High Water Shorelines in the Planning Area



Figure 12: Mean high water shorelines projected for as soon as 2030, 2050, and 2070 in the Planning Area.

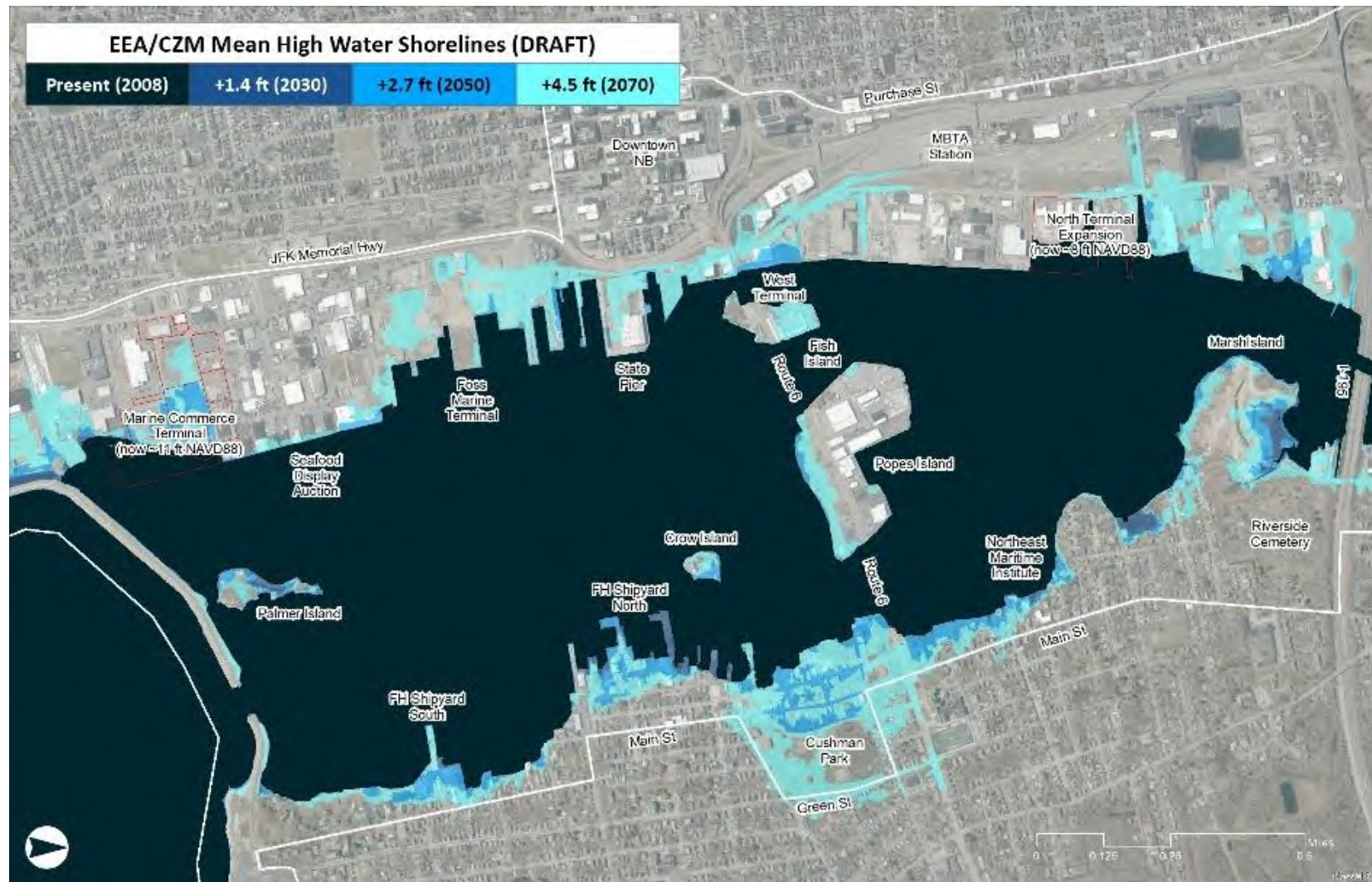


Figure 13: Mean high water shorelines projected for as soon as 2030, 2050, and 2070 in the Planning Area.

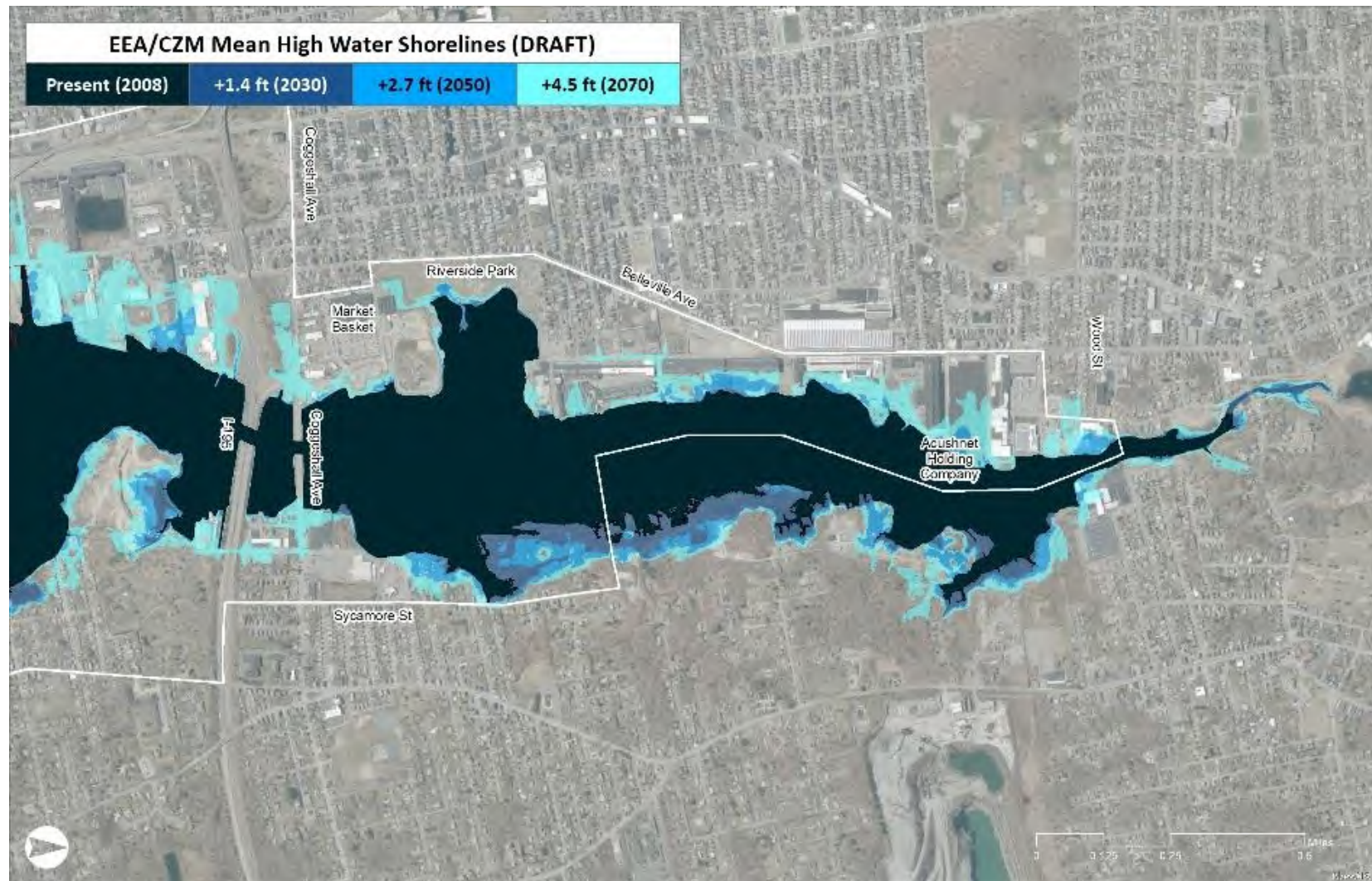


Figure 14: Mean high water shorelines projected for as soon as 2030, 2050, and 2070 in the Planning Area.

Existing Conditions

In the last five years, the Hurricane Barrier has closed 17 times per year on average and had an average of 31.45 closure hours per year. Closures are least common during the late spring and summer and most common in the fall and winter, reflecting the seasonal timing of minor storms and king tides. The decision to close the New Bedford Hurricane Barrier takes in factors other than the real-time water surface elevation, but closures generally occur when the water level reaches 3.48' NAVD88. This elevation represents the approximate onset of flood impacts on the Fairhaven shoreline, and closures are generally linked to the onset of those impacts. Hurricane Barrier closures are usually associated with storm conditions, but some closures occur during the combination of astronomical high tides and south winds. The USACE manages the Hurricane Barrier and makes decisions about when it is closed.

Key Findings

Tidal predictions available for New Bedford refer to the 1983-2001 tidal epoch, which is centered around 1992. The sea level rise projections used for this analysis refer to a 2000 baseline. To reconcile this 8-year difference, 0.1' (the sea level rise between 1992 and 2000 at the Woods Hole tide gauge) were added to all water level values in the tidal prediction data. Next, all sea level rise values from Table 1 were added to tidal predictions to create a water level time series for each year and sea level rise scenario. Finally, the 3.38' NAVD88 closure threshold was applied to the tidal predictions, and the number of closures per year and total annual closure duration were recorded in Table 2.

Table 2: Closure analysis results.

<i>CLOSURES (3.48' NAVD88 threshold)</i>																
Year	NOAA Int-Low		NOAA Int		NOAA Int-High		NOAA High		EEA Int		EEA Int-High		EEA High		EEA Extreme	
	#	Hours	#	Hours	#	Hours	#	Hours	#	Hours	#	Hours	#	Hours	#	Hours
2030	35	59.75	36	64	37	68.5	37	68.5	36	65.75	69	132	182	393.25	277	637.75
2040	66	119.25	75	146.25	94	189.5	100	209.5	83	161.5	152	344.5	379	1000	555	1750.25
2050	141	304.75	185	418	260	620.5	311	766.5	311	766.5	417	1108.3	660	2330.8	705	3544.25
2060	200	445.5	300	748.5	461	1309	595	1947.75	410	1125.25	600	1973.5	708	3681.8	708	5521.25
2070	387	966.25	555	1710.25	691	2766.75	706	3645	653	2327.5	704	3222.5	706	5422.3	172	8478.25
2080	418	1162.75	670	2522.25	707	3890.25	707	5544.5	699	3143	707	4350	318	8143.8	1	8784.5
2090	586	1814	706	3680.75	706	5326.75	261	8291.5	706	4158.25	694	5889.3	1	8760.5	1	8760.5
2100	610	2046	706	4806.5	410	7869.75	1	8760.5	706	5080	382	7987.5	1	8760.5	1	8760.5

It was critical to record both number of closures per year and hours of closure to account for long-duration closures after large amounts of sea level rise. As the mean sea level increases, the number of closures per year approaches a maximum of approximately 708. After this number of closures is reached, closures begin to overlap, reducing the number of closures but continuing to increase the total closure duration. In all High and Extreme sea level rise scenarios, only one closure occurs in 2100 because all water levels for the year exceed the closure threshold. Figures 15 and 16 further demonstrate the number of closures and closure hours over time across various scenarios. The lines in Figure 15 are dashed after the number of closures reaches its maximum and begins to drop again.

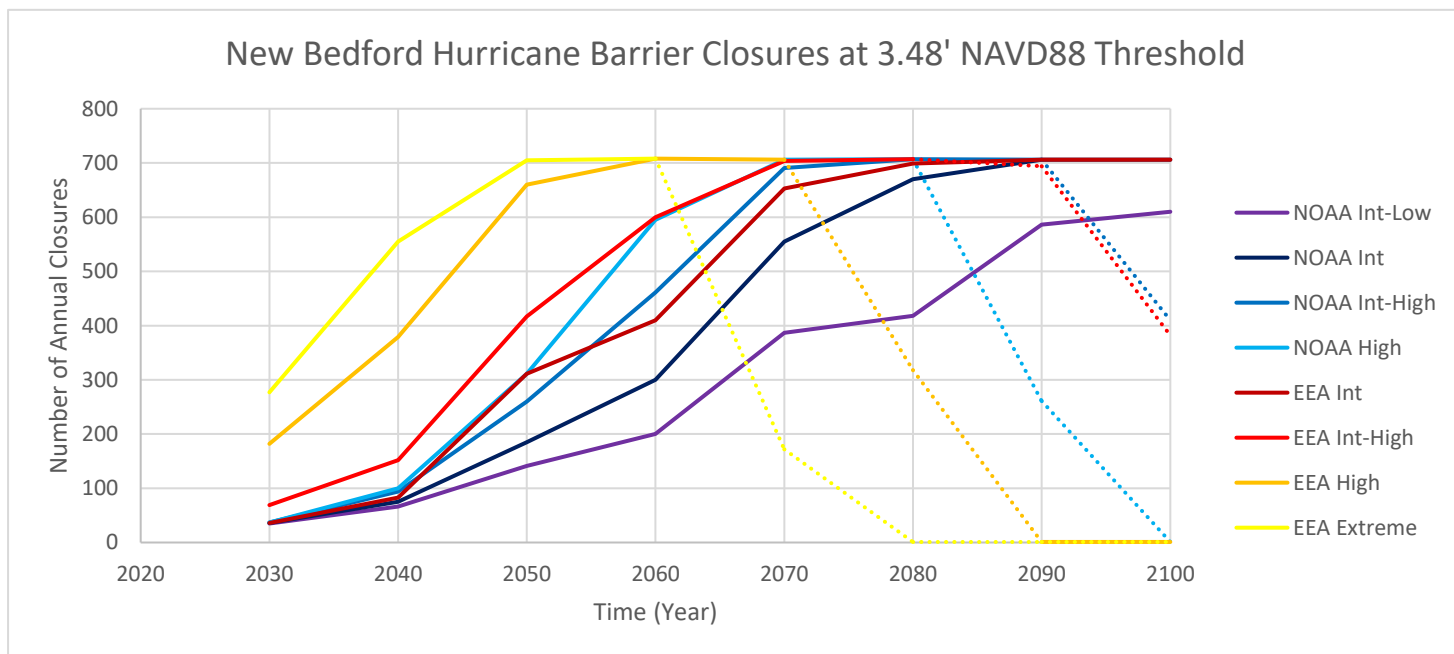


Figure 15: Number of closures per year in various sea level rise scenarios.

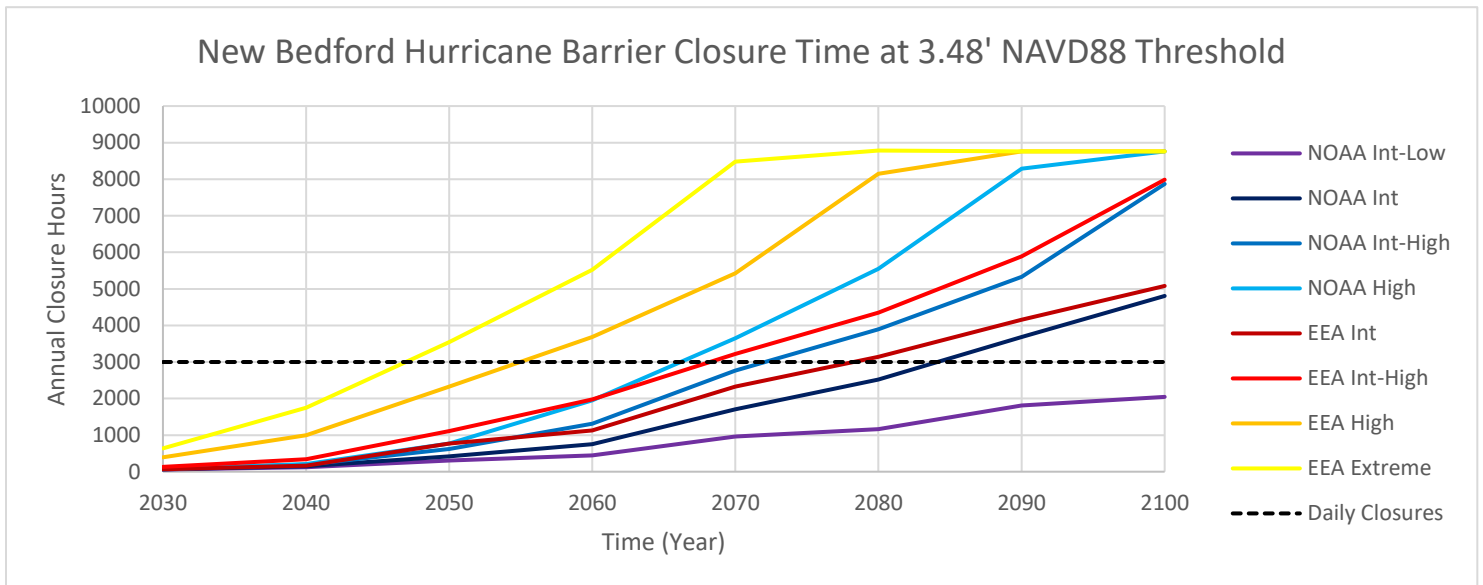


Figure 16: Annual closure hours in various sea level rise scenarios.

When these annual closure numbers and hours are divided by 12, more tangible monthly averages emerge. Table 3 shows the range of number of closures and closure hours per month across all sea level rise scenarios. Even in the most gradual sea level rise scenario, the average number of closures per month reaches the current number per year around 2060. The number of hours closed per month increases rapidly, exceeding the number of hours in a standard work week in the lowest sea level rise scenario in 2070.

Table 3: Range of number of closures and closure hours, on average, per month across all sea level rise scenarios included in the analysis.

Year	AVERAGE CLOSURES PER MONTH	
	#	Hours
2030	2 - 18	2.8 - 40.5
2040	4 - 42	6.3 - 125.7
2050	9 - 59	19.1 - 279.7
2060	12 - 59	27.3 - 438.0
2070	27 - 59	64.2 - 694.8
2080	30 - 59	79.9 - 732.0
2090	45 - 59	130.6 - 732.0
2100	48 - 59	148.8 - 732.0

While the monthly averages described above are helpful for conceptualizing impacts, closures are not uniform in length or in distribution throughout a given month or year. Tides are primarily caused by the moon's gravity and are generally more extreme during times of alignment between

the sun and moon (full and new moons) and when the moon is slightly closer to the earth (perigee). Figures 17-24 graph projected closures under the NOAA Intermediate (shown in blue) and EEA Intermediate-High (shown in orange) scenarios. The NOAA Intermediate scenario aligns with NOAA's regional observation extrapolation for the northeast, and the EEA Intermediate-High scenario is the most extreme scenario that does not result in a full year of closure in 2100. Massachusetts uses the EEA High scenario for planning purposes. Even when orange borders are not visible at this scale on either side of a NOAA Intermediate scenario closure, it should be assumed that this closure also occurs in the EEA Intermediate-High scenario.

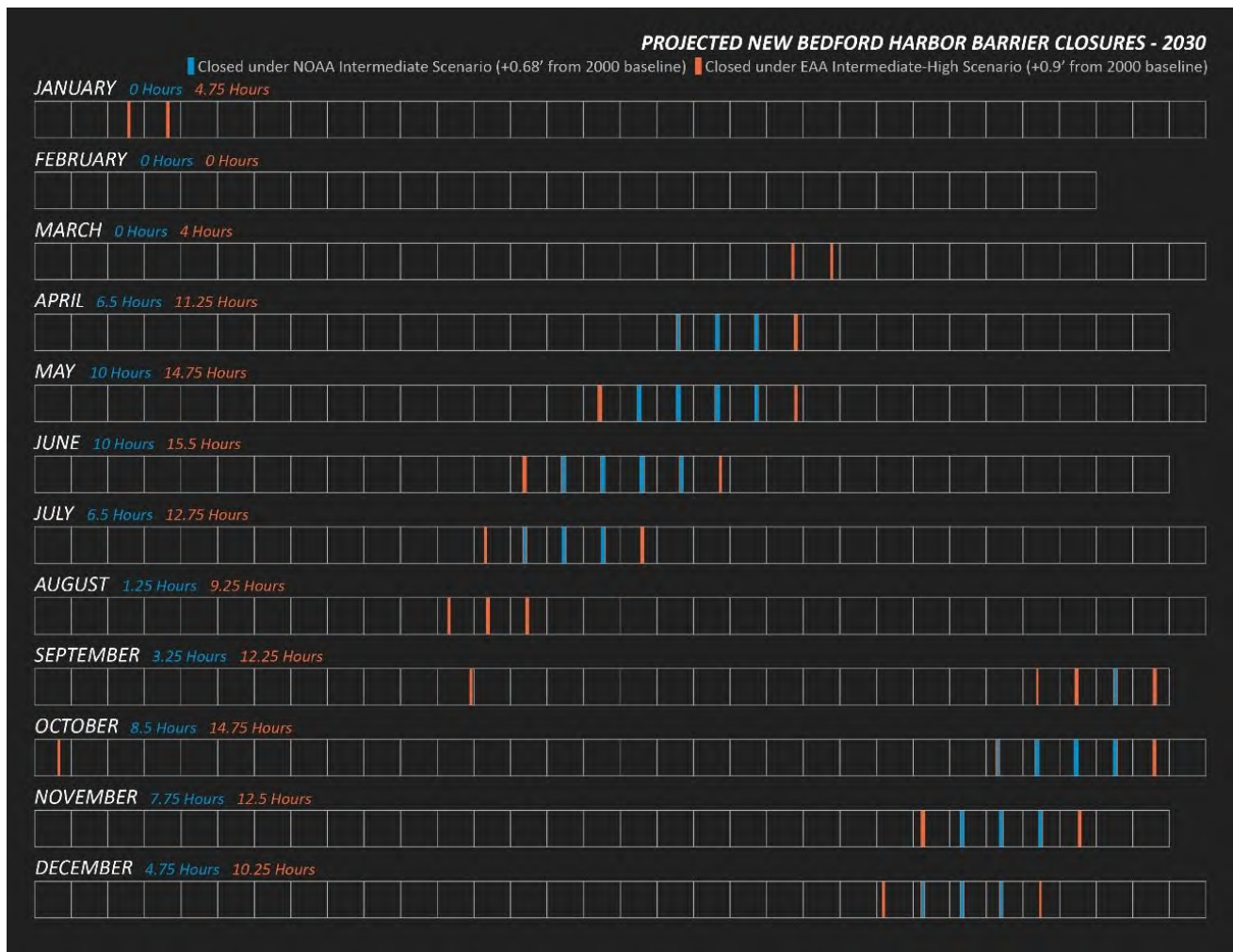


Figure 17: Projected barrier closures with a 3.48' NAVD88 closure threshold for 2030.

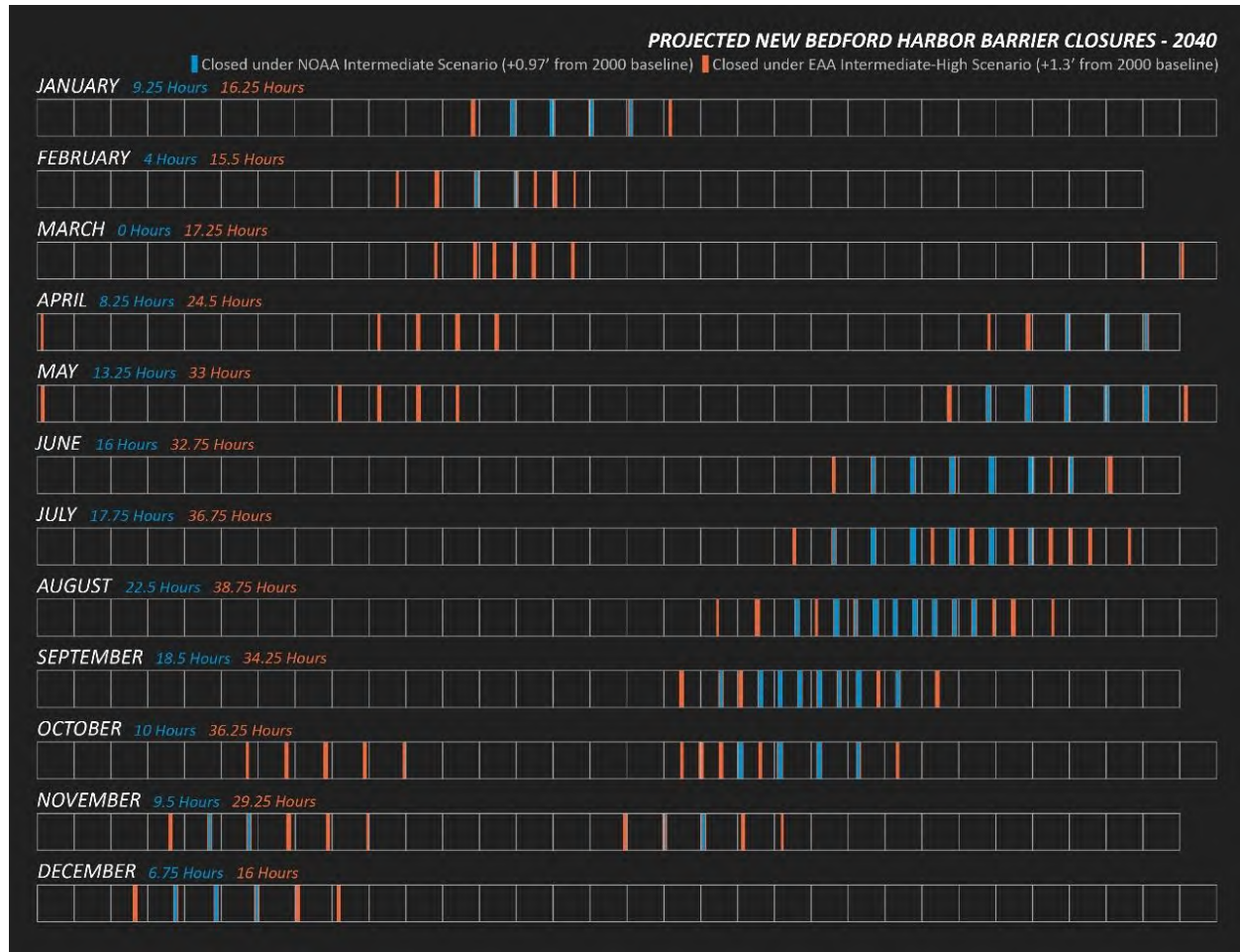


Figure 18: Projected barrier closures with a 3.48' NAVD88 closure threshold for 2040.

Figures 17 and 18, which correspond to sea level rise projections for 2030 and 2040, demonstrate the uneven distribution of closures. In most months, 5-15 closures are concentrated in a period of a few days to a week, and closures triggered by tidal conditions are not expected for the rest of the month. The 2030 calendar features 36 closures for the NOAA Intermediate scenario (+0.68' from a 2000 baseline) (blue) and 69 closures for the EEA Intermediate-High scenario (+0.9' from a 2000 baseline) (orange). The 2040 calendar features 75 closures for the NOAA scenario (+0.97' from a 2000 baseline) and 152 closures for the EEA scenario (+1.3' from a 2000 baseline). Although simple number of closures per year will not be the only metric used to set a target threshold, these graphics point to the possible distribution of 50 or 100 closures per year.

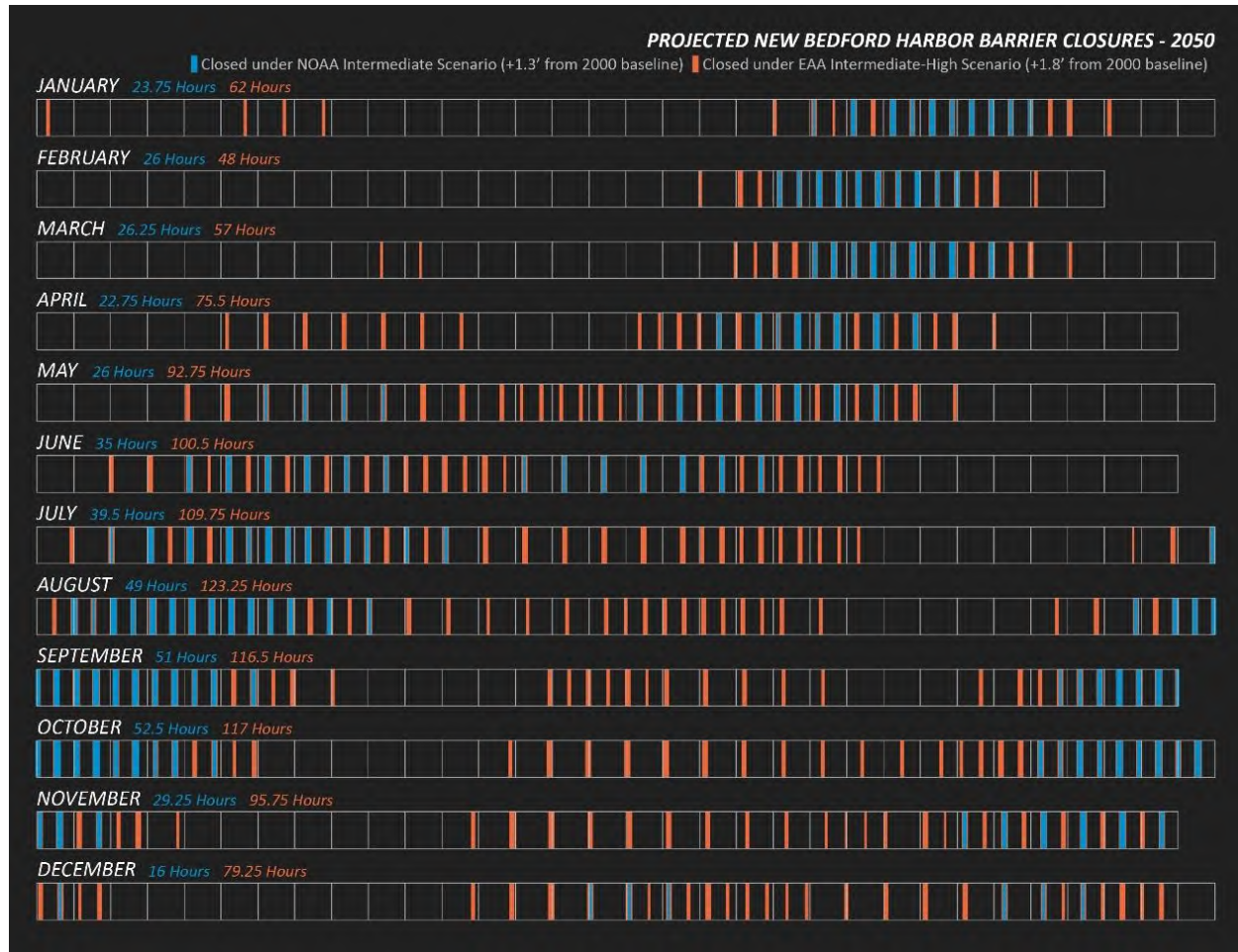


Figure 19: Projected barrier closures with a 3.48' NAVD88 closure threshold for 2050.

Figure 19, which corresponds to sea level rise projections for 2050, straddles the tipping point between closures occupying a set time frame during each month and spreading out to occupy the majority of days. In the EEA Intermediate-High scenario for 2050 (+1.8' from a 2000 baseline), more than half of the year's days feature at least one closure, and there are a total of 417 closures. In the NOAA Intermediate scenario (+1.3' from a 2000 baseline), closures are still generally isolated to one week of each month, and there are a total of 185 closures.

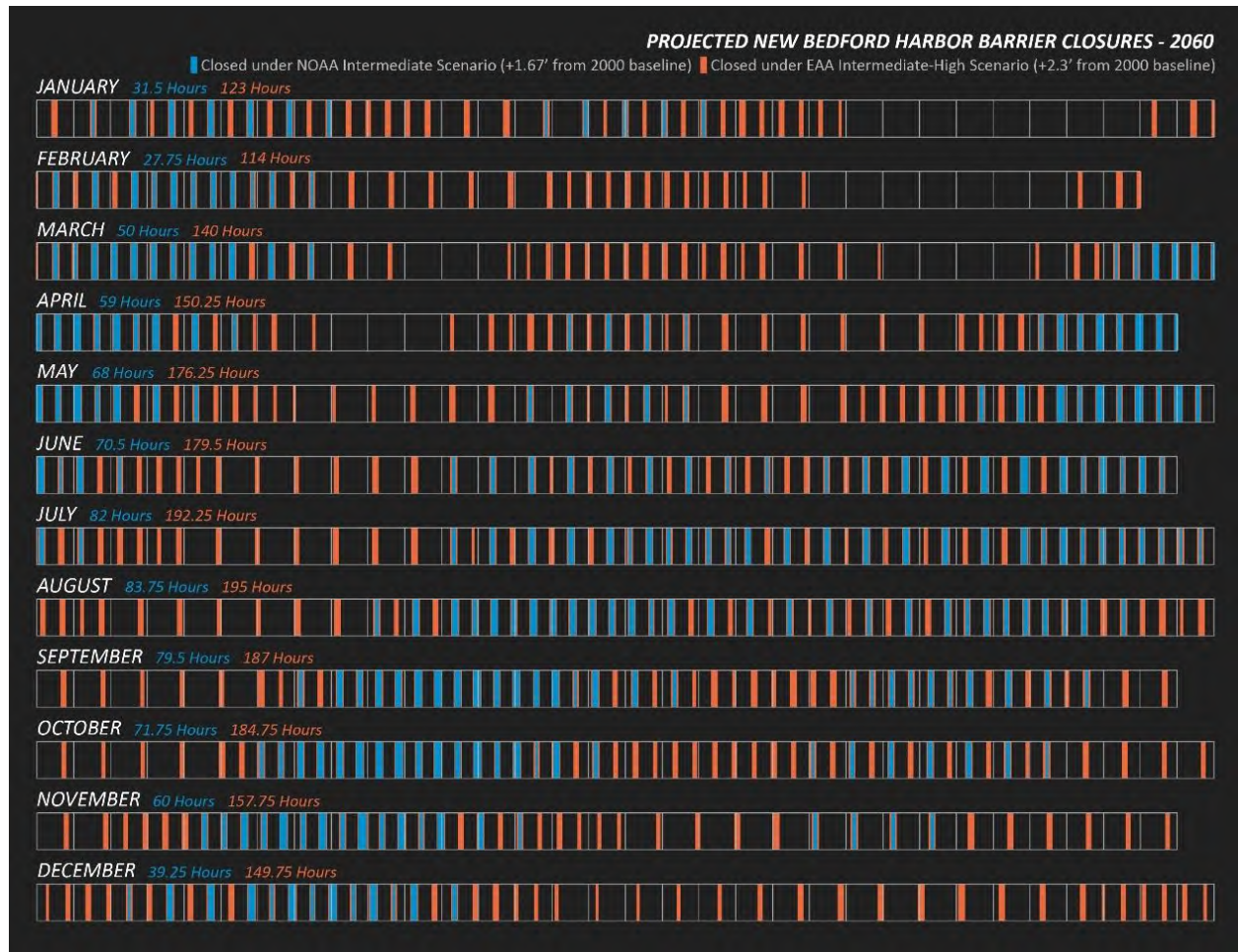


Figure 20: Projected barrier closures with a 3.48' NAVD88 closure threshold for 2060.

Figure 20, which corresponds to sea level rise projections for 2060, shows a condition in which closure-free days are in the minority. In the EEA Intermediate-High scenario for 2060 (+2.3' from a 2000 baseline), there are a total of 600 closures, and closure-free days are rare. In the NOAA Intermediate scenario (+1.67' from a 2000 baseline), the majority of days include a closure, and there are a total of 300.

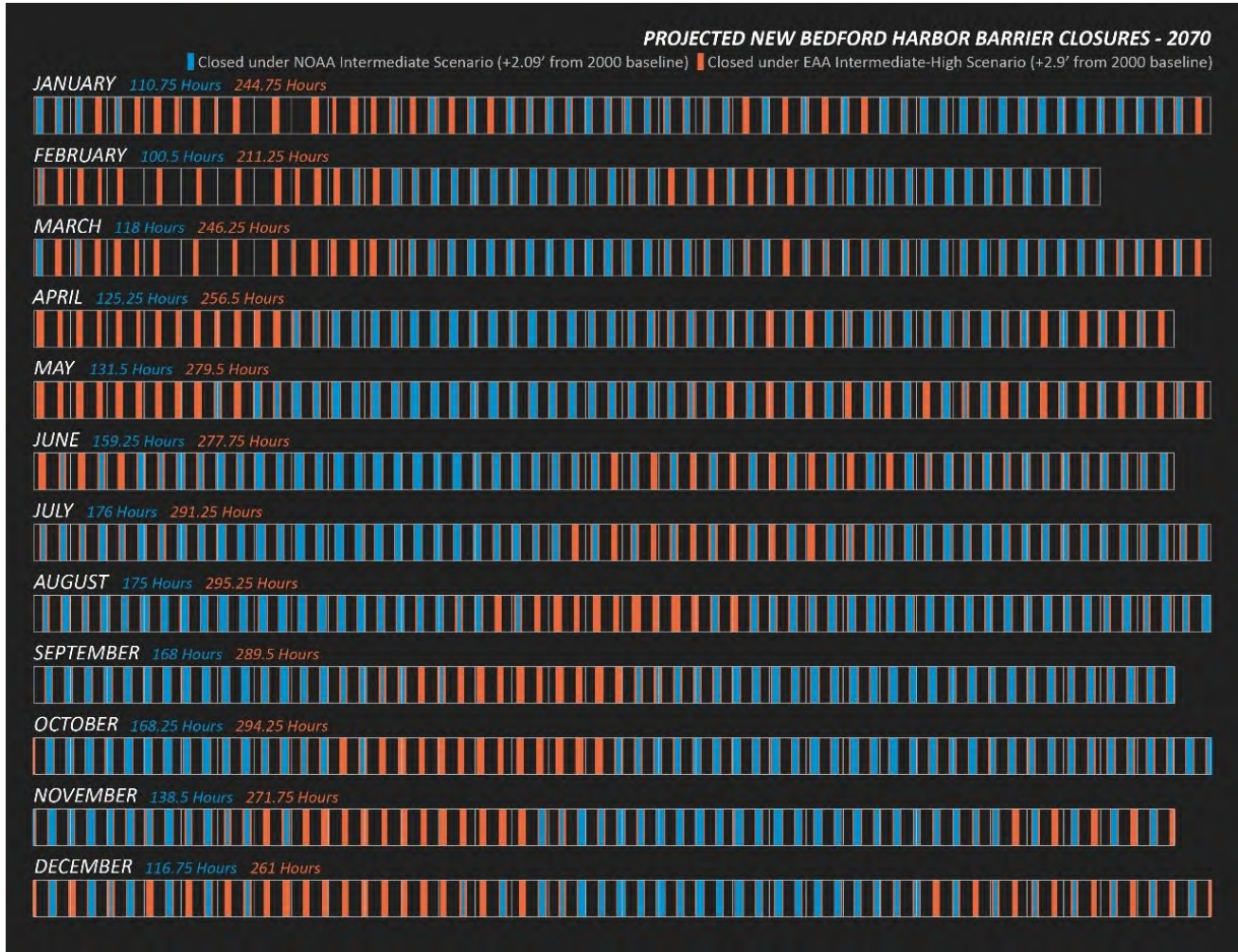


Figure 21: Projected barrier closures with a 3.48' NAVD88 closure threshold for 2070.

Figures 21, 22, 23, and 24, which correspond to sea level rise projections for 2070, 2080, 2090, and 2100, show conditions where closure-free days are rare or nonexistent. In the EEA Intermediate-High scenario (+2.9' to +5.1' from a 2000 baseline), there are no closure-free days in any of the four decadal snapshots. In 2100 (+5.1' from a 2000 baseline), closures begin to overlap and last days or even weeks. In the NOAA Intermediate scenario, 2070 and 2080 (+2.09' to +2.58' from a 2000 baseline) include closure-free days, but 2090 and 2100 (+3.19' to +3.86' from a 2000 baseline) do not.

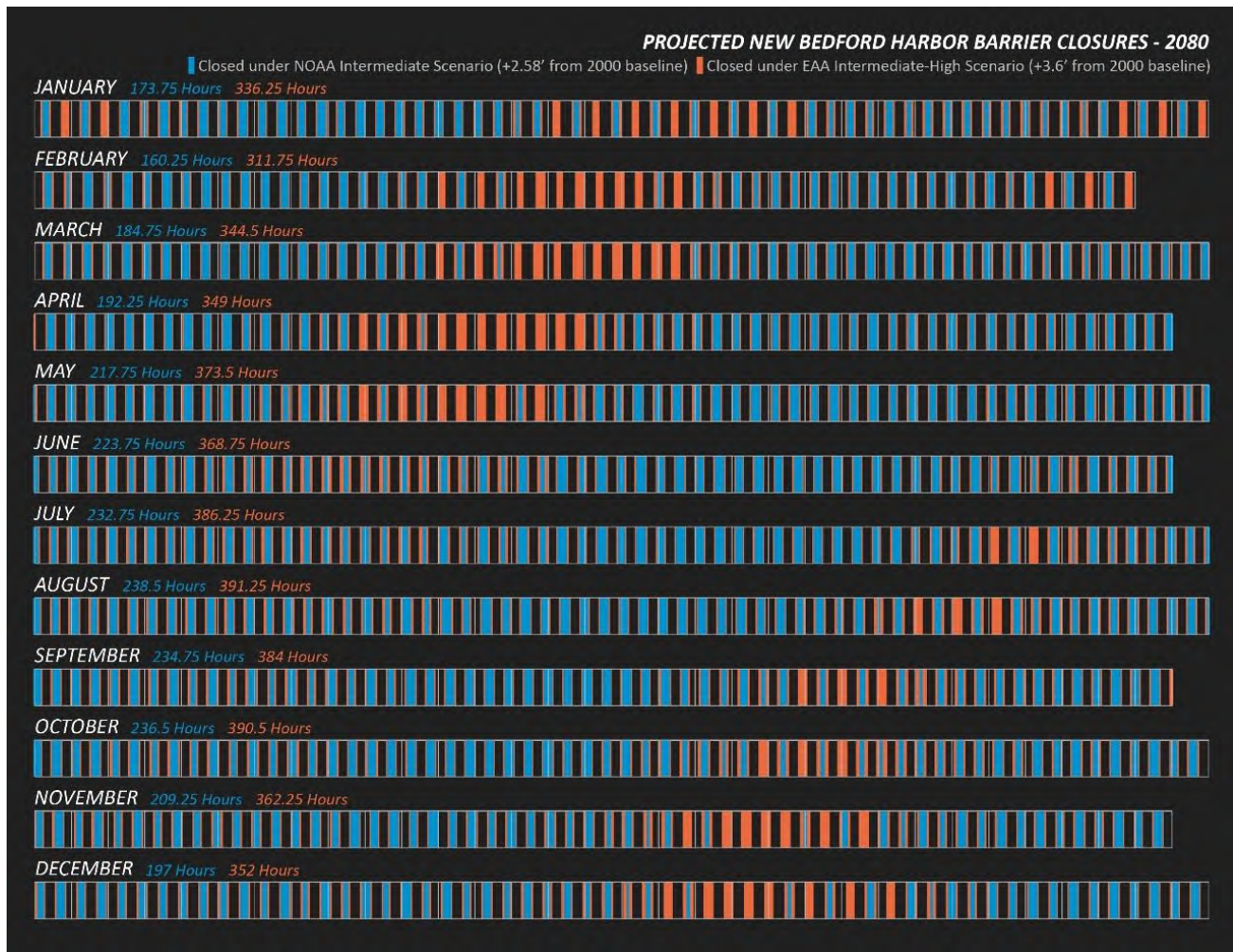


Figure 22: Projected barrier closures with a 3.48' NAVD88 closure threshold for 2080.

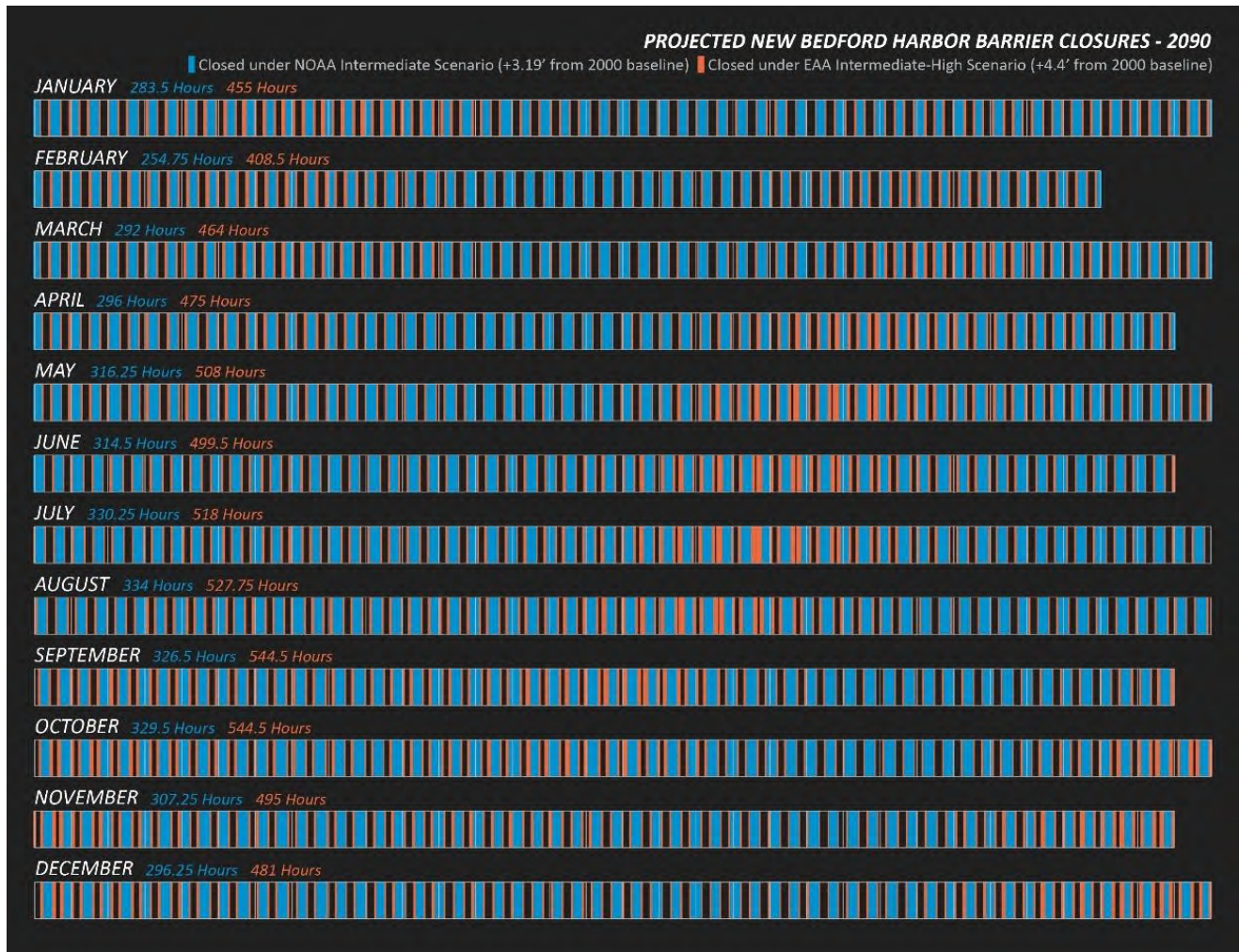


Figure 23: Projected barrier closures with a 3.48' NAVD88 closure threshold for 2090.

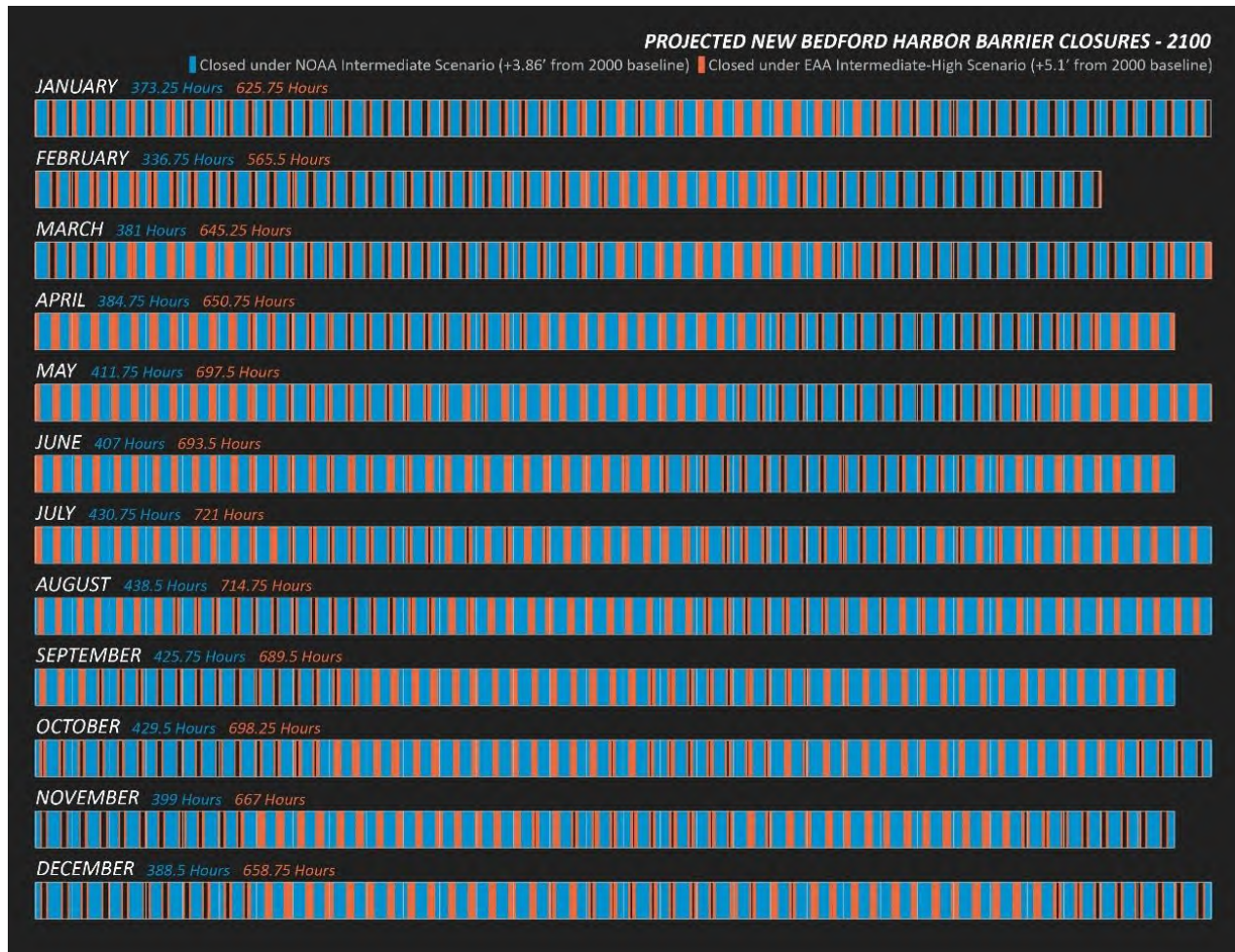


Figure 24: Projected barrier closures with a 3.48' NAVD88 closure threshold for 2100.

An initial analysis of current waterfront ground elevations prompted the testing of closure thresholds one and two feet higher than the current 3.48' NAVD88. These higher thresholds would only be possible if waterfront areas inside the Hurricane Barrier were adapted to be resilient to these corresponding higher water levels. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 4 and Figures 25-26.

Table 4: Projected barrier closures under NOAA Intermediate and EEA Intermediate-High scenarios with a closure threshold of 3.48' NAVD88 (Current Closure Elevation), 4.48' NAVD88 (Current Closure Elevation +1'), or 5.48' NAVD88 (Current Closure Elevation +2').

<i>CLOSURES (various thresholds)</i>												
<i>Year</i>	<i>NOAA Int, Current</i>		<i>NOAA Int, Current +1'</i>		<i>NOAA Int, Current +2'</i>		<i>EEA Int-High, Current</i>		<i>EEA Int-High, Current +1'</i>		<i>EEA Int-High, Current +2'</i>	
	<i>#</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Hours</i>
2030	36	64	0	0	0	0	69	132	0	0	0	0
2040	75	146.3	0	0	0	0	152	344.5	1	1	0	0
2050	185	418	8	8.75	0	0	417	1108	60	113	0	0
2060	300	748.5	31	52.25	0	0	600	1974	144	320	5	6
2070	555	1710	123	242.5	0	0	704	3223	486	1357	69	133
2080	670	2522	264	646.8	16	23.5	707	4350	673	2560	273	673
2090	706	3681	603	1913	160	351.5	694	5889	706	4001	666	2345
2100	706	4807	697	3085	387	1040	382	7988	706	5290	706	3502

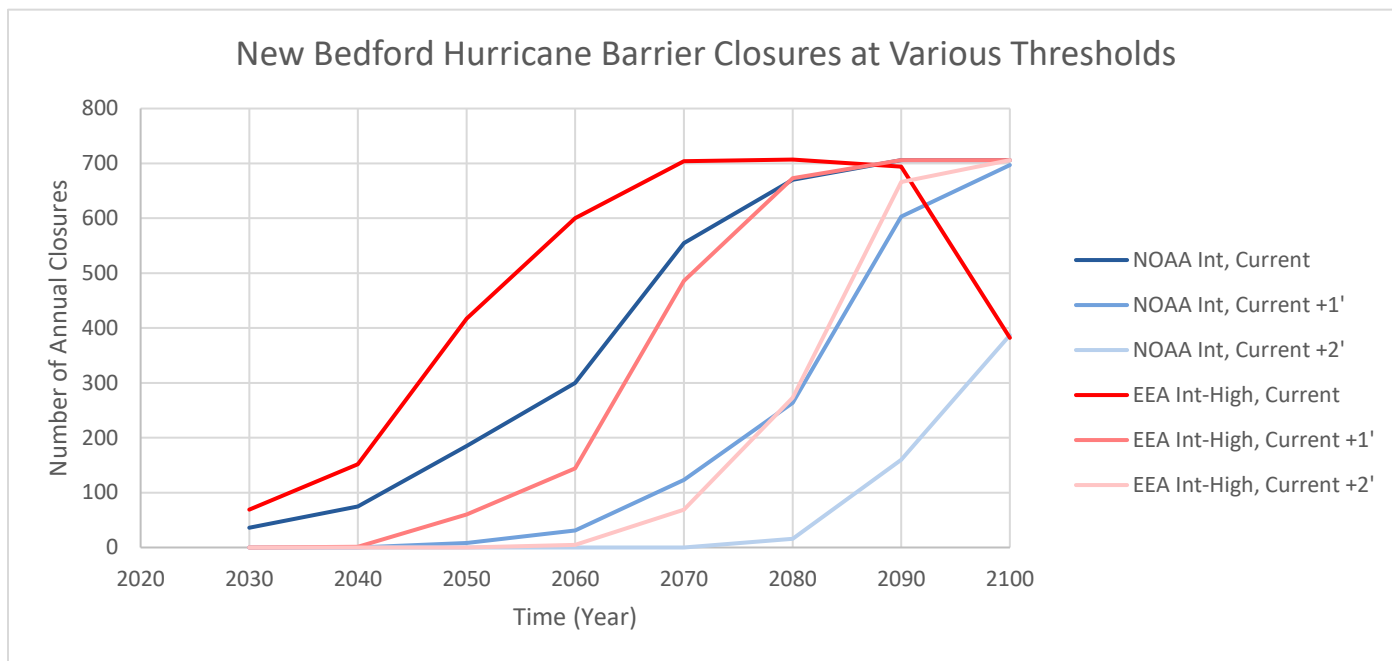


Figure 25: Number of projected barrier closures under NOAA Intermediate and EEA Intermediate-High scenarios with closure thresholds of 3.48' NAVD88 (Current Closure Elevation), 4.48' NAVD88 (Current Closure Elevation +1'), or 5.48' NAVD88 (Current Closure Elevation +2').

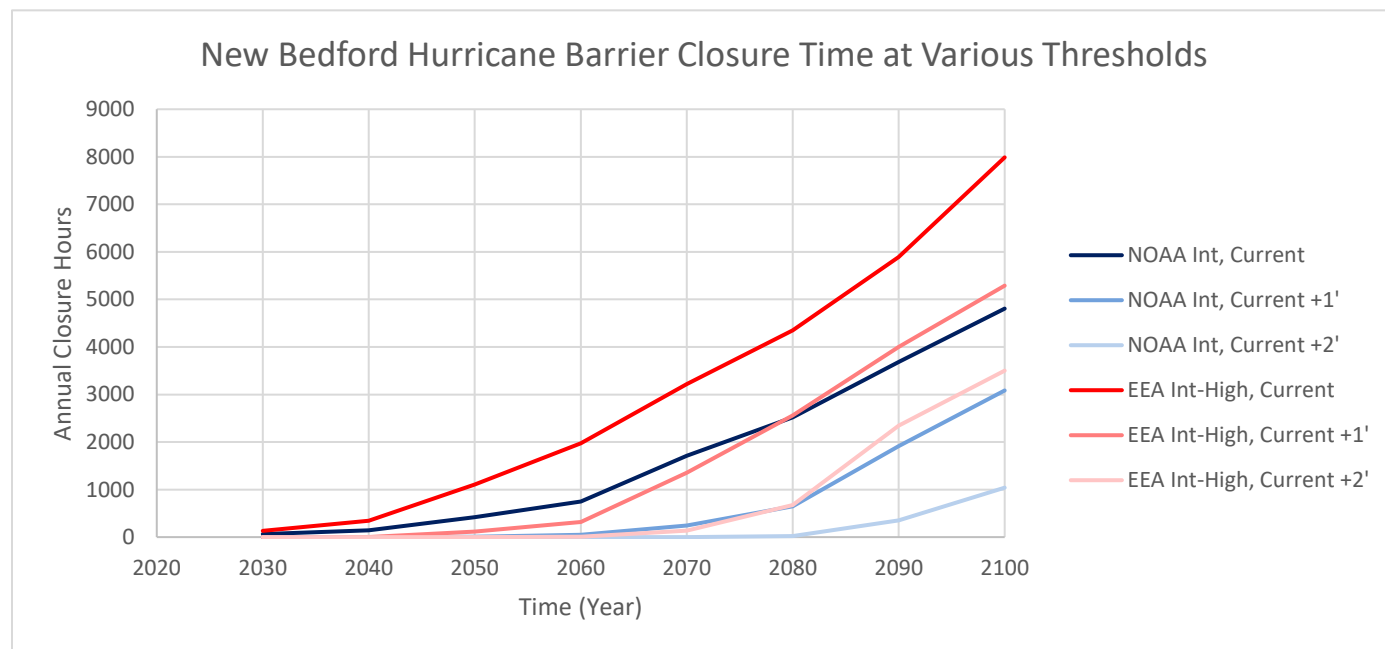


Figure 26: Hours of projected barrier closure under NOAA Intermediate and EEA Intermediate-High scenarios with closure thresholds of 3.48' NAVD88 (Current Closure Elevation), 4.48' NAVD88 (Current Closure Elevation +1'), or 5.48' NAVD88 (Current Closure Elevation +2').

In simple terms, raising the closure threshold can be thought of as delaying more frequent closures for a certain amount of time. If the threshold is raised by one foot to 4.48' NAVD88, the onset of more frequent closures is delayed by approximately 30 years in the NOAA Intermediate scenario and approximately 20 years in the EEA Intermediate-High scenario. If the closure threshold is raised by two feet to 5.48' NAVD88, the onset of more frequent closures is delayed by approximately 50 years in the NOAA Intermediate scenario and approximately 40 years in the EEA Intermediate scenario. Figures 27 and 28 show the areas of waterfront that would need to be adapted to raise the closure threshold. To raise the closure threshold to 4.48' NAVD88, approximately 6,100 feet of shoreline would need to be adapted. To raise the closure threshold to 5.48' NAVD88, approximately 23,000 feet of shoreline would need to be adapted.



Figure 27: Areas where adaptation would be required to increase the closure threshold by one foot (to 4.48' NAVD88).



Figure 28: Areas where adaptation would be required to increase the closure threshold by two feet (to 5.48' NAVD88).

Building for Future Conditions

Currently, when owners of properties located in a FEMA flood zone plan new construction, elevate their buildings, or implement floodproofing, they must adhere to the Design Flood Elevations (DFEs) in the Massachusetts (MA) State Building Code. These DFEs are elevation targets for the lowest occupiable floor and represent the combination of FEMA Base Flood Elevation (BFE) and additional freeboard required by the State Building Code. FEMA's BFEs are derived from historic high water levels, and the freeboard requirements factored into Massachusetts DFEs are designed to compensate for wave action, changing climate conditions and the lack of inclusion of physical processes in FEMA's transect-based approach. For unprotected areas outside the Hurricane Barrier (a FEMA-certified flood protection structure), forward-looking DFEs were drafted for this memo using the local results of the Massachusetts Coast Flood Risk Model (MC-FRM) in New Bedford and Fairhaven. MC-FRM is a probabilistic, hydrodynamic model that uses past, present, and future storm scenarios to calculate each point on land's probability of flooding in three planning horizons, labeled 2030, 2050, and 2070. Refer to the Future Flood Vulnerability section for an in-depth description of MC-FRM and the planning horizons.

In many cases, the current MA State Building Code DFE (BFE plus applicable freeboard) for a structure in New Bedford or Fairhaven may be higher than the DFE provided for that structure's area in this memo. The DFEs in Table 5 should be referenced as general for their areas (Figure 29), and any specific building project should calculate its own DFE and adhere to building code.

To maintain coastal flood resilience in future conditions, mid-term DFEs were derived from MC-FRM 2050 (2.5ft of sea level rise) 1% AEP water level and wave height data (specifically, significant wave crest elevations). Long-term DFEs were derived from MC-FRM 2070 (4.3ft of sea level rise) 1% AEP water level and wave height data. Future sea level rise and wave dynamics (setup and runoff) are already accounted for in these elevations, therefore additional freeboard is not necessary.



Figure 29: General zones for DFE implementation.

Table 5: Building and critical infrastructure DFEs for the zones in Figure 29.

Elevations in feet NAVD88

Area	Mid-term DFE (as soon as 2050)	Long-term DFE (as soon as 2070)
Head of Clarks Cove - Shoreline	16.2	18.7
Head of Clarks Cove - Inland	15.1	17.6
Clarks Point West - Shoreline	16.2	19.1
Clarks Point West - Inland	14.7	17.1
Clarks Point East - Shoreline	16.4	19.3
Clarks Point East - Inland	15.3	17.7
Harbor Mouth - Shoreline	16.9	19.6
Harbor Mouth - Inland	N/A	12.3
Fort Phoenix - Shoreline	16.9	19.6
Fort Phoenix - Inland	15.6	18

Development in the Inner Harbor, which benefits from the storm protection afforded by the FEMA-certified Harbor Barrier, requires a different approach to planning for future conditions. A standardized waterfront edge elevation for areas inside the Hurricane Barrier was developed that would allow the number of closures to stay approximately steady into the future. The mid-term standardized waterfront edge elevation for inside the Harbor Barrier represents the approximate Highest Annual Tide (HAT) as soon as 2050. Building to the mid-term waterfront edge elevation while leaving flexibility to extend to the long-term elevation if needed is recommended. This recommendation assumes that the barrier will be closed in any significant storm situation.

If the standardized waterfront edge elevation is achieved, the Hurricane Barrier would not need to be closed until water surface elevations reach 6.0' NAVD88. This level of protection would reduce the need for Harbor Barrier closures under present day minor storm conditions as well as future high-tide flooding. Figure 30 shows the number of closure hours per year with the current closure threshold (3.48' NAVD88), mid-term waterfront edge elevation (6.0' NAVD88), and long-term waterfront edge elevation (7.8' NAVD88). If the mid-term waterfront edge elevation is implemented, the onset of more frequent closures could be delayed by approximately 40 years, or until 2080.

Figure 31 shows the areas of waterfront that would need to be adapted to raise the closure threshold to the mid-term waterfront edge elevation and overlays the potential flood patterns (based on available LiDAR) associated with the mid-term HAT elevation (6.0' NAVD88). Visualizing these patterns allows New Bedford, Fairhaven and the Port Authority to identify priority areas for adaptation to enable adoption of a higher closure threshold. The shoreline vulnerable to flooding at 6.0' NAVD88 is longer than the 23,000 feet identified in for 5.48' NAVD88 (Figure 28), but focusing Inner Harbor adaptation on high intensity use areas (e.g. Fairhaven North and South Shipyards and the Foss Marine Terminal and Leonard's Wharf areas) and significant community flood pathways (e.g. Pease Park to Cushman Park) can optimize investments that will tie community resilience to efficient Port operations.

If closures begin to become untenable late in the century, raising the waterfront edge to the long-term waterfront edge elevation can delay the onset of more frequent Harbor Barrier closures until after 2100. Therefore, it is important to design and engineer flexibility into any mid-term adaptation along the Inner Harbor, such that additional elevation can be incorporated to maintain similar levels of access/use if sea level rise accelerates in the future.

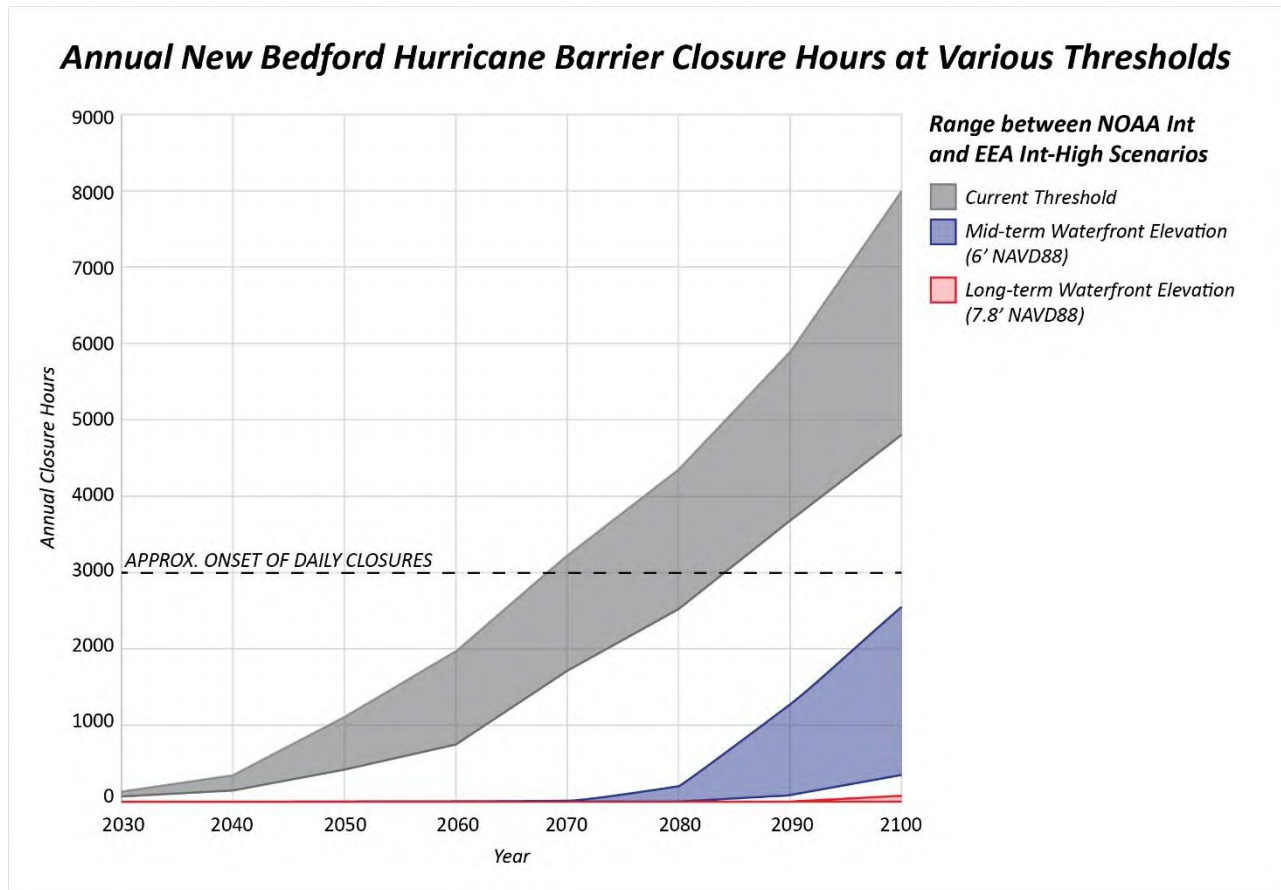


Figure 30: Annual closure hours per year with the current closure threshold (3.48' NAVD88), mid-term waterfront edge elevation (6.0' NAVD88), and long-term waterfront edge elevation (7.8' NAVD88).



Figure 31: Areas where adaptation would be required to increase the closure threshold to Inner Harbor mid-term waterfront edge elevation (2050 HAT = 6.0' NAVD88), and corresponding potential flood patterns without shoreline adaptation.

Recommendations

Near-Term (during 2026-2036 duration of this MHP Update)

- Encourage new construction or significant renovation within the Hurricane Barrier to design to a minimum elevation of 6.0' NAVD88 to prepare constructed ground (e.g. bulkheads and seawalls) for near-term minor storms and mid-term Highest Annual Tides. Simultaneously encourage these adaptations to adopt flexible design, such that they can accommodate future elevation up to 7.8' NAVD88, if necessary. Although MassDEP's proposed Chapter 91 Resilience Regulation Updates would require (if promulgated) all applications for a License, Amendment, or Renewal to consider projected sea level rise in the engineering and construction standards, more local specificity and standardization may be achieved through modification to the New Bedford and Fairhaven wetland by-laws.
 - Detailed planning, coordination and feasibility studies are recommended to determine where shoreline intervention is needed to enable an increase of the Hurricane Barrier closure threshold. Priority areas for implementation of the minimum elevation standard should include: high intensity use areas, low-lying approaches to the Route 6 and Coggeshall bridges, and alignments that intersect significant community flood pathways.
- Encourage new construction and significant renovation projects outside the Hurricane Barrier to adopt Mid-term 2050 DFEs to protect development and critical infrastructure from flooding and wave action under projected conditions over their reasonably foreseeable design life. This may be achieved by either:
 - Developing site/project specific Mid-term DFEs directly from MC-FRM, or
 - Adopting Coastal Flood Resilience Overlay Districts based on general guidance from Table 5 Mid-term DFEs.
- Collaborate with USACE to monitor Hurricane Barrier closure threshold and sea level rise trends on 5-year basis going forward.
- Model potential coastal flooding resulting from (fully or partially) open Hurricane Barrier gates due to malfunction, and develop adaptations and/or floodproofing contingencies.
- Conduct flood vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning for New Bedford Wastewater Treatment Plant and Fairhaven Water Pollution Control Facility (and all related system infrastructure).
- Work with New Bedford, Fairhaven and State/Federal partners to promote coastal flood resilience at beaches and coastal parks, including adaptations to waterfront parks to provide protection to Rodney French Boulevard outside of the Hurricane Barrier.

Longer-Term

- Re-evaluate Hurricane Barrier closure threshold and sea level rise trends as part of future MHP Updates and, based on findings, be prepared to:
 - Implement long-term waterfront edge elevation (7.8' NAVD88)
 - Adopt Long-term 2070 DFEs for areas outside the Hurricane Barrier
- If long-term trends indicate potential for more than 8 feet of sea level rise from the 2000 baseline, coordinate with USACE to study need for (and feasibility of) increasing the Harbor Barrier crest elevation to reduce volumetric contributions from wave overtopping and/or surge during extreme future storms.
- Incorporate climate considerations (including more intense rainfall events, coastal outfall backups due to coastal flooding, and reduced stormwater storage due to decreasing depth to groundwater) into stormwater and CSO management plans.