

2010 - 2016

# Cohasset Open Space & Recreation Plan

*Presented to:*

Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee  
Town of Cohasset  
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## **CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thank you to everyone who participated in the update of Cohasset's 2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Without the effort of many, this planning effort would not have been possible.

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**Section 1.0**  
**Plan Summary**

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## **1.0 PLAN SUMMARY**

### **1.1 Report Background**

The Town of Cohasset's 2009 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update has been prepared to serve as a guide to the many committees, boards, commissions and volunteer groups in the community. This OSRP update final report is the culmination of nearly 10 months of data gathering, public input and research. Similar to the 2002 OSRP, the 2009 OSRP is designed to inform the reader about natural resources, open space, recreational amenities and other related topics that exist in Cohasset. Mentioned throughout the OSRP update process by participants were the ideas that 1) existing open space areas should be made more approachable through dissemination of information relating to parking and trails; and 2) that many historic connections between open space areas have been lost, and that research and mapping of existing paths should be undertaken in order to maintain the existing network. Additionally, maintaining the Town's character and ensuring that open space, natural resources and recreation continue to be a focus as the Town continues to manage its growth is essential to those that live in Cohasset.

The final 2009 OSRP, in addition to serving as a guide for the town, once approved by the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services (DCS) will allow Cohasset to apply for specific types of grant funding for projects related to open space and recreation.

### **1.2 Report Organization**

The OSRP illustrates the importance of continuing to protect and preserve existing sensitive environmental areas and also provides an inventory of existing open space and recreational facilities. Other sections of the OSRP update include a discussion of the most recent demographic information available (population and housing data), an environmental inventory and analysis, a needs analysis, and also a discussion of goals and objectives. Perhaps one of the most significant sections of this report is the seven-year action plan, which details suggested steps that different boards, commissions and committees in Cohasset can take to achieve the stated goals and objectives.

Cohasset is a charming community with stunning scenery, valuable open space, and unique rock outcroppings both on the coast and inland that make it a wonderful place to live. The overall goal of this entire planning effort has been to provide another tool for the Town and its residents to use to help better understand the natural assets of the community and how to improve its open space and recreation in the future while protecting what currently exists.

## **Section 2.0**

### **Introduction**

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## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 Statement of Purpose**

The Town of Cohasset is a unique community with a tremendous diversity of natural resources, open space, and recreational amenities. It is a strikingly beautiful community with abundant scenic vistas. A tremendous amount of work has gone into researching the type of community that Cohasset was historically and how it has progressed. The 2009 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) update is laid out to highlight the Town's history and define how residents can continue to sustain the quality of life they currently enjoy through continued focus on the natural resources and recreational amenities that exist or may be needed in the future. The purpose of this OSRP update is to:

- Review and update the 2002 Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan with the goal of identifying what action items have been completed, what work remains, and which (if any) action items may no longer be applicable. The OSRP update is also meant to detail local open spaces, natural resources and recreational amenities to help guide the Town during the next seven years regarding how to best enhance and protect those resources.
- Inventory existing open space and recreational resources and recommend additional opportunities for acquisition, additional protection, or enhancement through the addition of specific facilities/amenities.
- Inform and educate local residents about their community and existing open space, natural resources and recreational amenities and why they are important.
- Obtain input regarding existing and potential open space and recreation amenities from Cohasset residents.
- Create the momentum needed for the implementing committee to begin implementation of the key element to the plan, the Action Items detailed in Section 9.0.

The OSRP update has been prepared as a document that will be educational and informative to those who read it. Overall, it is hoped that this plan will guide public policy in the areas of open space preservation and recreation facilities and that it will function as an agenda for the next seven years.

#### **2.1.1 Former Open Space and Recreation Planning Efforts**

The Town of Cohasset has published several open space reports. Beginning in 1961, a Long-Range General Plan for Cohasset, often known as the "Benjamin Report" after its author, Allen Benjamin, was issued but never officially

implemented. A second open space plan was prepared in 1970 by Henry R. Hidell Associates, but also was never adopted as Town policy.

In 1996, in order to qualify for state grants, the Town prepared the Open Space and Recreation Plan (1997–2001). This was the first plan developed under the guidelines established by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA). The plan was submitted to and accepted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and focused primarily on environmental health, protection of wildlife habitat, and promoted conservation of and access to open space and recreational resources.

In June of 2001 a five year update to maintain eligibility for state funding was completed with the adoption of the 2002-2006 Plan. This plan was prepared by the Open Space & Recreation Committee with the assistance of various Town departments. An update of accomplishments since 2002 is outlined in Section 2.1.2 below.

#### **2.1.2 2002 – 2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan Action Items**

Since 2002, the Town of Cohasset has made progress in accomplishing a number of tasks listed in the Section 9 Action Plan of the 2002 OSRP. An update of the status of each of the objectives outlined in the 2002 OSRP was provided by the Committee at the February 26, 2009 meeting. Specifically, the Committee noted whether an action was achieved, not achieved, or partially achieved, and also whether that action should remain a goal for the present OSRP update (refer to Appendix A).

### **2.2 Planning Process and Public Participation**

In the late fall of 2008, the Town of Cohasset issued a request for proposals to hire a consultant to assist the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee with the update of the Town's OSRP. Beals and Thomas, Inc. was selected and began working on the project in January 2009.

Beals and Thomas, Inc. (BTI) put together a team of qualified professionals that included a Project Director, Project Manager/Environmental Specialist, Planners, GIS Specialist, and ADA Accessibility surveyor. In addition to stakeholder meetings and the public forum, the BTI team met three times with the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, which consists of local residents who volunteer their time to serve their community. The Recreation Director, Ted Carroll, is also part of the Committee.

BTI also conducted a site visit with members of the Committee (specifically, Ted Carroll, Karen Quigley, and Debbie Shadd) in March 2009 to get a feel for the community and take photographs of open space, natural resources, playgrounds, water resources, ball fields, walking trails, scenic view-scapes and other recreational amenities.

Three public outreach meetings were held: two stakeholder meetings and one public forum. The stakeholder meetings were held on the evening of April 29, 2009 and the morning of April 30, 2009 (Refer to the meeting notes in Appendix A).

The public forum was held the evening of June 18, 2009 (Refer to the agenda and PowerPoint presentation in Appendix A). The public forum is summarized in Section 6, and goals and action items discussed at the forum are incorporated into Section 9.

In addition to the public outreach meetings conducted by BTI specific to the OSRP update, the Town of Cohasset also held its first annual Recreation Fair on March 22, 2009. The associated flyer is located in Appendix A.

Public outreach for the OSRP update also included an Open Space and Recreation Survey coordinated by the Town and analyzed by BTI (refer to Appendix A for a copy of the survey).

The public participation process is discussed further in Section 6. The update of Cohasset's OSRP was a collaborative and collective effort. The final OSRP is interesting, unique to the community of Cohasset and proactive regarding recommendations, goals, objectives and action items.

### **Section 3.0**

#### **Community Setting**

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### **3.0 COMMUNITY SETTING**

#### **3.1 Regional Context<sup>1</sup>**

The Town of Cohasset is located in Norfolk County approximately 20 miles south of Boston. Bounded by the Towns of Hull to the northwest, Hingham to the west, and Scituate to the south and southeast, Cohasset lies on the coast with the Atlantic Ocean to the north and northeast. Chief Justice Cushing Highway (Route 3A), the only arterial road, bisects the Town. Route 228 provides access through Hingham to Route 3, the major regional highway in the area.

Cohasset is a residential community with little commerce or industry. Because of the preponderance of both wetlands and rock ledge, development in Cohasset has historically been limited. The Town's physical coastal character consists of rocky shores and shoals, numerous coves, and protected harbors. Features to the north in Hull and to the south in Scituate shared with the town of Cohasset include Straits Pond, Bassing Beach, the Gulf River and Rocky Beach. Away from the coast, the Town shares the forests of Wompatuck State Park, Whitney and Thayer Woods (including portions known as Turkey Hill and Weir River Farm) and the Aaron River and Lily Pond watersheds with Hingham and Scituate.

At the time of the writing of this plan, the economy is not as strong as it was five (5) years ago. The Recreation Department has seen an increase in the number of children participating in activities during school and summer vacation periods. Additionally, residents have observed more people using public spaces that are free of charge. As a result of the economy, more Cohasset residents may be using the amenities of the Town rather than traveling to other venues.

Refer to Map 1.

#### **3.2 History of the Community<sup>2</sup>**

Cohasset's history has been shaped by the natural environment. As a Native American summer camp called Quonahassit (meaning "long, rocky place"), the area was occupied by a small population when Captain John Smith sailed into the harbor in 1614. Within a few decades, settlers from Hingham began to harvest hay in Cohasset's salt marshes and, by the last quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, some had begun farming in the area. Cohasset was incorporated as a separate town a century later, in 1770.

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<sup>1</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 3, page 8.

<sup>2</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 3, page 8-9.

For several decades before 1851, townspeople shared 91 acres of what is now Little Harbor for cattle grazing, but a storm in that same year brought the ocean over the dunes into the pasture forcing the Town to create an outlet into the ocean for what quickly became stagnant seawater. As a result, ocean water flowing in and out of Little Harbor on the tides created a haven for saltwater fish as well as nesting and migrating shore birds.

The mid-19th century was a turning point for the Town. Because of increased competition, the fishing industry declined from a high point in 1850 to virtually nothing by the 1880s. However, in 1849 the South Shore Railroad arrived in Cohasset, permanently changing the character of the Town. The railroad was abandoned in 1959.<sup>3</sup> However, in 2007 the Greenbush MBTA Commuter Rail opened along the same line and currently provides service between Greenbush in Scituate and South Station in Boston with a stop in Cohasset.<sup>4</sup>

Although Cohasset had attracted summer visitors as early as the 1820s, the railroad made it easily accessible by a greater number of visitors. Hotels and boarding houses sprang up, followed by private summer cottages. While year-round residents survived on the remnants of the fishing industry, as well as small domestic shops and railroad work, well-to-do Bostonians were attracted to the picturesque coastline. By the mid-1880s, piped water made it possible to build houses on the rocks and ledges, previously viewed as harsh obstacles to farming.

By 1898, E. Victor Bigelow, a local historian, accurately predicted Cohasset's future:

"The character of this town as a suburb and summer resort, to the exclusion of industries, has become fixed. A fair estimate of the future for at least a century must predict for Cohasset a suburban retirement. Many more homes of a comfortable and expensive sort may be expected to nestle among our ledges and hills. To Nantasket upon one side and North Scituate upon the other must be given the popularity that brings swarms of humanity to the beaches in summer; but to Cohasset, which has no long beach and whose shore line has been preempted already by quiet-loving people, there must remain a long era of immunity from crowds."

The final transformation of the town into a suburb of Boston took place after World War II, when many summer homes became year-round residences. The population doubled between 1945 and 1970 but remained relatively stable at around 7,000 residents for the next 20 years (See Table 3-1).

### 3.3 Open Space and Recreation History

The Town Common was Cohasset's first public open space area, designated as open land when the first settlers from Hingham distributed lots in 1670. Privately owned open

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<sup>4</sup> "MBTA," 24 March 2009 < [http://www.mbta.com/schedules\\_and\\_maps/rail/lines/?route=GREENBSH](http://www.mbta.com/schedules_and_maps/rail/lines/?route=GREENBSH)>.

space remained abundant throughout the 19th century, but in the early decades of the 20th century several important public and semi-public parks and reserves were created. The Trustees of Reservations acquired Whitney and Thayer Woods in 1933 and 1943 respectively and the Bancroft Bird Sanctuary in 1935. Wheelwright Park, was bequest to the Town in 1916 and the Sandy Beach Association acquired the beach for use by residents in 1917. Holly Hill Farm is approximately 140 acres in area and contains an organic farm, woods, fields, brooks, ponds and salt marshes, as well as an extensive trail system, which was recently improved by physically improving the paths and trails, adding informational signage, adding trail markers, and making available a published trail map and trail guide. Although privately owned, the property is available to the community for recreational purposes.

Wompatuck State Park originated as a Naval Ammunition Depot that served the North Atlantic fleet during World War II. Some of the oldest farms in Cohasset were taken by the federal government to create the depot. When the land was declared surplus by the federal government, it was given to the State of Massachusetts.

The Cohasset Conservation Trust, a nonprofit land conservation trust, was established in 1967. Since that time, the Trust has acquired 17 parcels of land (approximately 100 acres) for permanent conservation, including beaches, freshwater and saltwater wetlands, upland areas, and watershed land. In addition, the Trust holds a conservation restriction on Barnes Wildlife Sanctuary, a 32 acre parcel. Barnes Wildlife Sanctuary is owned by the Town of Cohasset. These sites provide wildlife habitat and passive recreation (Map 7).

Within the last five years, the Town participated in the acquisition of the aforementioned Barnes Property. The Water Department also participated in the acquisition of Brass Kettle Brook and placed a conservation restriction on the Litchfield Land in the West End of Scituate. The land was purchased by Maxwell Trust and Scituate CPC-Maxwell Trust (Scituate) to protect Cohasset's water supply. The Water Department also purchased a few small parcels outside of the Brass Kettle Brook Area.

Cohasset has a rich history of recreational opportunities for residents due to its location on the Atlantic Ocean and proximity to other inland recreational amenities. Boating, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, rowing and sailing are some of the major water based recreational activities within the Town. Baseball, softball, lacrosse, tennis, golf, horseback riding, walking and organized running, have been some of the major inland recreational activities. Over the past five (5) years, the Town has seen an increase in the number of participants in youth lacrosse. Additionally, the Town hosts a number of road races and triathlons throughout the year.

Cohasset has historically been rich in natural recreational opportunities such as cycling, hiking the hills, bird watching along the marshes, kayaking in the Gulf or playing softball. Currently, the Town is working towards constructing a senior center near the Swim Center. Nearby communities have indoor lacrosse, hockey and soccer that are utilized by Cohasset residents, however, there may be a need for such uses in Town in the future. Additionally, an indoor swim center has been identified as a need.

### 3.4 Population Characteristics

#### 3.4.1 Population Trends

Significant population growth took place in Cohasset between 1940 and 1970, during the post World War II suburban expansion and baby boom. The Town's population more than doubled in that period. From 1970 through 1990, Cohasset's population remained relatively stable at around 7,000 residents. The Town's population declined slightly between 1980 and 1990, but during the 1990s, Cohasset's population had grown by 10 percent.<sup>5</sup> The Massachusetts State Data Center projects that the Town's population will decrease to 6,899 residents by 2010 and 6,063 residents by 2020.<sup>6</sup> See Table 3-1 and Chart 3-1.

**Table 3-1: Cohasset Population (1780-2020)**

Year	Population	Percent Change
c. 1780	800 <sup>1</sup>	—
c. 1825	1,200 <sup>1</sup>	50%
1898	2,474 <sup>1</sup>	106%
1930	3,083	25%
1940	3,111	1%
1950	3,731	20%
1960	5,840	57%
1970	6,958	19%
1980	7,174	3.2%
1990	7,075	-1.4%
1995	7,805 <sup>2</sup>	10%
2000	7,261	-7%
2010	6,899 <sup>3</sup>	-5%
2020	6,063 <sup>3</sup>	-12%

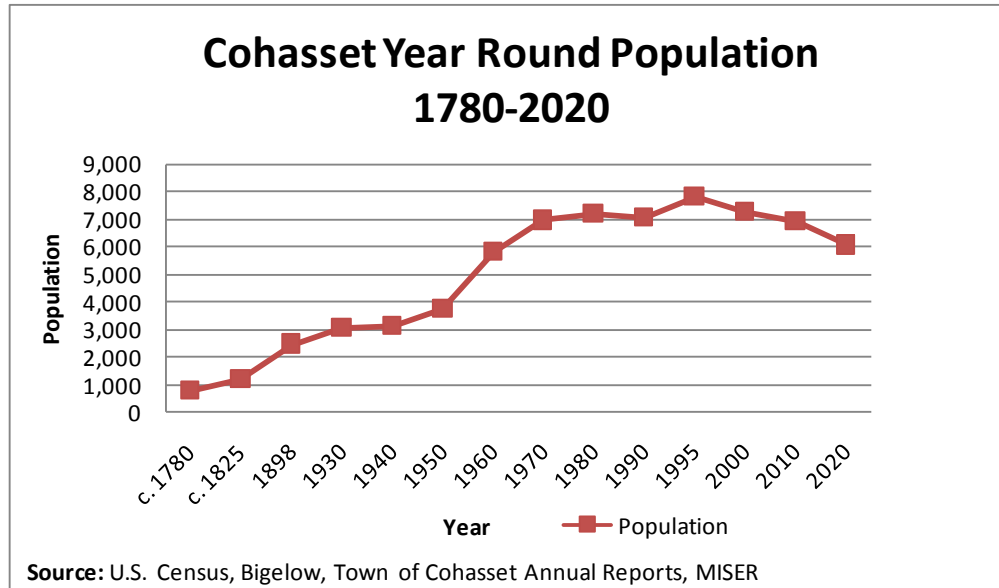
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau except <sup>1</sup>Bigelow, *Narrative History* (pp. 6, 312, 404), <sup>2</sup>Town of Cohasset 1994 and 1995 Annual Reports, and <sup>3</sup>Massachusetts State Data Center, MassBenchmarks, MISER projections.

<sup>5</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 3, page 10.

<sup>6</sup>Massachusetts State Data Center, MassBenchmarks, MISER projections 15 March, 2009, <<http://www.massbenchmarks.org/statedata/data.htm>>.



Chart 3-1



#### 3.4.1.1 Age Composition

Like many other stable New England communities, Cohasset's population has been getting older during the last 30 years. The age composition has changed substantially since the years of postwar population growth. The census breakdowns by age in 1970 and 2000 show how much the population aged during that period. In 1970, 41 percent of the population was age 20 or younger, and 28 percent of the population was age 13 or younger.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, in 2000 only 29 percent of the population was aged 20 or younger and 24 percent was aged 14 or younger. In 2000, only 36 percent of Cohasset households included children and teenagers under 18 years old. The proportion of people 65 years of age and older also increased. While 9.7 percent of the 1970 population was 65 or older, by 2000 that proportion had risen to 15.3 percent and 28.5 percent of households included persons 65 and older. The median age of Cohasset's population in 2000 was 40.9 years, up from 38.64 years in 1990.<sup>8</sup>

#### 3.4.1.2 Population Density

Population density is the measure of people per square miles of land area. Within the Town of Cohasset, the population density has been gradually rising from 1970 to 2000 (see Chart 3-2), with a small fall in 1990. As shown in Table 3-2, the population density in Cohasset is the least dense compared to proximate municipalities.

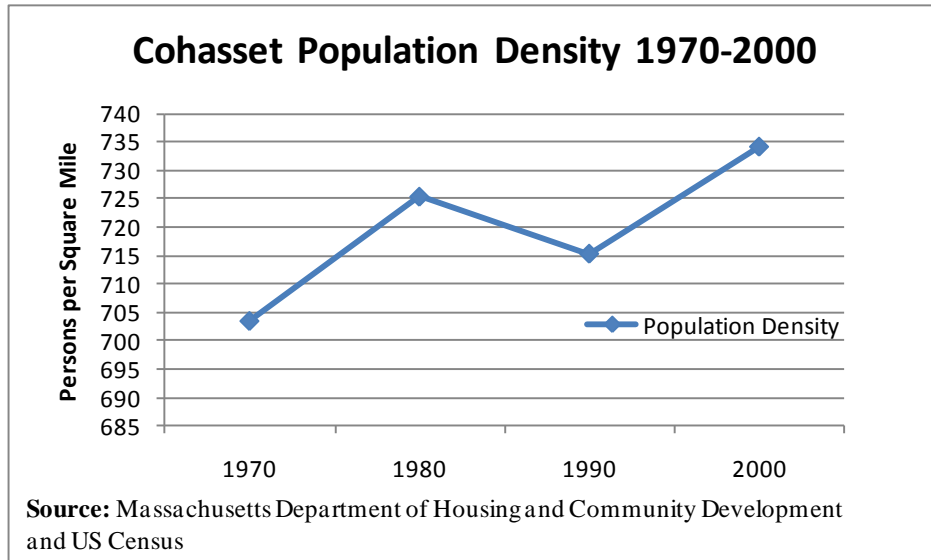
<sup>7</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 3, page 10.

<sup>8</sup> 2000 US Census, 15 March 2009, <www.census.gov>.

**Table 3-2: Population Density**

Municipality	Density (persons per square mile) (2000) <sup>9</sup>
Cohasset	715
Hingham	882
Hull	3,524
Scituate	997

**Chart 3-2**



### 3.4.1.3 Household Composition

Despite the fact that the overall population is relatively stable, the number of households continues to grow, reflecting a trend towards smaller household size and greater numbers of single persons living alone. See Table 3-3.

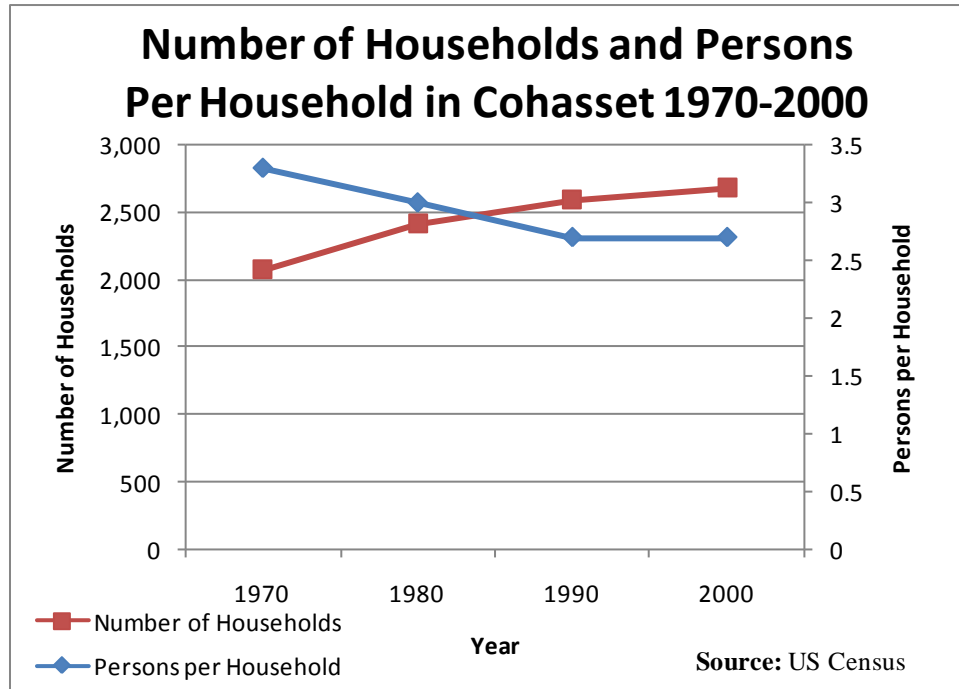
**Table 3-3: Cohasset Household Distribution (1970–2000)**

Year	Number of Households	Persons per Household
1970	2,078	3.3
1980	2,411	3.0
1990	2,590	2.7
2000	2,677	2.7

Source: U.S. Census

<sup>9</sup> MA Housing and Economic Development, DHCD Community Profiles, Updated through 2000, 7 April 2009  
<[http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=ehedterminal&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Economic+Analysis&L2=Executive+Office+of+Housing+and+Economic+Development&L3=Department+of+Housing+and+Community+Development&sid=Ehed&b=terminalcontent&f=dhcd\\_profiles\\_profiles&csid=Ehed](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=ehedterminal&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Economic+Analysis&L2=Executive+Office+of+Housing+and+Economic+Development&L3=Department+of+Housing+and+Community+Development&sid=Ehed&b=terminalcontent&f=dhcd_profiles_profiles&csid=Ehed)>

Chart 3-3



The average number of persons per household declined from 3.3 persons in 1970 to 2.7 persons in 1990. In 2000, the number of persons per household was similar to 1990. Married-couple households, with or without resident children under 18, accounted for 65 percent of all Cohasset households in 2000 and single-person households made up 21 percent.<sup>10</sup>

### 3.5 Housing and Economic Conditions

Cohasset is an affluent residential community with less than 7 percent of the taxes paid by business.<sup>11</sup> In 1995, the median house sales price was \$285,000. However, by 2000, the median price had jumped by 63 percent to \$465,000, which was the highest percentage increase on the South Shore<sup>12</sup>. In 2005, the median sale price increased to approximately \$650,000 (see Chart 3-4). The average number of sales has fluctuated in Cohasset from 1997 to 2007. The most sales occurred between 1997 and 2000 (See Chart 3-5).<sup>13</sup> In 2000, the majority (85 percent) of housing units in Cohasset were owner-occupied.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> 2000 US Census, 15 March 2009, <[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)>.

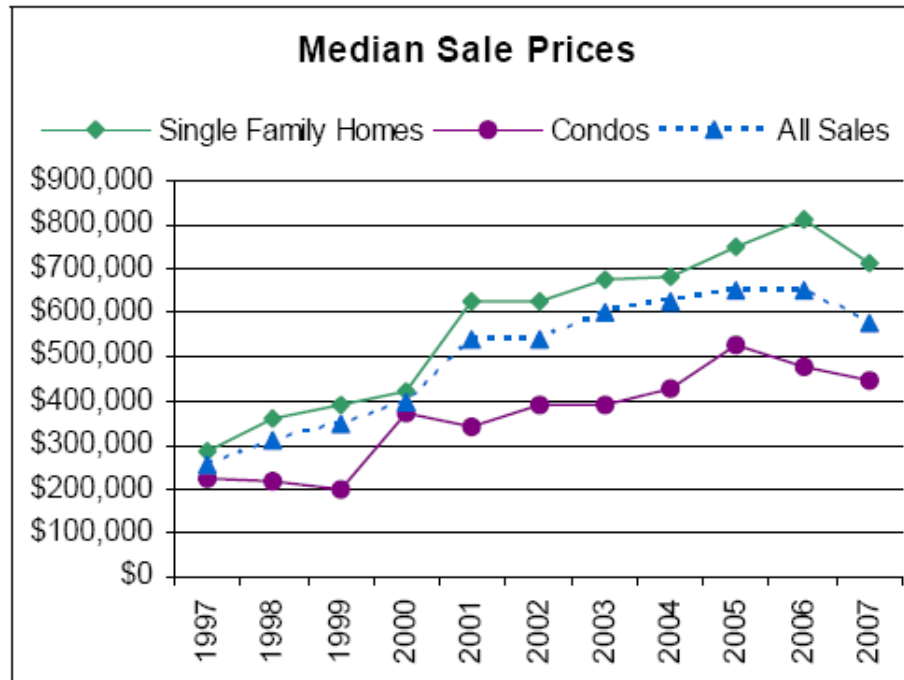
<sup>11</sup> Debra J Krupczak, M.A.A., Assistant Assessor, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 24 March 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 3, page 12.

<sup>13</sup> Banker and Tradesman, 15 March 2009, <[http://www.bankerandtradesman.com/records\\_\\_research.html](http://www.bankerandtradesman.com/records__research.html)>

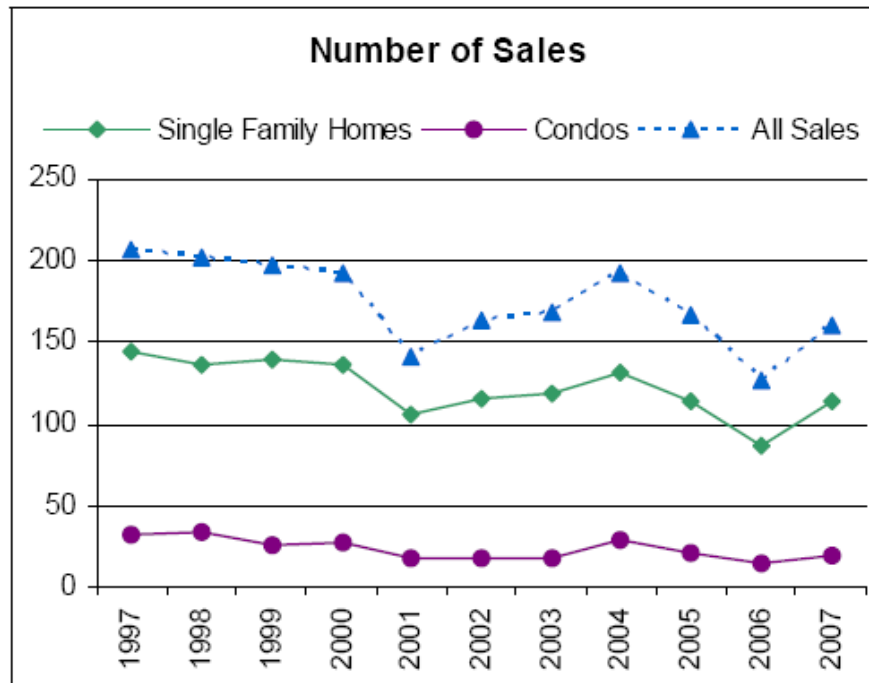
<sup>14</sup> 2000 US Census, 15 March 2009, <[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)>.

Chart 3-4



Source: Banker & Tradesman

Chart 3-5: Number of Sales in Cohasset (1997-2007)

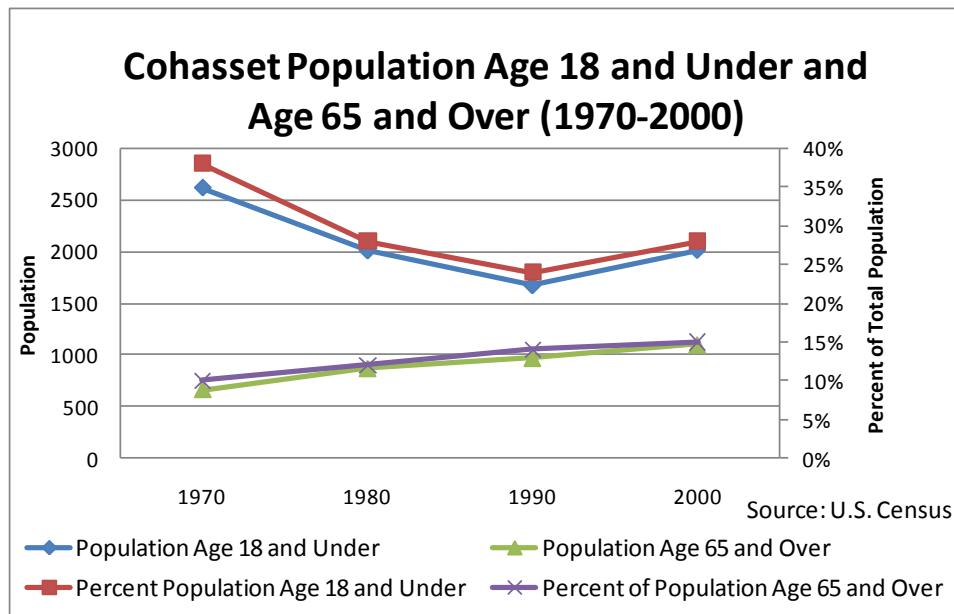


Source: Banker & Tradesman

### 3.6 Implications of Population Trends for Recreation and Open Space

To meet the needs of its population, Cohasset's recreation and open space resources must serve both an older adult population of comfortable means and a growing number of families with children. As shown on Chart 3-6, the number of children and elders in Cohasset grew in 2000 compared to 1990. Households with children under the age of 18 in Cohasset increased by 18.8% from 1990 to 2000.<sup>15</sup>

Chart 3-6



In 1998 Cohasset constructed a new elementary school and renovated the track, football field and tennis courts at the high school. In 2003 the Town completed a complete remodeling and expansion of its second elementary school and the Junior-Senior High School. Currently demand exists for walking trails and bicycle paths as well as playing fields, reflecting growth at either end of the age spectrum. A new artificial turf field opened in September 2009<sup>16</sup>.

### 3.7 Environmental Justice Populations<sup>17</sup>

According to the Massachusetts Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs, (EEA), Environmental Justice (EJ) is based upon the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution, and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. The EEA established an Environmental Justice Policy to help address the disproportionate share of environmental burdens experienced by lower-income people and communities of color, who often lack environmental assets in their

<sup>15</sup> 2000 US Census, 15 March 2009, <[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)>.

<sup>16</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

<sup>17</sup> [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov), Energy and Environmental Affairs, Environmental Justice Policy, accessed February 26, 2009.

neighborhoods. EJ populations in Massachusetts are determined by the following criteria based upon 2000 Census Block Data:

- Households earn 65% or less of the statewide household median income; or
- 25% or more of the residents are minority; or
- 25% or more of the residents are foreign-born; or
- 25% or more of the residents are lacking English language proficiency.

Based upon the 2000 U.S. Census, the Town of Cohasset does not meet any of the criteria for an Environmental Justice Population. However, the 2010 U.S. Census will be conducted in one year. A portion or the entire Town of Cohasset may be classified as an EJ population at that time. When the 2010 Census data becomes available, it should be reviewed to understand if Cohasset contains an EJ population. If the Town does have an EJ population, further steps should be taken to address its open space and recreational needs.

### **3.8 Employers and Employment Trends**

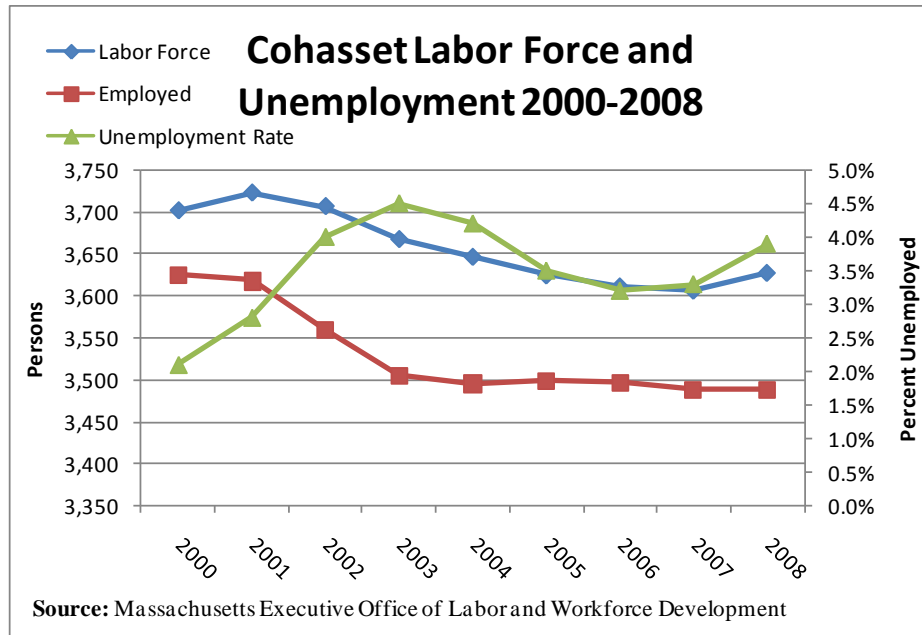
In general, most primary wage earners in Cohasset commute to jobs elsewhere in the region. The average commute time is 35 minutes and three quarters of employed residents commute at least 10 minutes to work.<sup>18</sup>

Cohasset's unemployment rate has fluctuated between 2% and 4.5% over the time period between 2000 to 2008. From 2003 to 2008, the number of employed residents remained steady at approximately 3,500 while the labor force decreased slightly and then increased in 2008. The increase in the labor force caused the unemployment rate to increase (See Chart 3-7).

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<sup>18</sup> Growth and Development Committee, Cohasset Master Plan and EO 418 Community Development Plan, January 2004, Section VIII, page 101-107.

Chart 3-7



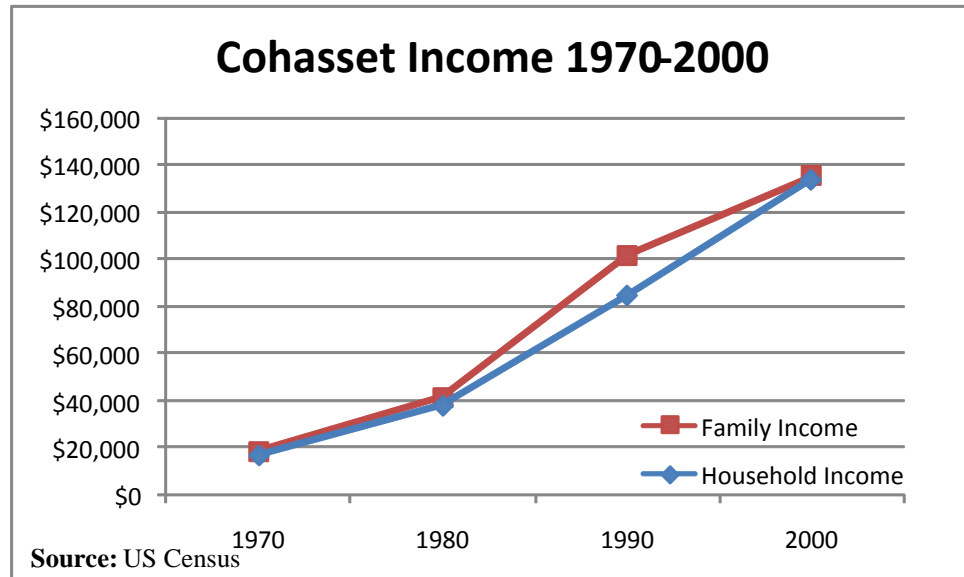
### 3.8.1 Major Industries

Cohasset has a small business sector in five zoning categories distributed in six locations. Most businesses are located either on Route 3A or in the Village Center. Cohasset's largest sources of employment are businesses in the service sector. The remaining source of employment is primarily businesses that produce goods.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.8.2 Family Income

A large amount of Cohasset residents are employed in professional occupations and have higher incomes than employees within the Town who work in service sector positions. Not accounting for inflation, the family and household income in Cohasset has increased sharply from 1970 to 2000 (See Chart 3-8). Additionally, as shown on Chart 3-4, the median housing sale price has also increased over time.

Chart 3-8



Additional information on Cohasset's economic development, employers and employment trends is detailed in the Cohasset Master Plan and EO 418 Community Development Plan, January 2004.

## 3.9 Growth and Development Patterns

### 3.9.1 Patterns and Trends

The earliest settlements in Cohasset were the village center, the harbor, and the Beechwood area, where farms were first carved out. Jerusalem Road began to see the establishment of inns and summer lodging houses in the early decades of the 19th century. This was the area where private summer cottages were first

<sup>19</sup> Growth and Development Committee, Cohasset Master Plan and EO 418 Community Development Plan, January 2004, Section VIII, page 98-101.



constructed. The arrival of the railroad in 1849 attracted even more summer visitors to Cohasset.

The Town continued to grow and, in the last quarter of the 19th century, new roads were laid out. Between 1876 and 1891, Doane Street, Forest Avenue, Atlantic Avenue, and Nichols Road were built. The last three were planned to accommodate summer houses, which in some cases took several decades before houses were constructed. Conversion of summer houses into year-round residences occurred primarily in the 1950s and 1960s.

The combination of large areas of public land in the southern part of the town and environmental constraints, both wetlands and rock ledge, has historically limited the opportunities for large development projects. Septic requirements, especially with the more stringent Title 5 regulations now in force, have posed another barrier to development. However, new construction techniques are allowing development on properties that previously could not pass percolation (“perc”) tests.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, a sewer plant expansion was recently completed to include connection to existing residences along Little Harbor and Atlantic Avenue. The permit allows connection only to existing homes, as the Environmental Protection Agency was reportedly concerned about a possible increase in development in environmentally sensitive areas associated with the sewer expansion.<sup>21</sup>

Recently several housing developments have been constructed or approved. The eight-home Rose Hill subdivision is complete, consisting of 14 single-family homes. A number of houses have been built near the Cohasset Golf Club. In the Beechwood area, a seven-lot subdivision was approved for construction at the lower end of Bound Brook and all but two lots have been developed. Avalon Bay, a 40B development of 200 rental units was approved and was originally scheduled to begin construction in the Spring of 2009. However, construction has been postponed with no new date announced.<sup>22</sup> A Senior Multi-family District Overlay Residential Development – “Cedarmere” was approved in 2004. This residential development off Beechwood Street consists of 105 total units of housing restricted to occupancy by persons age 55 and older. Currently, the project is on hold due to economic conditions. The Abbot development of Cook estate is currently underway.<sup>23</sup> Several other single-family subdivisions have been approved according to the Planning Board (See Table 3-4).<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 3, page 12-13.

<sup>21</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

<sup>22</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

<sup>23</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

<sup>24</sup> Jo-Ann Pilczak, Planning Board, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 9 March 2009.

**Table 3-4: Building Permits Issued for New Residential Construction on Previously Undisturbed Land**

Year	Number of Permits
2000	15
2001	13
2002	13
2003	6
2004	10
2005	15
2006	8
2007	5
2008	3

The “Old Colony Square” Transit Oriented Development was approved in 2007. This mixed-use facility located next to the commuter rail station on Rt. 3A (Chief Justice Cushing Highway) is designed as a 2-story building with retail space on the ground level and 16 residential rental units on the second floor. Construction of the project is currently in progress. 10% of the units will be deemed as affordable.

Commercial construction along Route 3A also has increased since the 1990s. The “Scituate Hill” 4 lot commercial subdivision was approved in 2006, and is located on Route 3A. Land clearing has begun on this site. Other commercial developments that have been constructed or approved since 2000 include Pilgrim Cooperative Bank, Hingham Lumber Company, King Jewelers Company, Joseph’s Hardware expansion, and Rosano office/residential mixed use building all off Route 3A. Additionally, Pompeo medical office building was approved, located off Parkingway. During the summer of 2009, the Town reviewed the CCI Energy application to construct two commercial size wind turbines on Graham Waste property on Route 3A.<sup>25</sup> The permit was denied, and the project is currently under appeal in Land Court.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.10 Infrastructure

#### 3.10.1 Transportation

Cohasset is primarily a residential town with commercial and industrial development concentrated along Route 3A, the Town’s major arterial road. More Cohasset residents work in Boston and other commercial centers than work locally and the majority commute by driving alone. However, about a tenth of Cohasset workers use mass transit, including the Hingham commuter boat, to get to work. Over the past 10 years, the MBTA worked with south shore

<sup>25</sup> Jo-Ann Pilczak, Planning Board, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 9 March 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

communities to re-establish the Greenbush commuter rail. In the planning and negotiation process, the MBTA entered into a Mitigation Agreement with Cohasset as well as Hingham, Braintree, Weymouth and Scituate (the five towns the rail line passes through). Currently, the Town is serviced by the Greenbush line at Cohasset Station which opened on October 30, 2007. Cohasset Station is located at 110 Chief Justice Cushing Highway and it is estimated that travel time to South Station in Boston is approximately 45 minutes. Currently, the Cohasset Station stop has 410 parking spaces, 10 of which are handicap accessible.<sup>27</sup> The Cohasset Greenbush Project team has been taking periodic scans of the Cohasset Station parking lot to assess potential ridership. On opening day, approximately 75 cars were parking in the lot. In the fall of 2008, there were 170 to 180 cars parked in the lot (this coincided with record high gas prices<sup>28</sup>). In early 2009, approximately 130 cars were observed in the parking lot. According to Tom Gruber, Special Assistant to the Town Manager for Greenbush Affairs, it is anticipated that ridership did not decrease; however, more people may be carpooling or are being dropped off at the station. Nearby stops to Cohasset Station include Hull, East Hingham, North Scituate and Greenbush.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.10.2 Water Supply Systems<sup>30</sup>

Cohasset's drinking water is supplied primarily from a surface water system comprised of Lily Pond and the Aaron River Reservoir. In addition, one well field, at Ellms Meadow provides supplementary water resources.

The Town water system is now operated under contract by American Water Enterprises and overseen by the Cohasset Board of Water Commissioners. A water treatment plant with a capacity of 3 million gallons per day (mgd) draws water from Lily Pond. Water from the Aaron River Reservoir can be diverted to Lily Pond as needed by adjustable gates at the Bound Brook control structure on Beechwood Street. The Ellms Meadow well field has a capacity of 0.185 mgd and is used to supplement the Lily Pond system.

North Cohasset residents are supplied with water from Hingham. In 1996, rates were increased by more than 150 percent. The Massachusetts Aquarian Water Company, the authority that operates Hingham water, has recently announced public hearings on another proposed rate increase. In the past, the Town has promised to explore the possibility of expanding the municipal water system into North Cohasset.

During the summer of 1995 drought, the Town instituted bans on watering lawns, however such watering bans are not a regular occurrence.<sup>31</sup> Cohasset is currently

<sup>27</sup> MBTA, " 24 March 2009 < [http://www.mbta.com/schedules\\_and\\_maps/rail/lines/?route=GREENBSH](http://www.mbta.com/schedules_and_maps/rail/lines/?route=GREENBSH)>.

<sup>28</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Telephone Conversation with Tom Gruber, 7 April 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Jared Hill, Cohasset Water Department Superintendent, facsimile, 4 March 2009.

making improvements to the water distribution and treatment systems. In a July 1, 2000, water quality report to the Town, the Water Department identified a number of potential threats to watershed quality including the Cohasset Heights Landfill (toxic leachate), the Massachusetts Highway Department garage (road salt runoff), Norfolk Conveyor (1983 oil spill and hazardous waste), the Hingham Annex former rocket manufacturing facility (toxic leachate), the Arrowwood Development in Scituate (septic systems), and the former military storage bunkers in Wompatuck State Park. All of these sites are being monitored.

The Water Department has embarked upon an aggressive program to upgrade the water system, replacing undersized pipes, and building a second tank to improve water quality and flow. A long-range capital improvements program for both the Lily Pond water treatment plant and the water distribution system has been developed, and the department is carrying out the goals set forth in those plans. In addition, the Water Department is continuing efforts to acquire additional property in the Lily Pond watershed including the Wolf Pit to minimize potential development near the reservoir. Additionally, the Water Department will be constructing a significant addition to the water plant in order to meet Environmental Protection Agency Regulations. Although the renovations were originally anticipated to be completed by 2012, the current funding situation has resulted in delays with no completion date established.<sup>32</sup>

### **3.10.3 Sewer Service<sup>33</sup>**

In the 2000's the Cohasset Sewer Commission (the Commission) continued to sewer existing residents and businesses in the Central Sewer District which flows to the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) off Elm Street. The design and implementation phase has begun for the Little Harbor Sewer Project to connect existing pollution sources in the designated Little Harbor, Atlantic Avenue and Jerusalem Road Sewer Districts in order improve Little Harbor water quality.

The WWTP continues to operate exceptionally well below permit effluent limits, while the Sewer Commission continues to examine incidents of peak flows during storm events; methods to reduce stormwater and groundwater influences on the sewer collection system and to look at design and operations procedure modifications at the plant to better deal with such events. In September of 2007 construction work began on the combined water/sewer/drain portions of the Little Harbor/Atlantic Avenue expansion project. The WWTP upgrades and expansion includes the installation of new membranes to allow the expansion of the plant's capacity from 300,000 to 450,000 gallons per day. The expansion has been designated due to the existing pollution sources in the Little Harbor, Atlantic

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<sup>31</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

<sup>32</sup> Jared Hill, Cohasset Water Department Superintendent, telephone correspondence, 29 September 2009.

<sup>33</sup> Diane Hindley, Sewer Commission, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 11 March 2009.

Avenue and Jerusalem Road area, and was mandated by law.<sup>34</sup> There continues to be a policy that no vacant lots within the new expansion areas or in the North Cohasset District (also flow limited) are being considered for sewer connection at this time due to capacity limitations but the Sewer Commission does maintain a “waiting list” for future consideration. The North Cohasset Sewer District, which flows first to Hingham and then to Hull, will accept flow from the Jerusalem Road District, included with the Little Harbor sewer expansion. This area was one of two “Priority” areas of existing homes (with septic systems being a defined pollution source) proposed for connection to that district. The area containing the homes along Old Coach Road comprises the second Priority area for connection to the North Cohasset Sewer District. Any available capacity defined in that district will first be applied to these existing homes which are in the Little Harbor watershed area. The construction of the expanded sewer system and plant upgrades was completed in the summer of 2009, and connections will be phased in.<sup>35</sup>

The plant expansion and modification efforts associated with the expansion for the Little Harbor sewers was completed in 2009 and also included modifications to further mitigate any potential overflows at the plant due to extreme wet weather conditions.

During 2006 and 2007 the Sewer Commission was notified that the suits filed against it by Jerusalem Road Estates, King Taylor Associates (Cedarmere) and Avalon developers had either been ruled in favor of the Commission by the Courts or appeals by the plaintiffs to earlier rulings found in favor of the Commission had been dismissed. All three of these entities had sought connections to Town sewers and had been denied by the Commission. The Commission has remained committed to satisfying the outstanding judicial judgment requirements as well as helping to eliminate “existing” pollution sources. For this reason the Commission will continue to strive, within its legal bounds, to provide service for existing homes with its limited treatment capacity before any consideration is given to new developments. In 2008 a capacity study evaluation was conducted for central district, which identified that Cohasset had additional capacity to distribute. This distribution must be used toward an existing pollution source; for example, an expansion or change in use of an existing development that would increase flows. Cohasset continues to maintain a moratorium on providing sewer service to vacant lots.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

<sup>35</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Diane Hindley, Administrative Assistant to the Cohasset Sewer Commission, telephone correspondence, 28 September 2009.

### **3.11 Long-Term Development Patterns**

#### **3.11.1 Long-Term Growth Patterns**

Zoning districts in Cohasset include residential, light industry, commercial, cluster zoning by special permit, and an open space district. A floodplain and watershed protection overlay district regulates development activities by requiring special permits. Special permits are issued by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Town also has a Wetlands Bylaw and detailed Wetlands Regulations which are administered by the Cohasset Conservation Commission. Much current construction activity consists of the expansion of existing homes, which often involves floodplain and wetlands protection concerns. Cohasset also has a Residential Cluster Development section in the Zoning Bylaw, however, developers rarely bring forth a plan under the provisions that adequately link open space within the Town. Recently, the “Large Home Review” bylaw was passed at Town Meeting in 2004. Since its adoption, the Planning Board has reviewed and recommended the issuance of permits for 21 homes, each with over 3,500 SF of residential living space. These projects included extensive renovation and expansion, tear down and rebuild, and new construction scenarios. Additionally, the Town adopted the Transit Oriented Development Overlay District to foster moderate to high density development within walking distance of the transit station.<sup>37</sup> The trend of transit oriented development has been growing throughout the nation and within the State of Massachusetts. Finally, in the recent past, the Town passed a Wind Energy Conversion Facility Bylaw for turbines greater than 500 kilowatts.

In 2008, Cohasset adopted a Stormwater Management Bylaw into the General Bylaw to prevent and reduce existing and future flooding, protect water quality, increase groundwater recharge, reduce erosion and sedimentation and help Cohasset meet federal requirements under Phase II of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The Stormwater Management Bylaw will allow the Town to review development for elements that are crucial to the health of the open space. The Conservation Commission is the permitting authority for the Stormwater Management Bylaw.

A citizen petition also proposed a bylaw proposal that would address development and blasting on ledge. However, the bylaw was not passed at Town Meeting.

The Town Assessor currently classifies 193 acres of open private vacant land as “developable” and an additional 127 acres as “potentially developable.” These two categories of land together constitute 5.3 percent of the Town’s 6,065 acres. Most of these parcels are small. The largest developable site contains 31 acres and the largest potentially developable site contains 45 acres. In contrast, 199 acres of open privately held land, 3 percent of all town land, is classified as undevelopable. Although current requirements for septic systems as well as the presence of wetlands and ledge preclude development of many sites at present,

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<sup>37</sup> Town of Cohasset Zoning Bylaw, March 29, 2008, Section 17.2.

installation of sewer systems for several areas of Cohasset and the use of alternative technologies for localized communal waste treatment may open up some of the undevelopable sites. Area requirements for new single-family dwellings on a new lot in residential districts range from 18,000 to 60,000 square feet, with a frontage requirement of 50 feet.

Refer to Map 3.

See Section 3.9.1 for a summary of the development that occurred over the past five (5) years.

### **3.11.2 Buildout Analysis**

To assist cities and towns, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) initiated a statewide analysis of building patterns. A buildout analysis consists of a series of maps, based on the geographical information system (GIS), that illustrate a community's current zoning, land available for development and how it is zoned, and maximum development possible in a particular community if every piece of developable land were developed based upon existing local zoning. Accompanying the maps, projections were calculated for the numbers of residents, households, public school students, and water use at maximum buildout. The buildout analysis provides a baseline for communities by demonstrating development as it could occur if no changes were made in current zoning. It is a planning tool designed to stimulate discussion and help communities identify if they are growing in the way they want and what, if any, changes they want to make. The 1999 analysis for Cohasset determined that 1,551 acres are developable. If all of this land were to be built upon using current Cohasset zoning, it would yield approximately 1,036 additional dwelling units and an additional 2,652 residents. This scenario would bring Cohasset's total population to 10,769 residents. Appendix B contains the Cohasset Buildout Summary Information provided by the Massachusetts EOEA.

**Section 4.0**  
**Environmental Inventory & Analysis**

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## **4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY & ANALYSIS**

Cohasset enjoys a variety of environmental and cultural resources. The following section provides an inventory of these resources, and describes the environmental challenges facing the town. Information contained within Section 4 of the prior 2002-2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan has been repeated and/or updated as applicable to complete this analysis.

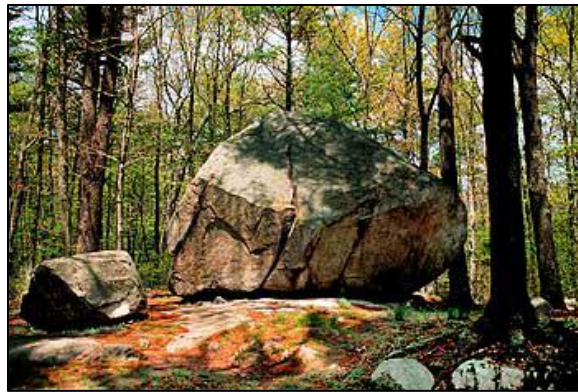
### **4.1 Geology, Soils & Topography**

Refer to the *Soils and Geologic Features Map* (Required Map 4) in conjunction with this section.

#### **4.1.1 Geology**

The majority of Cohasset's bedrock is comprised of Dedham granite.<sup>38</sup> The prevalent bedrock within Cohasset has historically represented a development constraint, although more recent blasting capabilities have made previously undevelopable areas available.

Glacial action is responsible for the town's surficial geology; glacial retreat approximately 12,000 years ago carried soils, rocks and boulders, and, as the glaciers melted, deposited glacial till on the ground surface. Cohasset contains many boulders transported by glacial action and then perched atop one another, or "glacial erratics". Rooster Rock, Bigelow Boulder, and Ode's Den, all in Whitney and Thayer Woods, and Big Tipling in Wheelwright Park are among the most well known glacial erratics. Cohasset's present swamps and marshes were formed from small water bodies created during the extended process of glacial retreat that became vegetated.<sup>39</sup>



**Photo 4-1:** Photograph obtained from The Trustees of Reservations website ([www.thetrustees.org/pages/392\\_whitney\\_and\\_thayer\\_woods.cfm](http://www.thetrustees.org/pages/392_whitney_and_thayer_woods.cfm))

<sup>38</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

<sup>39</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

#### 4.1.2 Soils

The majority of soils within Cohasset represent a constraint for development as they generally either contain prevalent stones and boulders or are poorly drained.<sup>40</sup>

MassGIS indicates that the soil types listed below occur in Cohasset. Prime farmland soils are noted with an asterisk\*, while important farmland soils are noted with a double asterisk\*\*. Prime soils constitute those exhibiting the most advantageous combination of physical and chemical characteristics for farming use and that are also available for farming uses. Important farmland soils include soils that nearly qualify for prime status, and that *“economically produce high yields of crops when treated or managed according to acceptable farming methods.”*<sup>41,42</sup>

- Beaches (Be)
- Canton fine sandy loam, 3 – 8% and 8 – 15% slopes (CaB\* and CaC\*\*)
- Canton fine sandy loam, extremely stony, 3 – 8% and 15 – 25% slopes (CbB and CbD)
- Canton fine sandy loam, extremely bouldery, 8 – 15% and 15 – 25% slopes (CcC and CcD)
- Charlton-Hollis-Rock outcrop complex, 3 – 8%, 8 – 15% and 15-25% slopes (ChB, ChC and ChD)
- Deerfield loamy sand, 3 – 8% slopes (DeB\*\*)
- Freetown muck (Fm)
- Freetown muck, ponded (Fp)
- Hinckley sandy loam, 3 – 8% and 8 – 15% slopes (HfB\*\* and HfC)
- Hollis-Rock outcrop-Charlton complex, 3 – 15% and 15 – 35% slopes (HrC and HrD)
- Ipswich mucky peat (Ip)
- Merrimac fine sandy loam, 0 – 3%, 3 – 8% and 8 – 15% slopes (MmA\*, MmB\* and MmC\*\*)
- Merrimac-Urban land complex, 0 – 8% slopes (MnB)
- Montauk fine sandy loam, 3 – 8% slopes (MoB\*)
- Montauk fine sandy loam, extremely stony, 3 – 8% and 8 – 15% slopes (MsB and MsC)
- Newport silt loam, 3 – 8%, 8 – 15% and 15 – 25% slopes (NpB\*, NpC\*\* and NpD)
- Newport-Urban land complex, 3 – 15% slopes (NuC)

<sup>40</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

<sup>41</sup> Prime farmland soil information obtained from <http://nesoil.com/prime1.html> on March 13, 2009.

<sup>42</sup> Important farmland soil information obtained from <http://nesoil.com/important.html> on March 13, 2009.

- Paxton fine sandy loam, 3 – 8% slopes (PaB\*)
- Paxton fine sandy loam, extremely stony, 3 – 8% and 8 – 15% slopes (PbB and PbC)
- Pittstown silt loam, 2 – 8% slopes (PtB\*)
- Raynham silt loam (Ra)
- Ridgebury fine sandy loam, 0 – 5% slopes (RdA)
- Ridgebury fine sandy loam, extremely stony, 2 – 8% slopes (RgB)
- Rock outcrop-Hollis complex, 3 – 25% slopes (RoD)
- Scarboro and Birdsall soils (Sb)
- Scio very fine sandy loam, 2 – 5% slopes (ScB\*)
- Scituate fine sandy loam, 3 – 8% slopes (SeB\*)
- Scituate fine sandy loam, extremely stony, 3 – 8% slopes (StB)
- Sudbury fine sandy loam, 2 – 8% slopes (SuB\*)
- Swansea muck (Sw)
- Udorthents, sandy (Ua)
- Udorthents, loamy (Ud)
- Udorthents, wet substratum (Ue)
- Udorthents, refuse substratum (Uf)
- Urbanland, 0 – 15% slopes (Ur)
- Urban land-Boxford complex, 0 – 3% slopes (UxA)
- Water (W)
- Walpole sandy loam, 0 – 5% (WaA)
- Whitman fine sandy loam, extremely stony, 0 – 5% slopes (WhA)
- Windsor loamy sand, 3 – 8% slopes (WnB\*\*)
- Woodbridge fine sandy loam, 3 – 8% slopes (WsB\*)

Of the soils occurring in Cohasset listed above, Table 4-1 depicts the ten most prevalent (by acre) soil types within Cohasset. There are no prime farmland soils within the “top ten” list, although important farmland soils are present.

**Table 4-1: Ten Most Prevalent (by Acre) Soil Types within Cohasset**

Soil Name	Acres	% Total
Hollis-Rock outcrop-Charlton complex, 3 to 15 percent slopes (HrC)	1881	30%
Rock outcrop-Hollis complex, 3 to 25 percent slopes (RoD)	576	9%
Charlton-Hollis-Rock outcrop complex, 8 to 15 percent slopes (ChC)	517	8%
Charlton-Hollis-Rock outcrop complex, 3 to 8 percent slopes (ChB)	343	6%
Swansea muck, 0 to 1 percent slopes (Sw)	281	5%
Ridgebury fine sandy loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes, extremely stony (RgB)	201	3%
Freetown muck, ponded, 0 to 1 percent slopes (Fp)	198	3%
Newport silt loam, 8 to 15 percent slopes (NpC)**	183	3%
Freetown muck, 0 to 1 percent slopes (Fm)	162	3%
Newport silt loam, 15 to 25 percent slopes (NpD)	161	3%
Other	1730	2%

Source: Adapted from USDA NRCS, Norfolk County Web Soil Survey  
([www.websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/](http://www.websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/))

The most dominant soil type in Cohasset is HrC, which is described as “*gently sloping and strongly sloping soils and areas of exposed bedrock on hills and ridges where the relief is affected by the underlying bedrock...The shallow, somewhat excessively drained Hollis soil is on the tops of ridges or is near rock outcrops. The very deep, well drained Charlton soil is in low pockets and saddles. Stones and boulders 10 inches to 10 feet in diameter cover 0 to 15% of the surface.*” Additionally, depth to the seasonal high water table occurs at greater than 6 feet with HrC soils. Slope and shallow bedrock depth are the main development limitations associated with HrC soils.<sup>43</sup>

RoD soils are generally unsuitable for development, mainly due to prevalent bedrock exposures.<sup>44</sup> Seasonal high water and wetland characteristics associated with the mucky soils (Sw, Fm and Fp) also represent significant development constraints. Seasonal high water and slow to very slow permeability represent the main limitations of RgB soils, especially with regard to septic, although development can be accommodated with consideration of mechanisms to avoid water damage.<sup>45</sup> Seasonal high water and slow permeability are also constraints for NpC and NpD soils.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> <http://nesoil.com/norfolk/HrC.htm> viewed online March 25, 2009.

<sup>44</sup> <http://nesoil.com/norfolk/RoD.htm> viewed online March 25, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> <http://nesoil.com/norfolk/RgB.htm> viewed online March 25, 2009.

<sup>46</sup> <http://nesoil.com/norfolk/NpC.htm> and <http://nesoil.com/norfolk/NpD.htm> viewed online March 25, 2009.

### 4.1.3 Topography

*“As noted above, glacial action created Cohasset’s rocky shoreline, ponds, and marshy depressions.”* The rocky topography prevalent in Cohasset produces many small changes in elevation, while more significant changes in elevation due to the town’s glacial past create a ranging topography that includes features from coastal estuaries to inland hills. “A number of the oval, rounded hills known as drumlins, which were also created during the retreat of the glaciers, can be found in the vicinity of Route 3A. These include Turkey Hill, Scituate Hill, Deer Hill, Bear Hill, James Hill, and Walnut Hill. Turkey Hill, on the border with Hingham, is the highest point in Cohasset at 187 feet above sea level.”<sup>47</sup>



**Image 4-1:** Topographic features of Cohasset. Courtesy of Google Maps online.

## 4.2 Landscape Character

Refer to the *Unique Features Map* (Required Map 5) in conjunction with this section.



**Photo 4-1:** Glacial erratic, Photograph obtained from The Trustees of Reservations website  
([www.thetrustees.org/pages/392\\_whitney\\_and\\_thayer\\_woods.cfm](http://www.thetrustees.org/pages/392_whitney_and_thayer_woods.cfm))

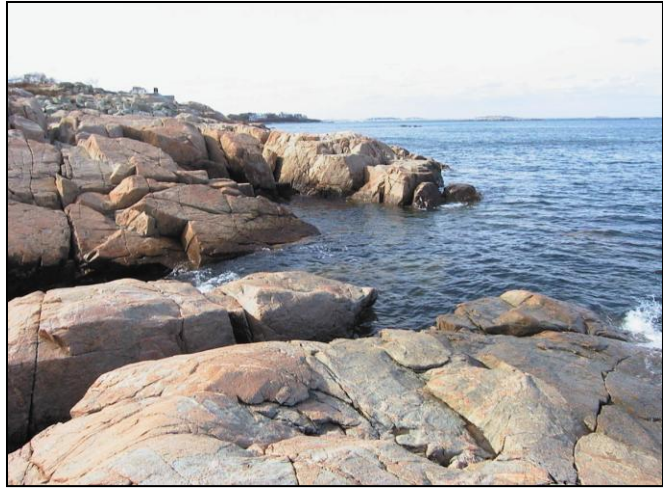
Cohasset is home to distinctive landforms, unique natural environments, and areas of scenic interest. Distinctive landforms include the previously noted drumlins, as well as ledge outcroppings and boulders throughout the Town.

<sup>47</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.



Cohasset's generally rocky shore also contrasts with the sandy beaches that are generally more common in the South Shore region.

The Town's landscape is characterized by a diversity of natural environments, ranging from uplands to freshwater areas to tidally influenced areas, including 6.12 miles of coastline.<sup>48</sup> Forested areas and wetlands are discussed in greater detail in Section 4.4.



**Photo 4-2:** View of Moors Rock off Jerusalem Road, photograph courtesy of Karen Quigley

The various distinctive landforms and unique natural environments create areas of scenic interest in Cohasset. Particularly scenic vistas include those along Jerusalem Road and Atlantic Avenue, as well as from Forest Avenue heading toward the ocean. The reversing falls at Cohasset Harbor are especially unique, and very popular with regional kayakers.

### 4.3 Water Resources

Refer to the *Water Resources Map* (Required Map 6) in conjunction with this section.

#### 4.3.1 Watersheds

According to MassGIS, Cohasset is located within two major watersheds: Boston Harbor and South Coastal. North Cohasset and those areas draining to Great Swamp, Turkey Hill Run, and Rattlesnake Run, which all flow to Straits Pond or the Weir River, are located within the Boston Harbor watershed. The remainder and majority of Town lies within the South Coastal watershed, which includes areas that drain to Lily Pond, the Aaron Reservoir, Brass Kettle Brook, Little Harbor, the Gulf River, and the Atlantic Ocean.

#### 4.3.2 Surface Waters

Cohasset contains both salt and freshwater resources. In addition to the Atlantic Ocean, saltwater bodies include Cohasset Harbor, Little Harbor, the Gulf River estuary, and Straits Pond.<sup>49</sup> Straits Pond lies within the northernmost portion of Cohasset, within the Weir River Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

<sup>48</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

<sup>49</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

and is located in both the Towns of Cohasset and Hull.<sup>50</sup> Straits Pond is an Outstanding Resource Water due to its location within an ACEC.<sup>51</sup> Straits Pond is described in further detail in Section 4.6.4. The Gulf River estuary is located in the southeastern portion of Cohasset, within both the Towns of Cohasset and Scituate, and includes salt mashers, tidal flats, and other lands subject to tidal action.

The major freshwater bodies within Cohasset consist of the Aaron River Reservoir, Lily Pond, Sanctuary Pond, Treat's Pond, Aaron River, Bound Brook, Peppermint Brook, Herring Brook, Brass Kettle Brook, James Brook, Turkey Hill Run, Richardson's Brook, and Rattlesnake Run.<sup>52</sup> Smaller ponds, streams, and seasonal wet places are also present throughout the Town. Note that Lily Pond and the Aaron River Reservoir are surface drinking water supplies. Therefore, Lily Pond and the Aaron River Reservoir, as well as the streams and wetlands tributary to these surface waters, are Outstanding Resource Waters.<sup>53</sup> James Brook runs through Cohasset center, the most densely developed portion of Town, where it passes through a culvert under the village center and emerges south of Elm Street and drains into Cohasset Cove.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. "Weir River." ACEC Designations. 30 Jan. 2009 <[www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/acec/acecs/l-weiriv.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/acec/acecs/l-weiriv.htm)>.

<sup>51</sup> Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards [314 CMR 4.00].

<sup>52</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

<sup>53</sup> Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards [314 CMR 4.00].

<sup>54</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

#### 4.3.3 Water Supply & Aquifer Recharge Areas<sup>55</sup>

Two surface water supplies provide potable water for Cohasset: Lily Pond (DEP Drinking Water Supply ID# 065-01S) and the Aaron River Reservoir (ID# 065-02S).

The 52-acre Lily Pond contains a maximum capacity of approximately 100 million gallons of water, while the maximum 550 million gallons of water available in the Aaron River Reservoir, which is 136 acres in size, supplements the Lily Pond supply during high water demand.

The watershed associated with these surface water supplies encompasses 5,892 acres, of which only 40% is in Cohasset. The amount of water available for use in Lily Pond and the Aaron River Reservoir without detrimental repercussions is 5.2 million gallons per day (gpd), whereas Cohasset's average daily demand is approximately 800,000 gpd. During maximum demand times (summer), Cohasset utilizes 2.2 million gpd.

In addition to these surface supplies, the Cohasset Water Department also manages two well fields. The proximity of the Sohier Street Wells (ID# 065-03G) to the recently re-established Greenbush rail line resulted in their abandonment. However, the Ellms Meadow Well field (ID# 065-02G) was reactivated in 2007 and has been approved for a maximum 170,000 gallons per day (gpd) withdrawal.

It is anticipated that the existing water supply will meet future water demands for at least the next 20 years.

##### **Water Supply Protection Area Definitions**

Public Water Supply Protection Areas are defined in the Drinking Water Regulations at 310 CMR 22.02.

##### **Interim Wellhead Protection Area (IWPA)**

For public water systems using wells or wellfields that lack a Department approved Zone II, the Department will apply an interim wellhead protection area. This interim wellhead protection area shall be a one-half mile radius measured from the well or wellfield for sources whose approved pumping rate is 100,000 gpd or greater.

**Zone I** The protective radius required around a public water supply well or wellfield. For public water system wells with approved yields of 100,000 gpd or greater, the protective radius is 400 feet.

**Zone II** That area of an aquifer which contributes water to a well under the most severe pumping and recharge conditions that can be realistically anticipated (180 days of pumping at approved yield, with no recharge from precipitation).

**Zone A** The land area between the surface water source and the upper boundary of the bank; the land area within a 400 foot lateral distance from the upper boundary of the bank of a Class A surface water source; and the land area within a 200 foot lateral distance from the upper boundary of the bank of a tributary or associated surface water body.

**Zone B** The land area within one-half mile of the upper boundary of the bank of a Class A surface water source, as defined in 314 CMR 4.05(3)(a), or edge of watershed, whichever is less.

<sup>55</sup> Norfolk RAM Group. "Where Your Drinking Water Comes From." Cohasset Water Department Consumer Confidence Report Map. 30 Jan. 2008, 17 Feb. 2009 <<http://www.cohassetwater.org/pdf/2008CCRMMap.pdf>>.



#### 4.3.4 Flood Hazard Areas

Areas within Cohasset that are subject to inundation by the 100-year flood elevation are depicted on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) community panels 2502360002B, 2502360004C, and 2502360005B dated September 29, 1986, July 2, 1992, and September 29, 1986 respectively. Note that a Letter of Map Amendment (LOMA) dated October 27, 1999 also exists for panel 2502360004C. A Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and accompanying Flood Boundary and Floodway Maps (community panels 2502360002 and 2502360004) are also available for the town of Cohasset. The study and floodway maps are dated September 29, 1986 and provide more specific base flood information for most coastal and tributary rivers within Cohasset.

Because of Cohasset's extensive river and tributary system, many flood hazard areas are spread throughout the town. The areas subject to flooding depicted on the FEMA maps generally include the basins of James Brook, Brass Kettle Brook, Bound Brook, Turkey Hill Run, Rattlesnake Run, Aaron River, the Gulf River, Lily Pond, Straits Pond, Aaron River Reservoir, and portions of tributaries thereto. In addition, Cohasset Harbor and the lowland shores of Little Harbor are subject to flooding and velocity hazards (wave action).

The following is excerpted from the Flood Insurance Study:

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

*In addition to flooding, damaging waves may result in areas with sufficient fetch length, water depth, and exposure to winds. The outer coastline from the Cohasset-Hull town boundary to the White Head section of Cohasset Harbor is susceptible to damaging waves.*

*Seaward of the western side of Pleasant Beach is an ancient river channel which extends from the beach to approximately 1,500 feet offshore. The depth of water at this channel is significantly deeper than at other parts of the beach. These greater depths are a pathway for higher wave energy to reach the shore. The result is more overtopping and seepage at this part of the dune than at other sites in the system.*

*Inland riverine flooding is also a major concern in Cohasset. During peak runoff seasons and high intensity storms, inland flooding occurs along Turkey Hill Run and in the downtown Pleasant Street area*

*where James Brook passes through a long culvert...*<sup>56</sup>

#### 4.3.5 Wetlands

Wetlands provide a variety of important functions, including 1) the protection of public and private water supply; 2) the protection of groundwater supply; 3) flood control and storm damage prevention; 4) the prevention of pollution; 5) the protection of fisheries and shellfish; and 6) wildlife habitat.

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

Saltwater wetlands are located in the northern and eastern portions of Cohasset bordering on the Gulf River estuary, parts of Cohasset Harbor, Straits Pond, and portions of Little Harbor. Major freshwater wetland areas include the Great Swamp, Jacob's Meadow (a marshland), the area between Lily Pond and the Aaron River Reservoir, Brass Kettle Brook and Bound Brook, Breadencheese Swamp (near the town transfer station and former landfill, north of Cedar Street), Jacob's Meadow (adjacent to James Brook between South Main Street and Elm Street), and Ellms Meadow (adjacent to James Brook between Cushing Road, James Lane and the MBTA Railroad).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Flood Insurance Study Town of Cohasset, Massachusetts Norfolk County, dated September 29, 1986. Federal Emergency Management Agency.

<sup>57</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

## 4.4 Vegetation

### 4.4.1 General Inventory<sup>58,59</sup>

Cohasset falls within the central hardwoods dominated Southern New England Coastal Plains and Hills sub-ecoregion, which is topographically variable with granites, schist and gneiss bedrock types present. The Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) has classified the natural communities of Massachusetts; these classifications can be used to determine what vegetative community types are present at a given location. Natural Community locations can be reported to NHESP in order to increase its existing database. Refer to Appendix C for information pertaining to reporting Natural Community observations.

A **natural community** is a distinct grouping of plant species that occur together in recurring patterns. Natural Communities are distinguished by the three following characteristics:

1. Definite plant species composition;
2. Consistent physical structure (e.g., grassland, shrubland, forest); and
3. Specific physical conditions (e.g., nutrients, climate).

Typically, natural communities are classified, described, and named on the basis of their dominant or characteristic vegetation.

NHESP has also identified “Priority Natural Vegetation Communities”, which represent the most critical conservation areas with regard to biodiversity in Massachusetts. NHESP organizes vegetation community types into three systems: Terrestrial, Palustrine, and Estuarine, all of which occur in Cohasset. Specifically, within the three broad categories, Riverine, Coastal, and Upland Forest natural community systems occur in Cohasset. Within these subcategories, the follow specific vegetative communities occur in Cohasset:

- Coniferous, deciduous and mixed deciduous/coniferous upland forests (Terrestrial).
- Herbaceous, shrub and tree riverine natural community systems (Palustrine).
- Brackish tidal wetland, coastal bank/beach/dune, coastal forest, maritime shrubland, saltmarsh, tidal flat, and rocky shore coastal natural community systems (Estuarine).

<sup>58</sup> Patricia C. Swain and Jennifer B. Kearsley, “Classification of the Natural Communities of Massachusetts,” Draft Version 1.3. Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, 2001.

<sup>59</sup> Office of Geographic and Environmental Information, “MassGIS,” Metadata for Priority Natural Vegetation Communities, Apr. 2003, 26 Mar. 2009 <[www.mass.gov/mgis/laylist.htm](http://www.mass.gov/mgis/laylist.htm)>.

Refer to Section 4.4.2 for additional detail regarding Terrestrial areas in Cohasset, and to Section 4.4.5 for additional detail regarding Palustrine and Estuarine areas in Cohasset.

#### 4.4.2 Forest Land

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

- Wompatuck State Park
- Whitney and Thayer Woods
- Turkey Hill
- Wheelwright Park
- Great Brewster Woods
- Barnes Wildlife Sanctuary
- Cornelia and Richardson White Woods
- Wooded portions of Cohasset Country Club
- Turtle Island and vicinity
- Reeds Corner and vicinity
- Walnut Hill and vicinity
- Adjacent to Deer Hill
- Water Department parcels around Lily Pond
- Brass Kettle Brook area off King Street

Oak and white pine are the dominant species within Cohasset's upland forests. In addition to the dominant oak-white pine forested communities identified throughout Cohasset, several smaller forest communities have been identified within specific areas of Town:<sup>60</sup>

*"Significant understory stands of American holly exist in Wheelwright Park, Whitney and Thayer Woods, and north of Lambert's Lane" as well as on the Holly Hill Farm and Cornelia Richardson White Woods property. Oak-hemlock-white pine forests are generally distinguished by the presence of eastern hemlock and "can be found in moist lowland areas, particularly parts of Wompatuck State Park and east of Bound Brook."*<sup>61</sup>

According to MassGIS, forested riverine natural community systems are also located proximate to the Aaron River, Bound River, Brass Kettle Brook, James Brook, Richardsons Brook, and a tributary to the Gulf River. Coastal forest communities are located proximate to Richardson's Brook, within Wheelwright

<sup>60</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

<sup>61</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

Park, and off Atlantic Avenue between Little Harbor and Cohasset Cove.

*“In addition to the woodlands in parks and protected conservation areas, both mature and successional forest lands exist in scattered stands throughout the town... Early successional scrub forest is less common and can be found in areas such as the edges of the Turkey Hill meadows.”*<sup>62</sup> MassGIS also indicates that three properties participate in the Chapter 61 tax abatement program for forestry, however MassGIS has not updated its Chapter 61 data for 10 years.

#### **4.4.3 Public Shade Trees<sup>63</sup>**

Street trees line North and South Main Street, Highland Street, Oak Street, and many of the roads throughout Cohasset. Park and publicly owned trees are located within town-owned properties. These properties include the Town Common, Wheelwright Park, Barnes Wildlife Sanctuary, Cohasset public school lands, public recreation lands, and lands owned by the water department, for example. Cemeteries also contain public shade trees. Refer to Section 4.6.5 for a list of cemeteries within Cohasset.

#### **4.4.4 Agricultural Land**

Cohasset does not have a significant inventory of land used for growing agricultural products or raising livestock, although there are a number of “backyard barns” and a significant associated horse population. Holly Hill Farm represents the only significant working farm. The majority of agricultural areas are subject to Conservation Restrictions.<sup>64</sup>

#### **4.4.5 Wetland Vegetation**

The most prevalent forested palustrine vegetation community within Cohasset is red maple swamp. A mixture of trees generally coexist within the red maple swamp community and include yellow birch, black gum, white ash, white pine, American elm, hemlock, pin oak, and swamp white oak.<sup>65</sup> Examples of red maple swamps within Cohasset include Great Swamp and forested wetlands bordering on Brass Kettle Brook. Atlantic white cedar may have historically dominated the Great Swamp, as well. Atlantic white cedar was harvested by colonial settlers in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries as a durable wood, but as a consequence, is now a rare wetland community type in Massachusetts.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

<sup>63</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

<sup>64</sup> Personal communication, Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, May 28, 2009.

<sup>65</sup> Patricia C. Swain and Jennifer B. Kearsley, “Classification of the Natural Communities of Massachusetts,” Draft Version 1.3. Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, 2001.

<sup>66</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

Non-forested palustrine vegetation communities within Cohasset include scrub-shrub swamps, freshwater marshes, and wet meadows. Shrub swamps in Cohasset are dominated by buttonbush. Although less common in Cohasset, open wet meadows and cattail marshes are present along lower Bound Brook, on the Richardson White property, and within Ellms Meadow.<sup>67</sup>

Tidally influenced wetland (estuarine) communities include beaches, dunes, salt marshes, tidal flats and rocky intertidal shores. Of these, only salt marshes exhibit significant vegetation, although seaweeds are likely present at the lower reaches of beaches and rocky intertidal shores, and dunes likely contain salt tolerant species such as beach grass, beach plum rose, and poison ivy. Salt marshes are dominated by saltmeadow and saltmarsh cordgrass, however many of Cohasset's salt marshes have become populated by common reed, an invasive species (refer to Section 4.7.8).<sup>68</sup> Additionally, Cohasset contains several eelgrass beds, discussed in greater detail in Section 4.4.7.

#### 4.4.6 Rare Plant Species

The population status of rare plants and animals in Massachusetts is described using three categories: 1) special concern; 2) threatened; and 3) endangered:

- Special concern species have either experienced a decline that could threaten the species without intervention, or whose populations are so small, localized, or dependant upon specialized habitats that they could become threatened.
- Threatened species are likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.
- Endangered species are in danger of extirpation from Massachusetts.<sup>69</sup>

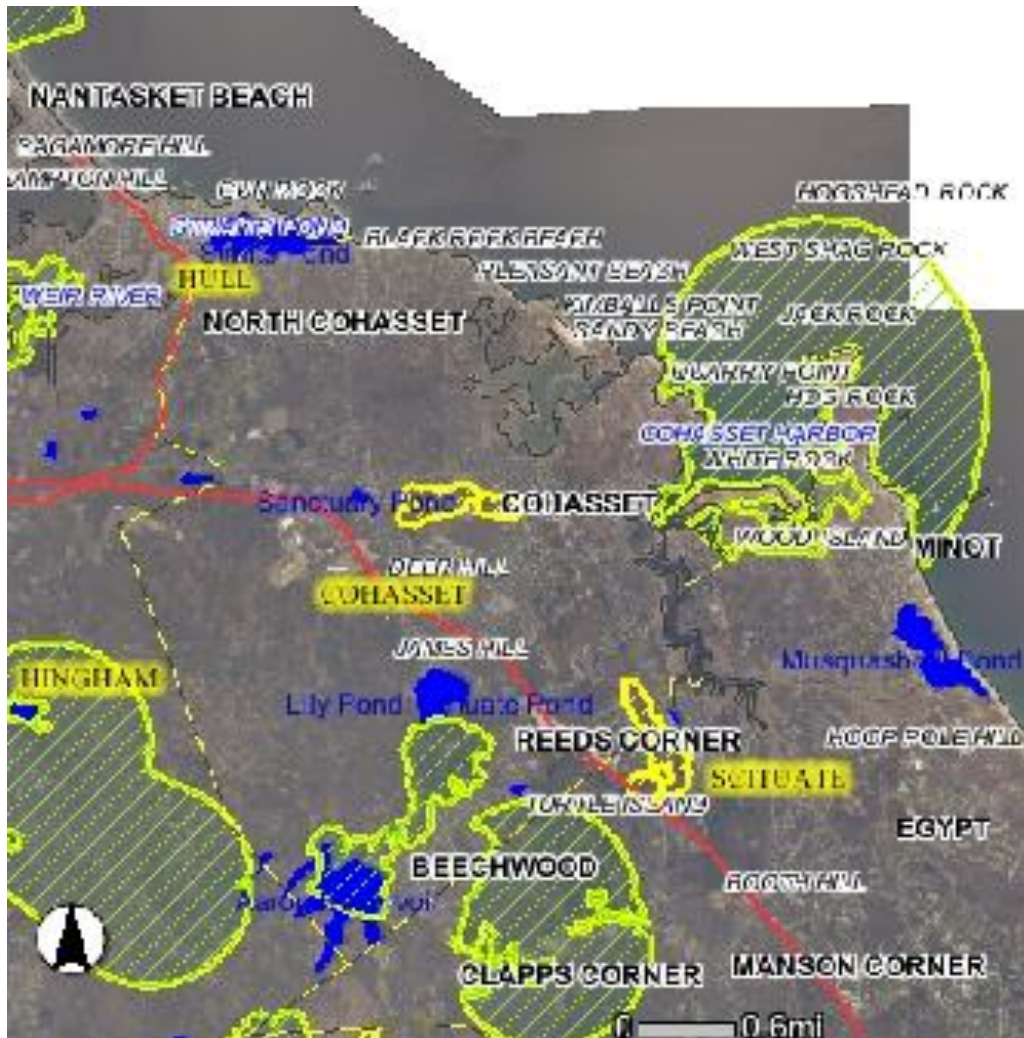
A relatively small area of Cohasset's land is mapped as Priority and/or Estimated Habitat.

- Priority Habitat (PH) is the geographical extent of habitat for all state-listed plant and animal species.
- Estimated Habitat (EH) depicts the geographical extent of habitat of state-listed rare wildlife.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.  
<sup>68</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife. "Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program." 11 Feb. 2009 <[www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/nhesp.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/nhesp.htm)>.

<sup>70</sup> Office of Geographic and Environmental Information. "MassGIS." Metadata for NHESP Priority and Estimated Habitat. Sep. 2008, 17 Feb. 2009 <[www.mass.gov/mgis/laylist.htm](http://www.mass.gov/mgis/laylist.htm)>.



**Image 4-2:** NHESP 2008 Priority Habitat of Rare Species and Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife. Viewed online at [http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/resources/maps/eelgrass/cohasset\\_harbor.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/resources/maps/eelgrass/cohasset_harbor.htm) on March 26, 2009. Priority Habitat of Rare Species are depicted in yellow. Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife are depicted in green

Refer to Section 4.5.4 for information pertaining to state-listed rare wildlife species.

Table 4-2 lists the most recent rare plant observations. These state-listed plant species are protected pursuant to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA).

Swamp dock (*Rumex verticillatus*), a threatened species, was found along Bound Brook below Beechwood Street during research for the 1997-2001 Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan, and is currently listed by the Natural Heritage &

Endangered Species Program (NHESP) as occurring in Cohasset with a most recent observation date of 2002.<sup>71, 72</sup> Rare plant species observed historically in Cohasset, such as seabeach dock (*Rumex pallidus*) and adder's-tongue fern, both threatened species that were observed in Cohasset in 1876 and greater than 25 years ago, respectively; or that presently exist in neighboring communities, such as American sea-blite (*Suaeda calceoliformis*), a special concern species that was observed in Scituate in 1987, as well as pale green orchid (*Platanthera flava* var. *herbiola*), a threatened species observed in Hingham and Scituate, may also grow in Cohasset.<sup>73</sup>

**Table 4-2: Rare Plant Species within Cohasset<sup>74</sup>**

E = Endangered T = Threatened SC = Special Concern

Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	MESA Status	Most Recent Observation
Vascular Plant	<i>Ophioglossum pusillum</i>	Adder's-tongue Fern	T	Historic
Vascular Plant	<i>Rumex pallidus</i>	Seabeach Dock	T	1876
Vascular Plant	<i>Rumex verticillatus</i>	Swamp Dock	T	2002

Source: Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. October 1, 2008

#### 4.4.7 Unique Natural Resources

The Town of Cohasset contains both unique coastal and inland natural resources. Unlike neighboring communities, which exhibit sandy coasts, the majority of Cohasset's coastline consists of rocky intertidal shores. Another unique coastal natural resource is eelgrass beds. Unusual inland/freshwater communities include vernal pools (discussed later in Section 4 of this report).

<sup>71</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

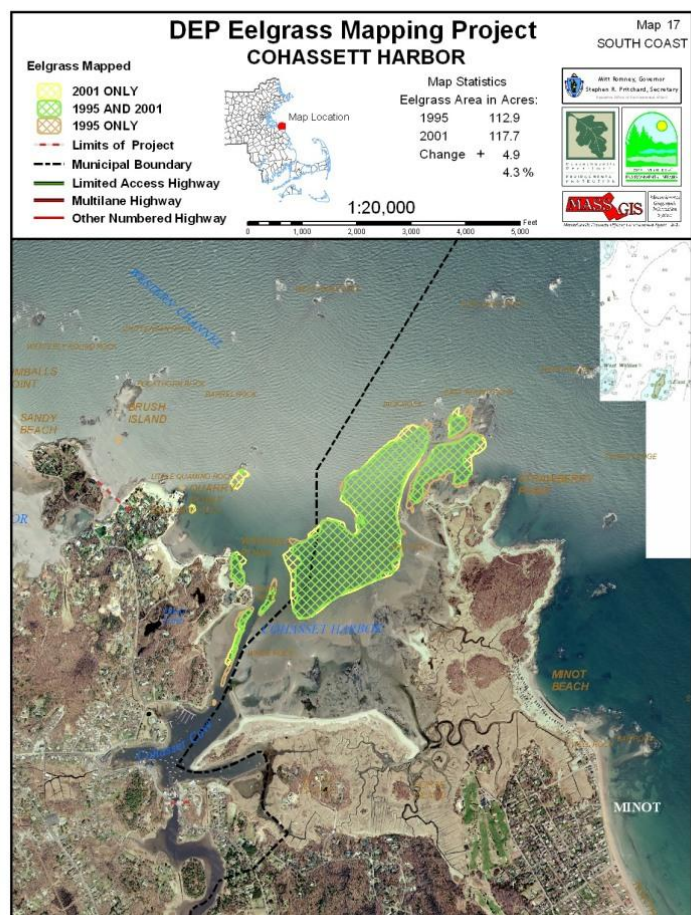
<sup>72</sup> [http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhosp/species\\_info/mesa\\_list/rare\\_occurrences.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhosp/species_info/mesa_list/rare_occurrences.htm) viewed online March 26, 2009.

<sup>73</sup> [http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhosp/species\\_info/mesa\\_list/rare\\_occurrences.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhosp/species_info/mesa_list/rare_occurrences.htm) viewed online March 26, 2009.

<sup>74</sup> [http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhosp/species\\_info/town\\_lists/town\\_c.htm#cohasset](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhosp/species_info/town_lists/town_c.htm#cohasset) viewed online March 26, 2009.



Cohasset's unique natural resources include an eelgrass vegetation community. *"Eelgrass (Zostera marina) is a subtidal marine angiosperm, or 'seagrass,' that grows in temperate waters, often forming extensive underwater meadows. Eelgrass beds are highly productive communities, and are ecologically important because they act as a nursery, habitat, and feeding ground for many fish, waterfowl, and invertebrates. As such, eelgrass beds, as well as other seagrasses, often have become the center of resource management initiatives to protect them."*<sup>75</sup> Eelgrass mapping projects have been undertaken by DEP and the Environmental Protection Agency. Although DEP mapping available online (comparing the extent of eelgrass in 1995 and 2001, see right) indicates that eelgrass is present within Cohasset Harbor, later surveys indicate that, as of 2006, the formerly lush eelgrass meadow is no longer present within the Harbor.<sup>76</sup>



**Image 4-2:** DEP Eelgrass Mapping Project, Cohasset Harbor. Map 17 South Coast. Viewed on March 26, 2009 online at [http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/resources/maps/eelgrass/cohasset\\_harbor.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/resources/maps/eelgrass/cohasset_harbor.htm).

<sup>75</sup> Joe Costa, "Eelgrass in Buzzards Bay," Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program, 18 Feb. 2009 <[www.buzzardsbay.org/eelgrass.htm](http://www.buzzardsbay.org/eelgrass.htm)>.

<sup>76</sup> Phil Colarusso, Marine Biologist, Environmental Protection Agency, telephone correspondence, 1 October 2009.

#### 4.4.8 Vegetation Mapping Projects

With the exception of the previously discussed NHESP natural community and DEP eelgrass mapping, comprehensive town-wide vegetation mapping has not been completed to date.

### 4.5 Fisheries & Wildlife

#### 4.5.1 General Inventory

*“Cohasset’s forest, wetland, and coastal habitats support a wide range of animal species. Whitney and Thayer Woods and Wompatuck State Park offer habitat to a variety of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds. The many acres of contiguous forest, increasingly rare in urbanized metropolitan areas, permit the survival of “forest-interior” species such as box turtle, (a species of “Special Concern”), hermit thrush, black-throated green warbler, and possibly fisher. Because of the paucity of upland meadows and hayfields in Cohasset, associated grassland birds and invertebrates are rare or absent. Scrub vegetation in a few locations can provide habitat for species such as the eastern cottontail rabbit, coyote, black racer, indigo bunting, and the yellow and black-billed cuckoos.*

*The rocky ocean coastline, salt marshes along the Gulf River, the tidal and mud flats of Little Harbor and south of White Head, and the brackish waters of Straits Pond support diverse communities of marine invertebrates, ocean fish, mollusks, and birds... However, the once bountiful clam beds in the harbor have disappeared, however mussels seem to survive.<sup>77</sup>*

*...Recreational ocean fishermen catch mackerel, bluefish, and striped bass, the latter especially near the entrances to the Gulf River and Little Harbor. The only commercial fishing industry remaining in Cohasset is for American lobster. Clam harvesting in Little Harbor tidal flats collapsed some 20 to 30 years ago. The tidal flats near White Head were re-opened for harvesting shellfish after 1996 but closed temporarily in 2000 for regeneration. Cohasset’s coastal bays, beaches, and salt marshes provide resting and feeding areas for many migrant and some nesting ducks, geese, shore birds, and waders, some of whom overwinter in Cohasset. Some 15 to 20 nesting pairs of least tern [have been observed on Pleasant Beach/Scott’s Shore in recent years. The Town’s red maple swamps, hardwood forests, and open fields provide habitat for many other migrant and nesting birds.*

*Cohasset’s red maple swamps also provide habitat for species such as the star-nosed mole and wood frog. The shallow ponds common in red maple and shrub swamps typically have no fish. These ponds and small pools provide vernal pool habitat for frog, salamander, turtle, and invertebrate species.*

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<sup>77</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

*Warm-water fish species such as largemouth bass, black crappie, and sunfish, as well as painted and snapping turtles, northern water snakes, and many common bird species are found in and around Lily Pond, the Aaron River Reservoir, and Sanctuary Pond. The brooks and streams that drain from the uplands into the ocean provide habitat for warm-water fish species, birds such as spotted sandpiper and warbling vireo, and stream-breeding amphibians.”<sup>78</sup>*

NHESP has established BioMap Habitat to identify the most critical areas whose protection will protect the state’s biodiversity. Although the BioMap considers state-listed plants and animals and significant natural communities, it also takes into consideration more prevalent species and ecosystems. *“The goal of the BioMap is to promote strategic land protection by producing a map showing areas, that if protected, would provide suitable habitat over the long term for the maximum number of Massachusetts’ terrestrial and wetland plant and animal species and natural communities.”<sup>79</sup>* In Cohasset, there are four BioMap locations that have been mapped by NHESP. The largest portion of BioMap Habitat comprises the southwestern portion of town, encompassing Wompatuck State Park and Whitney Woods. Other areas include a portion of Bound Brook and associated wetlands southeast of Beechwood Street, a small area southwest of Main Street and southeast of Beechwood Street, and Brush Island. BioMap Supporting Natural Landscapes are located on Bound Brook; between James Hill, Lily Pond, and Walnut Hill; and between Route 3A, South Main Street, and Beechwood Street.

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<sup>78</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

<sup>79</sup> [http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/land\\_protection/biomap/biomap\\_home.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/land_protection/biomap/biomap_home.htm) viewed on March 26, 2009.

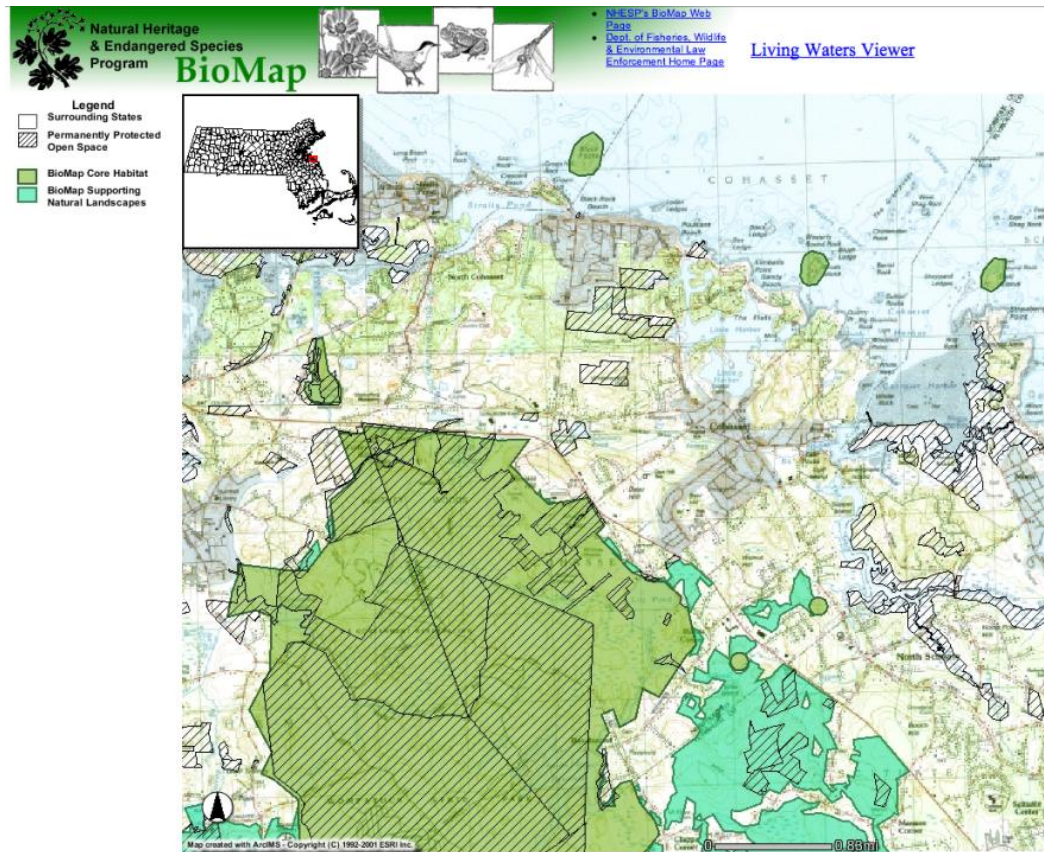


Image 4-3: NHESP BioMap. Viewed online at <http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/BIOMAP/viewer.htm>.

#### 4.5.2 Vernal Pools

Vernal pool wildlife communities are very diverse. The pools are typically ephemeral in nature, with water ponded through the spring but drying by the middle to end of summer, although some pools do contain water year-round. Such intermittent drying precludes fish from establishing permanent populations within these wetlands; many amphibian and invertebrate species rely on breeding habitat that is free of fish predators. Physical factors such as water temperature, sunlight exposure, water acidity, and the duration of ponding all effect the type of animal community inhabiting a pool.<sup>80</sup> As of November 24, 2008, Cohasset has 18 certified vernal pools according to NHESP. This is twice the number of certified vernal pools reported in the 2002 Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan. However, based upon MassGIS information, there are an additional 86 potential vernal pools that may in fact be certifiable. Refer to Appendix C for information regarding certification of vernal pools.

<sup>80</sup> Leo P. Kenney and Matthew R. Burne, *A Field Guide to the animals of Vernal Pools* (Westborough, MA: Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, 2001).



#### 4.5.3 Wildlife Migration Corridors

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

*“Broad forested areas parallel to streams and rivers form natural wildlife corridors. The Aaron River/Brass Kettle Brook/Bound Brook system forms the core of Cohasset’s most important wildlife corridor”* that links the Aaron Reservoir and Wompatuck State Park with Lily Pond, Bailey Conservation Land in Scituate, and the Gulf River estuary system. Additional significant riparian wildlife corridors include the Gulf River estuary and adjacent woodlands, a tributary stream to the Gulf River, Rattlesnake Run and associated wetlands, and the stream corridor flowing to Little Harbor within the Cabot & White Conservation Land. The opening of Weir River Farm, which lies adjacent to Turkey Hill, to the public by the Trustees of Reservations in 2000 created contiguous open space connecting Turkey Hill, Whitney and Thayer Woods, and Wompatuck State Park.<sup>81</sup>

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

Although the above-discussion focuses on local wildlife corridors, parts of Cohasset also play important roles in broader migratory corridors. Specifically, coastal areas on the South Shore are renowned for their importance to migrating birds. Essentially, any open space with cover and food is important to migrating birds, while the waters of Massachusetts Bay proximate to Cohasset provide important feeding habitat for terns during the summer. The air space above Cohasset is full of migrating birds, although they may not touch down in Cohasset, since many of the birds passing through Massachusetts during migration do not follow narrow routes.

#### 4.5.4 Rare Animal Species

NHESP has recent records for observations of Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) listed animal species that include least tern (*Sternula antillarum*),

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<sup>81</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

umber shadowdragon (*Neurocordulia obsoleta*), mocha emerald (*Somatochlora linearis*), and attenuated bluet (*Enallagma daeckii*). Refer to Table 4-3.

Another rare animal species that has been observed in Cohasset, but is not listed by NHESP is the eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina*).<sup>82</sup> Rare animal species found within the adjacent towns of Scituate, Hingham, and Hull provide a guide for the types of rare species that might be found within Cohasset: piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), arctic tern (*Sterna paradisaea*), pied-billed grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*), barn owl (*tyto alba*), purple tiger beetle (*Cicindela purpurea*), wood turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*), comet darter (*Anax longipes*), and spartina borer moth (*Spartiniphaga inops*).<sup>83</sup> In fact, although not mapped by NHESP as occurring in Cohasset, piping plovers are believed to be present on Scott's Shore and Sandy Cove.<sup>84</sup>

**Table 4-3: Rare Animal Species within Cohasset<sup>85</sup>**

E = Endangered T = Threatened SC = Special Concern

Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	MESA Status	Most Recent Observation
Bird	<i>Gavia immer</i>	Common Loon	SC	1922
Bird	<i>Sternula antillarum</i>	Least Tern	SC	2007
Butterfly/Moth	<i>Cingilia catenaria</i>	Chain Geometer Dot	SC	Historic
Butterfly/Moth	<i>Eacles imperialis</i>	Imperial Moth	T	Historic
Butterfly/Moth	<i>Spartiniphaga inops</i>	Spartina Borer Moth	SC	Historic
Dragonfly/Damselfly	<i>Enallagma daeckii</i>	Attenuated Bluet	SC	2003
Dragonfly/Damselfly	<i>Neurocordulia obsoleta</i>	Umbel Shadowdragon	SC	2004
Dragonfly/Damselfly	<i>Somatochlora linearis</i>	Mocha Emerald	SC	2003

Source: Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. October 1, 2008

<sup>82</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

<sup>83</sup> Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife. "Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program." 11 Feb. 2009 [http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/species\\_info/mesa\\_list/rare\\_occurrences.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/species_info/mesa_list/rare_occurrences.htm).

<sup>84</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

<sup>85</sup> [http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/species\\_info/town\\_lists/town\\_c.htm#cohasset](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/species_info/town_lists/town_c.htm#cohasset) viewed on March 26, 2009.

## 4.6 Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

### 4.6.1 Scenic Landscapes

*“Cohasset has long been known for its picturesque landscapes of ocean, ledge, and marsh. The drive along Jerusalem Road and Atlantic Avenue has been famous since the 19<sup>th</sup> century for its scenic views of rocky coastline and offshore islands.*



**Photo 4-3:** View from Forest Avenue, photograph taken March 31, 2009

*The Atlantic shore contrasts with the intimacy of Little Harbor, with its granite islands, and the twists and turns of the Gulf River, fringed by salt marshes.*



**Photo 4-4:** View of Little Harbor, photograph taken March 31, 2009

*The Town Common, set off by dignified historic buildings, communicates a classic image of New England calm and simplicity. The Cohasset Town Common is often considered to be among the finest surviving examples of an original New England town common.*<sup>86</sup>



**Photo 4-5:** View of the Town Common, photograph taken June 4, 2009

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

#### **4.6.2 Unusual Features**

*"Cohasset's boulders, rocks, and ledges are intrinsic to the town's character. Several of the most famous glacial erratics, Rooster Rock, Ode's Den, and Bigelow Boulder, are already preserved within Whitney and Thayer Woods by The Trustees of Reservations."*<sup>87</sup> Ode's Den is named after Theodore "Ode" Pritchard, who lived under one of the boulders after losing his home in 1830. Bigelow Boulder is named in honor of the author of the first volume of *The Narrative History of Cohasset*. Nearby, the Milliken Memorial Path was

<sup>86</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

<sup>87</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.



originally planted with flowering shrubs in the late 1920s by Arthur N. Milliken as a memorial to his wife, Mabel Minott Milliken.<sup>88</sup>

Perhaps Cohasset's most unusual feature is the reversing rapids under the Border Street bridge. These rapids change direction with the tide between the harbor and the Gulf River estuary.



Photo 4-6: Reversing Rapids, photograph taken March 31, 2009

#### 4.6.3 Cultural, Archeological, and Historical Areas

*"The two historic centers of settlement in Cohasset are the village and harbor area, focusing on maritime pursuits, and the Beechwood area, which was once the center of the town's agricultural life. The Town Common and Government Island are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as Historic Districts and the Caleb Lothrop House (1821) is a National Register Individual Site. The Town Common and surrounding historic churches and residences also comprise a local historic district. The Joshua Bates house, dating from 1695, and a number of 18th century houses are valuable historic resources. In addition to the colonial and early national period buildings and sites in Cohasset, the Victorian mansions built along Jerusalem Road and Atlantic Avenue represent examples of later, significant historic architectural styles. The drive along Jerusalem Road became famous in the late 19th century not only for the picturesque views of the rocky shore and ocean, but also for the substantial homes perched on the rocks. Also listed as a National Register Individual Site is the Hagerty House, located near Sandy Beach. Built in 1938, the Hagerty House was designed in the international style by Walter Gropius in association with Marcel Breuer."*<sup>89</sup> See Appendix D

<sup>88</sup> The Trustees of Reservations. "Whitney and Thayer Woods." 17 Feb. 2009 <[www.thetrustees.org/pages/392\\_whitney\\_and\\_thayer\\_woods.cfm](http://www.thetrustees.org/pages/392_whitney_and_thayer_woods.cfm)>.

<sup>89</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

for State and National Designated Historic Sites (including information from the Massachusetts Archaeological and Cultural Information System).

In 1998, the Cohasset Historical Society also published *A Quick Guide to Cohasset Heritage Trail Houses 1695-1816*. This guide lists the date of construction, historic name, address, and a brief description about each of the 94 historic buildings and their occupants.

#### 4.6.4 Unique Environments

The unique (for the greater Boston area) salt marsh ecosystem associated with Straits Pond (located on the Cohasset/Hull town boundary) forms part of the Weir River Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The Weir River ACEC was designated as such not only for its ecosystem, but also due to development pressure facing the area.<sup>90</sup>

The approximately 950 acres of the Weir River ACEC (which include areas in Cohasset, Hingham, and Hull) support over 100 migratory and resident bird species, numerous small mammals, and shellfish, which were historically harvested and which continue to provide a food source for avian populations. A diverse finfish population, including alewives, smelt, flounder, bluefish, and striped bass, utilize the marshes and flats within this ACEC as nursery and feeding areas. The Weir River estuary floodplain also protects adjacent areas from flood damage.<sup>91, 92, 93</sup>

*“Straits Pond is the innermost element of the estuary and the salinity of the water is increasingly precarious. The pond suffers contamination from runoff and leaching septic systems, resulting in sedimentation and eutrophication. It is also subject to increasing residential development pressures in both Hull and Cohasset. A municipal sewer system was installed in North Cohasset and will improve the environmental health of Straits Pond, but may further contribute to increasing development pressure.”<sup>94</sup>* Straits Pond is currently closed to fishing due to coliform bacteria. The Straits Pond Watershed Association mission is “to provide community input to governmental committees and agencies, and to facilitate efforts to maintain and improve the environmental quality and the

<sup>90</sup> Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. “Weir River.” ACEC Designations. 30 Jan. 2009 <[www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/acec/acecs/l-weiriv.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/acec/acecs/l-weiriv.htm)>.

<sup>91</sup> “Straits Pond Watershed Association,” The Weir River Watershed Association, Inc. 30 Jan. 2009. <<http://www.weirriver.org/>>.

<sup>92</sup> Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. “Weir River.” ACEC Designations. 30 Jan. 2009 <[www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/acec/acecs/l-weiriv.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/acec/acecs/l-weiriv.htm)>.

<sup>93</sup> Weir River Estuary Park Committee, “Weir River Estuary Land Protection Plan,” Dec. 2004, 17 Feb. 2009 <[www.uhi.umb.edu/pdf\\_files/WREP\\_Protection\\_Plan\\_final\\_0202.pdf](http://www.uhi.umb.edu/pdf_files/WREP_Protection_Plan_final_0202.pdf)>.

<sup>94</sup> Weir River Estuary Park Committee, “Weir River Estuary Land Protection Plan,” Dec. 2004, 17 Feb. 2009 <[www.uhi.umb.edu/pdf\\_files/WREP\\_Protection\\_Plan\\_final\\_0202.pdf](http://www.uhi.umb.edu/pdf_files/WREP_Protection_Plan_final_0202.pdf)>.

*beauty of Straits Pond.*”<sup>95</sup> A restoration project through Coastal Zone Management’s Wetland Restoration Program (in cooperation with others) for Straits Pond began construction in September 2009.<sup>96</sup> The project entails the reconstruction and enlargement of a deteriorating culvert under Route 228, and is anticipated to restore 94 acres of tidal pond habitat, improve tidal flows to the estuary, and eliminate seasonal midge infestations.<sup>97</sup> The Straits Pond Watershed Association is also working to address the current algae bloom.

#### 4.6.5 Cohasset Cemeteries

Cemeteries located in the Town of Cohasset contain public shade trees, maintained lawns, and peaceful spaces that contribute to Cohasset’s history and sense of rural character. A list of Cohasset Cemeteries is provided below:<sup>98</sup>

**Beechwood Cemetery** – Beechwood/Doane Streets

**Cedar Street Cemetery** – Off Cedar Street between North Main and Hull Streets (adjacent to the Cohasset Golf Club)

**Central Cemetery** – North Main Street/Joy Place

**Green Gate Cemetery** – Jerusalem Road

**Woodside Cemetery** – North Main Street



**Photo 4-7:** Cedar Street Cemetery, photograph taken March 31, 2009



**Photo 4-8:** Marker of freed slave in Woodside Cemetery, photograph taken March 31, 2009

<sup>95</sup> “Straits Pond Watershed Association,” The Weir River Watershed Association, Inc. 30 Jan. 2009. <<http://www.weirriver.org/>>.

<sup>96</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

<sup>97</sup> June 2009 CZ-Mail Newsletter, received via email June 3, 2009.

<sup>98</sup> Richard Dennis Souther, “Cohasset Cemeteries,” Souther Family Association Home Page, 30 Jan. 2009 <[www.geocities.com/Heartland/Estates/9785/cohasset.html](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Estates/9785/cohasset.html)>.

## 4.7 Environmental Challenges

### 4.7.1 Hazardous Waste Sites

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) maintains a database of sites in communities throughout the state where oil or other hazardous material has been released and reported to DEP. According to DEP's Waste Site/Reportable Release database, updated through March 18, 2009, the Town of Cohasset has 88 sites listed (refer to Appendix E), many of which have been appropriately remediated.<sup>99</sup>

Wompatuck State Park contains contamination associated with a historic federal defense facility (the Hingham Naval Ammunition Depot Annex). Although the contamination lies within the portion of Wompatuck in Hingham, it is within the watershed of Brass Kettle Brook and Lily Pond. Water quality testing led the Army Corps of Engineers to conclude that the remaining contamination is unlikely to migrate toward Lily Pond.<sup>100</sup>

### 4.7.2 Landfills

*"The town owns a 10-acre landfill within a 44-acre parcel on Cedar Street. It began operation in the 1940s as an open burning dump. Burning of waste ended in the early 1970s but the landfill continued to receive municipal solid waste until 1989, when a transfer station and recycling center were constructed adjacent to the landfill. Refuse is taken by a private contractor to the SEMASS Resource Recovery Facility in Rochester, Massachusetts. The landfill capping has been completed."*<sup>101</sup>

*"Cohasset Heights Ltd. (CHL) owns a private landfill at 23 Crocker Lane. Landfill operations began in 1976 under a previous owner, who sold the property to CHL in 1982. The landfill was closed in 1998."*<sup>102</sup> This facility is located in a former gravel pit on the western side of Scituate hill that lies between the Great Swamp and wetlands flowing to Brass Kettle Brook.<sup>103</sup> The Water Commission requested Norfolk Environmental to study the potential contamination of the Lily Pond watershed by CHL. This effort concluded that contaminants from CHL have migrated about one-quarter mile from the landfill, to wells 8/8A and wells 7/7A. The report also stated that further studies would be needed to fully characterize the pattern of groundwater flow from the landfill. Norfolk Environmental also

<sup>99</sup> Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, "Waste Site / Reportable Releases Look Up," 21 Feb. 2009 <<http://db.state.ma.us/dep/cleanup/sites/search.asp>>.

<sup>100</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

<sup>101</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

<sup>102</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

<sup>103</sup> Office of Geographic and Environmental Information, "MassGIS," Metadata for Solid Waste Facility Datalayer., 17 Feb. 2009 <[www.mass.gov/mgis/laylist.htm](http://www.mass.gov/mgis/laylist.htm)>.

has confirmed the existence of two north/south trending bedrock fractures which could allow contaminated leachate from CHL to drain toward Brass Kettle Brook, which is tributary to Lily Pond.<sup>104</sup> An expansion to the landfill had been proposed, however this request was denied and the landfill is now capped, closed, and monitored.<sup>105</sup>

#### **4.7.3 Erosion/Sedimentation**

The majority of the coastline is rocky or contains salt marsh, so erosion along the shore is not a major problem. However, erosion and movement of the dunes at Sandy Beach has resulted in issues related to keeping the adjacent roadway clear of sand. There is an order from the Environmental Protection Agency dictating what the Town of Cohasset and the Sandy Beach Association is allowed to undertake with regard to clearing the parking lot and roadway of sand. Additionally, salt marshes in the harbor are calving for unknown reasons. Sandy Cove represents one of the few accreting beaches.<sup>106</sup> Both Straits Pond and Little Harbor experience sedimentation from stormwater run-off.

#### **4.7.4 Chronic Flooding**

Cohasset has a draft Flood Control Master Plan that is currently under review by the Board of Selectmen. Areas of chronic flooding were identified prior to the 2008 Annual Town Meeting and include: Rattlesnake Run at Jerusalem Road, Deep Run & Haystack, Jerusalem Road near Richardson's Brook, North Main near old Edison Plant, Jerusalem Road near Bow Street, Sohier Street yards, Sohier Street at Railroad, Sanctuary Pond at Outfall Spillway, Smith Place, Sandy Beach Road, The Hollow, Treats Pond, Magin Street, Jacob's Meadow, and Stewarts Brook at Sestito Lane. Generally, development/re-development within flood zone is controlled by insurance rates and building code/zoning regulations. Additionally, comprehensive recommendations made by the Flood Control Master Plan may help to reduce losses due to chronic flooding.<sup>107</sup>

#### **4.7.5 Growth Impacts**

Between 2001 and 2009, the town has lost forest lands and unprotected open space to residential and commercial development. Refer to Section 3.9 for a discussion of recent development projects undertaken in Cohasset.

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<sup>104</sup> Norfolk RAM Group, "Where Your Drinking Water Comes From," Cohasset Water Department Consumer Confidence Report Map, 30 Jan. 2008, 17 Feb. 2009 <<http://www.cohassetwater.org/pdf/2008CCRMMap.pdf>>.

<sup>105</sup> Personal communication, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, May 28, 2009

<sup>106</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

<sup>107</sup> Coughlin Environmental Services, LLC, "Town of Cohasset Flood Control Master Plan," 2008, 17 Feb. 2009 <[www.townofcohasset.org/FloodControlMasterPlan.html](http://www.townofcohasset.org/FloodControlMasterPlan.html)>.

The number of potential buildable lots in Cohasset has increased due to the expansion of sewer services and changes in private septic technology, as well as advances in the ability to blast areas of bedrock.

#### **4.7.6 Ground & Surface Water Pollution**

Cohasset maintains spill control equipment to address potential oil releases with potential to affect the water supply, and activities proximate to wetlands and water bodies are subject to the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. Several water bodies in Cohasset are presently polluted, including Straits Pond, where fishing is not allowed due to coliform bacteria, and Little Harbor, which no longer contains productive shellfish beds. Stormwater runoff pollutes all water bodies in Cohasset to some degree. One particular area of pollution is the outfall from Jacob's Meadow into the harbor.<sup>108</sup> Although proposed, the boat pump-out station noted in the prior OSRP as being installed at the town pier at Government Island was never constructed. However, Cohasset does maintain a pump-out boat.<sup>109</sup> However, Cohasset's coastal waters have been designated as a "No Discharge Area" for boat sewage. The recent expansion of sewer services will also decrease water pollution, as failing septic systems can result in significant impacts, including bacterial and nutrient contamination, to ground and surface water bodies. Additionally, the recently adopted Stormwater Management Bylaw will also enhance ground and surface water protection. The Town of Cohasset has installed over 50 rain gardens to address stormwater runoff and to educate the public regarding Low Impact Stormwater Management techniques.

#### **Drinking Water Supply Protection**

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has prepared a Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP) Report for the water supply sources serving the Cohasset Water Department. The SWAP Report notes that the key issues for water supply protection are:

- protection of Zone A
- protecting the watershed outside Cohasset
- public education
- control of residential uses that might contaminate the watershed<sup>110</sup>

The report commends Cohasset for mapping storm drains, conducting a study on the health of Lily Pond, and taking preliminary steps to develop a lawn care program. The Water Commission plans to address the protection

<sup>108</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

<sup>109</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.

<sup>110</sup> Norfolk RAM Group, "Where Your Drinking Water Comes From," Cohasset Water Department Consumer Confidence Report Map, 30 Jan. 2008, 17 Feb. 2009 <<http://www.cohassetwater.org/pdf/2008CCRMMap.pdf>>.



recommendations by implementing all the SWAP recommendations and by implementing a Surface Water Supply Protection Plan that was completed and approved by DEP in 2002. The complete SWAP report is available at the Water Department website.<sup>111</sup>

The Cohasset Water Department recommends the following steps for protecting drinking water supplies:

1. Inspect your septic system every 1-3 years to make sure it is working properly. Pump out your septic tank as necessary, but at least once every 5 years.
2. Recycle used motor oil by bringing it to the Cohasset Recycling Transfer Facility or to the store where you bought it. NEVER pour used motor oil on the ground or down the drain!
3. Dispose of household hazardous waste properly at the next Household Hazardous Waste Day. NEVER pour hazardous materials down the drain, on the ground, street, or storm drains. Call the Board of Health at 383-4116 or visit [www.ssrc.info](http://www.ssrc.info) to find out when the next HHW day is.
4. NEVER dump grass and yard waste into storm drains. Grass clippings and yard waste contain nutrients that can promote weed growth.
5. Reduce the use of fertilizers and herbicides on your lawn. Use only slow-release fertilizers. Have your soil tested to determine how much fertilizer to apply. Water fertilizers in with a hose and do not apply before a rainfall. Visit [www.nswra.org](http://www.nswra.org) for more information.
6. Clean your car at a car wash instead of in your driveway. This will prevent any soaps, polishes, waxes and other chemicals from draining into storm drains and into the water supply.
7. Use water wisely. Avoid over-watering your lawn.
8. Watch out for any activities that might contaminate the water supply, and report any suspected contamination to the Water Department (383-0057), the Board of Health (383-4116), or the Fire Department (383-0260)<sup>112</sup>

The Water Department is performing the following tasks to protect drinking water:

- Regularly monitor water quality in tap water and in the surface water and groundwater of the watershed.
- Keep track of known potential sources of contamination within the watershed and take action to remediate them.
- Review all proposed developments in the watershed.

<sup>111</sup> Cohasset Water Department, "Cohasset Water and Sewer System Improvements," 30 Jan. 2009 <[www.cohassetwater.org](http://www.cohassetwater.org)>.

<sup>112</sup> Norfolk RAM Group, "Where Your Drinking Water Comes From," Cohasset Water Department Consumer Confidence Report Map, 30 Jan. 2008, 17 Feb. 2009 <<http://www.cohassetwater.org/pdf/2008CCRMMap.pdf>>.

- Acquire land in the watershed to protect it from development. Propose changes in bylaws and zoning to protect water quality.
- Implement the recommendations of the Water Commission's 2002 Surface Water Supply Protection Plan and the Source Water Assessment Program report.<sup>113</sup>

#### 4.7.7 Impaired Water Bodies

The following waters in Cohasset are listed as impaired based upon the Massachusetts Year 2008 Integrated List of Waters:

- The Aaron River Reservoir has a TMDL for metals and is also listed as impaired due to flow alteration
- Little Harbor has a TMDL for pathogens
- Aaron River is listed for noxious aquatic species, exotic species, and flow alteration
- Herring Brook is listed for flow alteration and exotic species
- Cohasset Cove requires a TMDL for pathogens
- Cohasset Harbor requires a TMDL for pathogens
- The Gulf requires a TMDL for pathogens
- Lily Pond requires a TMDL for flow alteration, turbidity, and exotic species

The Aaron River Reservoir was removed from the Integrated List for mercury.

During 2007, the Cohasset Harbor Health Committee continued to work with local, state, and federal environmental agencies to evaluate Cohasset Harbor and identify possible sources of pollution and recommend solutions. Monitoring and testing is conducted by Coastal Zone Management, Massachusetts Bays National Estuary Program, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Environmental Protection. The EPA once again designated Cohasset Harbor as part of its Clean New England Beach Initiative and conducted targeted testing upstream in tributaries as well as within the Harbor. Ongoing work is being conducted through the implementation of a stormwater plan to reduce high bacterial counts reported in tributaries to Cohasset's harbors.<sup>114,115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Norfolk RAM Group, "Where Your Drinking Water Comes From," Cohasset Water Department Consumer Confidence Report Map, 30 Jan. 2008, 17 Feb. 2009 <<http://www.cohassetwater.org/pdf/2008CCRMMap.pdf>>.

<sup>114</sup> Town of Cohasset, "2007 Cohasset Town Report," 2007.

<sup>115</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.



#### 4.7.8 Invasive Species

In Massachusetts, invasive plants are defined as those that are exotic in origin and have the ability to out-compete native vegetation.<sup>116</sup> Invasive plant species are a significant threat to biodiversity, and are of increasing concern within the south coastal region. Although both plants and animals can be invasive species, the discussion of invasive species within this report focuses mainly on invasive plant species, as invasive animal species are not likely to be present in sufficient numbers to pose a serious and immediate hazard to Cohasset's natural resources. However, several animal species, both invasive and native are becoming nuisances to Cohasset residents as the animals' habitat and travel corridors are decreased by development pressure. Specifically, Canada Geese waste creates issues on athletic fields; wild turkeys harass passing vehicles and pedestrians; deer consume decorative landscape plants; and coyotes and fishers prey upon cats and small dogs.

Generally, invasive plants utilize prolific seed production and/or vegetative expansion of populations with vines or underground runners, or may alter the hydrology, fire regime, soil and water chemistry, and topography of natural systems to outcompete native species. Because these species originate from outside Massachusetts, and oftentimes outside the United States, natural competitors are not present to check the plants' growth.

Common reed (*Phragmites australis*), is an example of an extremely invasive perennial grass with low habitat value that outcompetes other wetland vegetation in many disturbed areas, including coastal areas. Examples of common reed colonies in Cohasset can be found in the meadow behind the Historical Society on South Main Street, on Whitehead Road,<sup>117</sup> in Treats Pond, and in Straits Pond, as well as in every salt marsh in Town.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Invasive Plants in Massachusetts brochure produced by the Town of Orleans Invasive Species Committee

<sup>117</sup> Open Space & Recreation Committee, Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan 2002-2006, June 2001, Section 4.

<sup>118</sup> Karen Quigley, Board of Selectmen Liaison to Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, Town of Cohasset, email correspondence, 27 September 2009.



**Photo 4-9:** View of common reed infestation in Treats Pond, photograph taken March 31, 2009

Additional invasive plant species likely to have significant populations in Cohasset include:

- Purple loosestrife
- Oriental bittersweet
- Japanese knotweed
- Common buckthorn
- Winged Euonymus (Burning bush)

Due to their insidious and aggressive nature, the spread of invasive species is often extremely difficult to control, and complete eradication of existing populations can be nearly impossible. The sooner that action is taken against invasive species (preferably prior to the establishment of a large population), the greater the likelihood of success is. Although the State implemented a ban on the sale and importation of over 140 invasive plants on January 1, 2006, existing invasive plant populations continue to spread. Control/eradication options are species-specific, but often entail the use of herbicides, sometimes in addition to other control measures, including mowing, burning, covering with black plastic, and excavation.

Invasive species are present on various Town-owned parcels. Identification of existing populations and management actions to remove or control their populations through a coordinated public/private effort would be beneficial. Additionally, a public education campaign could make property owners, facility managers, and commercial groundskeepers aware of invasive species and the benefits of helping to control and remove these species.

#### **4.7.9 Environmental Equity**

There appears to be equitable access to Cohasset's open space and recreational resources, including geological features, varied topography, vegetation communities, wetlands, and cultural landscapes. This is achieved through public parks and land directly owned by the Town of Cohasset, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and land owned and managed by the Trustees of Reservations and other land trusts that permit public access. However, direct access to coastal Environmental resources appears to be underdeveloped due to private ownership on the Town's waterfront and coastal waters.

**Section 5.0**

**Inventory of Lands of Conservation & Recreational Interest**

## **5.0 INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION & RECREATIONAL INTEREST**

The following section details specifically where open space resources and recreational amenities are located in the Town of Cohasset. Open space means different things to different people. It can range from a cemetery, forested area, farm, park or walking trail, for example. Recreational amenities might include playgrounds, playing fields, running paths or bicycle trails.

Open space in a community is valuable for several reasons. Land is a finite resource; preserving and maintaining open space area helps define community character and provides habitat areas and corridors for wildlife and plants. In addition, particularly in the Town of Cohasset, open space protects drinking water supplies.

Open space data was obtained from MassGIS, the Cohasset Assessors Department (non-taxable lands), and Norfolk Ram, which is working with the Town of Cohasset Water Department regarding conservation restrictions on land surrounding drinking water supplies.

The open space and recreation inventory column headings include:

**Location:** Indicates the address, if available.

**Acres:** Total number of acres or a close approximation. One acre equals 43,560 square feet.

**Owner:** Name of the property owner.

**Management:** Entity responsible for managing the property.

**Zoning:** Zoning Districts based upon “Town of Cohasset Massachusetts Zoning District Map” dated March 2002.

**Grant Received/Funding:** Denotes whether grants or other funding was utilized for the property.

**Level of Protection:** Notes whether the site, if by virtue of zoning, or by the receipt of state or federal funding, is protected from sale and development. MassGIS notes the following characteristics about level of protection:

*Permanent (In Perpetuity)* – Legally protected in perpetuity and recorded in a property’s deed. Public land is typically in perpetuity if it is owned by the Conservation Commission, if there is a conservation restriction on the property, if it is owned by a State conservation agency, if it is owned by a non-profit land trust or if state or federal monies were used to purchase or improve the property. Private land is in perpetuity if it has a deed restriction in perpetuity, if there is an agricultural preservation restriction, or if there is a conservation restriction on the property.

*Temporary* – Legally protected for less than perpetuity (short term conservation restriction) or temporarily protected through a functional use. Example: water district lands are only temporarily protected while water resource protection is their primary use.

*Limited* – Protected by legal mechanisms other than those listed above. Land might be protected by a requirement of a majority municipal vote for change in status or Chapter 61 land.

*Unknown* – Should be researched through the property deed to see if any protection level is listed.

For the purposes of the updated Cohasset OSRP, the levels of protection defined above have been used.

**Public Access:** Notes whether or not the site is open to public use.

**Type of Facility/Condition:** Details what kind of condition the site or facility is in and for what the site might be used (ballfields, beach, etc.). Includes name of facility, if available.

Open Space for the purposes of the 2009 Cohasset update is defined as both protected/unprotected and public/private undeveloped and recreational areas, including, but not limited to: conservation and wildlife habitat areas, coastal waters, rivers, brooks, and ponds and waterfront property; watershed protection lands, forests, fields, cemeteries, farms, parks; playgrounds and recreational and athletic playing fields.

## 5.1 Types of Open Space and Recreation Land Protection

In this section of the OSRP update, areas in Cohasset that are significant for their open space, natural resource or recreational amenities have been highlighted. The inventory is inclusive of private and public sites (both developed and undeveloped) and is meant to be comprehensive.

The types of programs below illustrate different types of protection that could be available to property in Cohasset. Some of these programs are already in use. Often, innovative land development bylaws may be used to create open space areas, and a summary of one such tool (Transfer of Development Rights) is also provided below.

**Article 97 Protection:** Article 97 protects publicly owned lands used for conservation or recreation purposes. In order for a property to be sold, transferred or converted to a different use, Article 97 requires a vote of the Town (Conservation Commission, Parks Department, or other, whichever is appropriate) in which the land use would be changed, a 2/3 vote at Town Meeting or City Council in support of the disposition, a 2/3 vote of the legislature in support of the disposition, and compliance with applicable funding sources must be demonstrated. The municipality must also file an Environmental Notification Form with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act office.

**Conservation Restriction:** A conservation restriction is an agreement that is bound legally between a landowner and a “holder” or grantee. The landowner agrees to limit the amount and/or use of a specific property in order to protect the unique or specific conservation values that are evident on the property or important to the landowner or “holder”. A specified amount of time for the conservation restriction can be noted, or the conservation restriction can be in perpetuity. A conservation restriction is recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

**Easements:** An easement is typically listed on a property deed and it allows permanent access to a property for a specific purpose. It is a right of use, not a right of possession.

**Chapter 61:** Chapter 61 encourages preservation of agricultural, recreation and forest land in Massachusetts. Landowners can ensure the long-term protection of their property by receiving a tax benefit if they agree to the terms of Chapter 61. If an owner wants to take property out of Chapter 61 designation, the Town can recover the tax benefits given and it also has the right of first refusal to purchase the property if the land is sold for residential, commercial or industrial purposes.

**Transfer of Development Rights:** Although not itself a form of protection, Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) can be used in conjunction with the protection programs described above to ensure that appropriate and meaningful open space is preserved in conjunction with development. The Massachusetts Smart Growth/Smart Energy Tool Kit very simply defines the concept of Transfer of Development Rights as follows:

*Transfer of Development Rights (TDR): A system that assigns development rights to parcels of land and gives landowners the option of using those rights to develop or to sell their land.*

TDRs are used to promote conservation and protection of land by giving landowners the right to transfer the development rights of one parcel that may be suitable for conservation purposes to another parcel that may be more appropriate for development. By selling development rights, a landowner concedes the right to develop his/her property, but the buyer could use the rights to develop another piece of land at a greater intensity than would otherwise be permitted.

Prior to implementing TDR in Cohasset, additional information and analysis would be required. For example, an evaluation of the amount of land area that is available for protection as “sending parcels”, an assessment of the general acceptability in the town to increase density in other areas, as well as a determination of the capacity of the town to administer the technique, would be required. While an increasing number of towns in Massachusetts have adopted the technique, it may not be appropriate for all.

## 5.2 Open Space Inventory

The following table is a listing of open space and recreation resources located in the Town of Cohasset. These resources are illustrated on Map 7. Also refer to Appendix F for the results of the ADA accessibility study for all municipally-owned conservation and recreation facilities. Table 5-1 was compiled from a variety of sources, including Assessor's information, the prior OSRP, information provided by the Cohasset Conservation Trust, and information provided by the Open Space & Recreation Committee.

**Table 5-1: Inventory of Areas of Conservation and Recreation Interest – Town of Cohasset<sup>119</sup>**

Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
55-150	1 AARON RIVER RD	22.00	Cohasset Town of/Cohasset Water Commissioners		RC				
59-014	ANDRUS ISLAND	3.02	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RB		Perpetuity	No	Andrus Island
29-034	ATLANTIC AV	2.58	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RC		Perpetuity	No	Blake Holmes Property
22-016	ATLANTIC AV	0.62	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RC				Scott's Shore
24-002	ATLANTIC AV	1.79	Sandy Beach Association		RC		None	Yes, Parking	Sandy Beach/Good
24-001X	353 ATLANTIC AV	2.90	Sandy Beach Association		RC		Limited	Yes, parking	Good

<sup>119</sup> This inventory was compiled from a list of non-taxable parcels provided by the Cohasset Assessors Department on March 26, 2009, conservation restriction information from Norfolk Ram (Cohasset Water Department), and MassGIS.



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Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
22-015	429 ATLANTIC AV	2.38	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RC		Perpetuity	Yes	Scott's Shore/Good
28-034	ATLANTIC AVE WEST	7.73	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RC		Perpetuity	Yes, Parking at Town Hall	Dean Meadows Addition/Good
38-003	BANCROFT RD	9.38	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen	DPW	RA		Limited	Yes, Parking	Milliken Bancroft Field/Good
28-041	BEACH ST	0.95	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RC		Perpetuity	Yes	summer Smith Property/Good
28-042A	BEACH ST	0.68	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
28-042A	BEACH ST	0.81	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		rc				
54-019	BEECHWOOD ST	4.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
54-024	BEECHWOOD ST	1.00	Cohasset Town of/Cohasset Water Commissioners		RB				
54-025	BEECHWOOD ST	5.50	Cohasset Town of/Cohasset Water Commissioners						

Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
56-012	BEECHWOOD ST	0.50	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
56-052A	BEECHWOOD ST	6.72	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC				
60-012	BEECHWOOD ST	2.50	Cohasset Town of/Cohasset Water Commissioners						
61-002	BEECHWOOD ST	2.50	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
46-017	BEECHWOOD ST	1.00	Vedanta Centre Inc		RB		None	No	Vedanta Centre Retreat
46-014	BEECHWOOD ST	11.30	Vedanta Centre Inc		RB				
50-035	BEECHWOOD ST	0.13	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
54-026	BEECHWOOD ST	1.49	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
56-048	BEECHWOOD ST	0.90	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RA				
56-050	BEECHWOOD ST	0.13	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC				

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Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
56-052A	BEECHWOOD ST	1.50	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RA				
53-074	BEECHWOOD ST	2.31	Maxwell Land Trust LTD						
	BEECHWOOD ST	5	Cohasset Land Foundation						OPEN SPACE ABUTTING GEORGE M. INGRAM PARK
46-015	130 BEECHWOOD ST	8.70	Vedanta Centre Inc		RB		Perpetuity	No	Vedanta Centre Retreat
54-100	345 BEECHWOOD ST	0.15	Cohasset Town of/Cohasset Water Commissioners						
55-009	BEECHWOOD/DOA NE STS	4.40	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen	DPW	RA		Limited	Yes	Beechwood Cemetery/Good
55-030	BEECHWOOD/DOA NE STS	3.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen	DPW	RA		Limited	Yes	Beechwood Ballpark/Good
47-010	BEECHWOOD/LOC UST STS	0.39	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
	Beechwood St/Norman Todd Rd	20	Cohasset Conservation Trust						George M. Ingram Park
01S-107	BLACK ROCK RD	0.23	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				

Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
01S-103	BLACK ROCK RD	0.42	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
01S-109	REAR BLACK ROCK RD	0.21	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
32-020	32 BORDER ST	0.19	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen	Harbor Department	WB		Limited	Yes	Lawrence Wharf/Good
85-047	REAR BOULDER LN	1.99	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
54-009	BOUND BROOK LN	5.05	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RB		Perpetuity	Limited	Barbara Churchill Conservation Area
52-008A	C J CUSHING HWY	5.00	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RB		Perpetuity	No	Adams Property
41-070	C J CUSHING HWY	0.42	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
41-073	C J CUSHING HWY	0.39	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
41-074	C J CUSHING HWY	0.36	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
41-075	C J CUSHING HWY	0.38	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				

Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
41-076	C J CUSHING HWY	0.38	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
41-077	C J CUSHING HWY	0.40	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
74-001X	C J CUSHING HWY	4.47	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC				
42-040	C J CUSHING HWY	1.08	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
42-041	C J CUSHING HWY	8.72	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
74-007T	C J CUSHING HWY	8.98	Massachusetts Bay Trans Auth						
74-008T	C J CUSHING HWY	7.12	Massachusetts Bay Trans Auth						
74-020	C J CUSHING HWY	26.60	Massachusetts Commonwealth of / Dept of Conservation & Recreation						
74-022	C J CUSHING HWY	2.18	Cohasset Town of						
74-021	C J CUSHING HWY	4.47	Trustees of Reservations						

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74-009	110 C J CUSHING HWY	5.30	Massachusetts Bay Trans Auth						
05-048	81 91 CEDAR ST	19.35	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen	DPW	RC			Yes	Recycling & Transfer Facility/Good
55-036	CHURCH & DOANE ST	0.50	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RA				
55-050	CHURCH ST	0.67	Beechwood Congregational Church		RA				
55-052	CHURCH ST	1.81	Cohasset Town of/Water Commission						
55-090	51 CHURCH ST	0.55	Beechwood Congregational Church		RA				
19-020	COHASSET	3.70	Cohasset Central Cemetery / Eleanor Tower Campbell	Trustees of Cemeteries	RB		Limited	Yes	Cohasset Central Cemetery/Good
27-001X	COHASSET	0.14	St Stephen's Parish		RB				
72-008	COHASSET	2.09	Massachusetts Commonwealth of		NT				
73-003	COHASSET	2.73	Massachusetts Commonwealth of		RC				
06-025B	COHASSET	10.93	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC		Perpetuity	Yes, Parking	Wheelwright Woods/Good

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19-042	COHASSET	6.31	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB		Limited	View from cemetery	Salt Marsh/Good
27-001Y	COHASSET	0.89	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB		Limited	Yes, parking	Town Common/Good
54-027	COHASSET	19.02	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC				Beechwood Watershed
56-049	COHASSET	0.02	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC				
57-012	COHASSET	3.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC			Limited	Aaron River Watershed
57-013	COHASSET	6.30	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						Watershed
57-014	COHASSET	7.20	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						Watershed
57-015	COHASSET	5.30	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC				Watershed
57-016	COHASSET	0.60	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC				Watershed
05-RR	COHASSET	24.08	Massachusetts Bay Trans Auth						

Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
18-076	CONSTITUTION PARK	0.39	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
73-004	30 CROCKER LN	9.37	Massachusetts Commonwealth of		NT				
56-014	DOANE ST	1.00	Cohasset Town of / C/O Board of Water Comm.						
56-015	DOANE ST	2.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
56-016	DOANE ST	1.90	Cohasset Town of / C/O Cohasset Water Comm.						
56-016A	DOANE ST	4.00	Cohasset Town of / C/O Board of Water Comm.						
85-002	DOANE ST	0.50	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
85-003	DOANE ST	3.80	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
85-004	DOANE ST	6.60	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
85-005	DOANE ST	3.25	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						



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85-006	DOANE ST	2.25	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
85-015	DOANE ST	3.54	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
85-018	DOANE ST	0.81	Cohasset Town of/Water Commission						
85-019	DOANE ST	1.50	Cohasset Town of/Water Commission						
85-020	REAR DOANE ST	1.50	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
38-142X	ELEAZERS LN	0.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RA				
27-112	ELM ST	0.42	Cohasset Town of / C/O Water & Sewer Dept.		RA				
27-036	4 ELM ST	0.18	Cohasset Historical Society / Wilson House		DB			Yes	Wilson House & Maritime Museum/Good
27-016-003	43 ELM ST 3	0.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RA				

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32-063	43 R ELM ST	1.46	Cohasset Town of / C/O Board of Sewer Comm		RA				
27-057	44 ELM ST	1.01	Cohasset Town of / C/O Police & Fire Dept		RB				
27-058	60 ELM ST	3.23	Cohasset Housing Authority		RB				
27-056	72 ELM ST	1.24	Cohasset Housing Authority		RA				
11-082	FOREST AV	0.38	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
13-008	FOREST AV	6.00	Cohasset Boy Scouts / Troup 28 Inc C/O Merle Brown		RC		None	Yes	Boy Scout Land, Wheelwright Woods/Good
13-001	REAR FOREST AV	32.13	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen				Perpetuity		Barnes Wildlife Area
06-003	REAR FOREST AV	13.53	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen	DPW	RB		Perpetuity	Yes, Parking	Wheelwright Woods/GOOD
09-024	387 FOREST AV	0.29	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB		Limited	Yes	Black Rock Beach/GOOD

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27-081	GREAT BREWSTER TRAIL	18.16	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RB		Perpetuity	Yes, Parking at Town Hall	Great Brewster Park/Good
13-019	25 HEATHER DR	0.84	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
27-104	16 HIGHLAND AV	0.65	St Stephen's Church		RB				
27-088	29 HIGHLAND AV	0.22	St Stephens Episcopal Church		RB				
27-089	41 HIGHLAND AV	1.31	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
27-090	43 HIGHLAND AV	0.23	Cohasset Congregational Church		RB				
31-013	150 HOWARD GLEASON RD	8.50	Jesuit Community at Boston Col		RC		None	No	Bellamine House, salt marsh
67-002	HOWES RD	2.55	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC				
01-054	245 HULL ST	0.25	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen	DPW	DB			Yes	Former Fire Station Lot/Poor
18-004	JAMES LN	0.39	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		DB				

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38-150	22 JAMES LN	11.10	Cohasset Town of / Elms Meadow	Water Department			Limited	No	Watershed/Good
10-114	JERUSALEM RD	0.30	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RB		Perpetuity		Francis Shore, Rocky Beach
09-039	JERUSALEM RD	3.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB		None	Yes	Straits Pond Land/Overgrown
09-040	JERUSALEM RD	3.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
19-035	JERUSALEM RD	0.64	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB		Limited	Limited	Good
09-026	JERUSALEM RD	0.77	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
19-036	45 JERUSALEM RD	0.61	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RB		Perpetuity	No	Guggio Scenic Overlook/Good
17-009	339 JERUSALEM RD	2.80	Congregation of the Sisters of / St Joseph of Boston		RB				
17-002	377 JERUSALEM RD	0.42	Congregation of the Sisters of / St Joseph of Boston		RB		Perpetuity		Clapp Road property
01-050	811 JERUSALEM RD	1.12	South Shore Hellenic Church Inc		RA				

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Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
01-051	819 JERUSALEM RD	0.25	South Shore Hellenic Church Inc		RA				
01-052	821 JERUSALEM RD	0.13	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
59-011	KING ST	3.50	Cohasset Town of / C/O Cohasset Water Comm		RC				
59-012	KING ST	5.50	Cohasset Town of / Water Commission		RC				
59-013	KING ST	2.50	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				Watershed
60-002	KING ST	2.45	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC		Perpetuity		Watershed
60-003	KING ST	3.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC		Perpetuity		Watershed
65-002	KING ST	5.20	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC		Limited		Watershed
65-007	KING ST	2.15	Cohasset Town of/ C/O Water Commission		RB		Perpetuity		
65-008	KING ST	5.50	Cohasset Town of		HB				

Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
65-010	KING ST	6.80	Cohasset Town of		RC				
65-018	KING ST	9.80	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC				
66-004	KING ST	3.50	Cohasset Town of/ C/O Water Commission		RC		Perpetuity		brass kettle brook
66-005	KING ST	4.50	Cohasset Town of/ C/O Water Comm		RC				
66-006	KING ST	9.30	Cohasset Town of/ C/O Water Commission		RC		Limited		
66-007	KING ST	20.43	Cohasset Town of/ C/O Water Commission		HB		Perpetuity		
72-001	KING ST	5.50	Cohasset Town of/Water Commission		RC				
72-002	KING ST	3.00	Cohasset Town of/ Water Commission		RC				
79-001	KING ST	4.60	Trustees of Reservations		RC				
41-001X	KING ST	0.63	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC				

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59-001	KING ST	1.40	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC		Perpetuity		Lily Pond Watershed
70-001X	KING ST	4.86	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		HB				
85-035	KING ST	16.74	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
85-036	KING ST	0.72	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
85-037	KING ST	5.20	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
85-038	KING ST	6.78	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
85-016	KING ST	0.75	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
85-017	KING ST	2.75	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
71-016	KING ST	16.50	Trustees of Reservations		RC		Perpetuity	Yes	Bancroft Bird Sanctuary
60-011	KING ST	5.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
65-006B	KING ST	4.01	Cohasset Town of						

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65-001	KING ST	9.10	Cohasset Town of		RC		Limited		
60-007	REAR KING ST	2.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC				Watershed
65-019	REAR KING ST	3.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC				
65-025A	231 R KING ST	4.80	Trustees of Reservations		RC				
65-009	301 R KING ST	6.00	Cohasset Town of						
60-001	339 KING ST	5.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC		Perpetuity		Watershed
85-021	KING ST WEST	0.29	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
65-030	KING ST/DOANE ST	527.00	Trustees of Reservations		RC		Perpetuity	Yes, Parking	Whitney & Thayer Woods/Good
30-020	MARGIN ST	0.21	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen	Harbor Department	MF		Limited	Yes	Margin Street Town Pier/Good
53-056	MILL LN	0.33	Cohasset Town of		RB				
74-001Z	N MAIN ST/C J CUSH	20.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen	DPW	RC		Limited	Yes	Woodside Cemetery/Good



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Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
46-018	50 NORMAN TODD RD	2.45	Vedanta Centre Inc						
05-003	NORTH MAIN ST	4.29	Cohasset Conservation Trust		LI		Perpetuity	Limited	Albert A. Golden Memorial Swamp
15-052	NORTH MAIN ST	0.10	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
05-016B	NORTH MAIN ST	0.05	Massachusetts Bay Trans Authority		LI				
05-070	NORTH MAIN ST	2.10	Massachusetts Bay Trans Authority						
05-050T	NORTH MAIN ST	0.02	Massachusetts Bay Trans Authority						
05-080T	NORTH MAIN ST	0.60	Massachusetts Bay Trans Authority						
05-070T	NORTH MAIN ST	2.10	Cohasset Conservation Trust						
04-050T	NORTH MAIN ST	0.21	Massachusetts Bay Trans Authority						
04-060T	NORTH MAIN ST	0.45	Massachusetts Bay Trans Authority						

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Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
15-013	169-185 NORTH MAIN ST	8.85	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB		None	Yes	Little League field, Gravel Pits/Good
40-024	REAR NORTH MAIN ST	0.48	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
74-001Y	REAR NORTH MAIN ST	0.11	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC				
18-081	19 NORTH MAIN ST	0.59	First Parish in Cohasset		RB				
27-001Z	30 NORTH MAIN ST	0.00	First Parish Meeting House						
14-013	309 NORTH MAIN ST	0.21	Massachusetts Bay Trans Authority						
39-067	REAR OLD PASTURE RD	14.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RA				
65-035	OLD ROAD	2.00	Cohasset Town of / Cohasset Water Commissioners						
37-011	40 PARKER AV	2.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC		Limited	Yes	Town Landing Ramp (Hagerty's)
18-002	25 PARKINGWAY	1.05	Cohasset Town of		DB				

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Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
50-024	PINE RIDGE RD	0.62	Cohasset Town of		HB				
39-064	13 PLEASANT ST	0.33	Massachusetts Bay Trans Authority						
18-014	PLEASANT ST/JAMES LN	0.72	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		DB				
41-001	143 POND ST	18.00	Cohasset Town of CMHS / Cohasset Middle High School	School/DPW	RB		Perpetuity	Yes, Parking	Cohasset High School/Good
48-001X	POND ST AT SPRING ST	0.12	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB		None		Skating Pond
52-004	POND ST/C J C WAY	3.70	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RB		Perpetuity	Limited	Anne & Daniel Campbell Meadow
15-030	22 RED GATE LN	0.23	Second Congregational Church		RB				
41-017	RESERVOIR RD	4.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen	Water Department	RB				Water Tower
38-001	RESERVOIR RD	6.65	Cohasset Town of		RB		None		
18-033	35 RIPLEY RD	3.71	Cohasset Town of/Joseph Osgood School	School/DPW	RA		Limited	Yes, Parking	Osgood Elementary School/Good

Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
18-015-001	119 RIPLEY RD	0.00	South Shore Art Center		DB				
35-029	RIVER RD	4.70	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RB		Perpetuity	No	Dormitzer Marsh
54-033	40 RIVERVIEW DR	0.74	Cohasset Town of / Cohasset Water Commissioners						
71-010	22 ROCKY LN	1.35	Massachusetts Bay Trans Authority						
32-043	SANKEY RD	1.65	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RA				pelletier park
32-046	SANKEY RD	2.80	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RA				
15-001	SOHIER ST	0.84	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RA				
40-001T	SOHIER ST	0.02	Massachusetts Bay Trans Authority						
40-002	SOHIER ST	23.17	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		DB				
15-002	REAR SOHIER ST	4.06	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				

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Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
40-022	REAR SOHIER ST	26.50	Cohasset Town of/Conservation Commission		RB				
39-088	REAR SOHIER ST	9.46	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RA				
15-003	89 SOHIER ST	3.80	Cohasset Swimming & Recreation Trust / Corbett Paul Treasurer		RB		Limited	Yes, Parking	Town Swim Center/Good
42-026	208 SOHIER ST	15.41	Cohasset Town of/Deer Hill School	School/DPW	RB		Unknown	Yes, Parking	Deer Hill School/Good
42-025	210 SOHIER ST	14.88	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen	DPW	DB		None		
48-017	SOUTH MAIN ST	2.00	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RB				
33-001X	SOUTH MAIN ST	0.10	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen						
45-001	SOUTH MAIN ST	3.20	Massachusetts Bay Trans Authority						
32-084	129 SOUTH MAIN ST	0.92	St Anthony's Rectory		RA				
35-025	346 SOUTH MAIN ST	14.75	Cohasset Conservation Trust		RB		Perpetuity	No	Pegram Preserve/Good

Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
38-001X	SPRING ST	2.03	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RA			Yes	Ellms Meadow
32-057	6 SUMMER ST	4.55	Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston		RA				
32-022	88 SUMMER ST	0.17	Cohasset Town of		DB				
72-003	TIPPLING RK HOWES	5.75	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC				
75-005	TURKEY HILL RD	5.93	Trustees of Reservations		RC		Perpetuity	Yes, Parking	Turkey Hill/Good
75-003	TURKEY HILL RD	4.25	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC		Perpetuity	Yes, Parking	Turkey Hill/Good
75-001	TURKEY HILL RD	14.73	Cohasset Town of/Board of Selectmen		RC		Perpetuity	Yes, Parking	Turkey Hill/Good
32-021	VETERANS PARK	0.34	Cohasset Town of		MF				
15-100	WHEELWRIGHT PARK	80.40	Cohasset Town of	DPW	RA		Limited	Yes, Parking	Wheelwright Park/Good
34-052	WINDSOR RD	0.55	Cohasset Town of		RB				

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Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
01X-01X	WOMPATUCK PK	861.00	Commonwealth of Massachusetts / Department of Conservation & Recreation	Division of Conservation and Recreation	OS		Perpetuity	Yes, Parking	Wompatuck State Park/Good
01X-001Y	WOMPATUCK PK	190.00	Commonwealth of Massachusetts / Department of Conservation & Recreation	Division of Conservation and Recreation			Perpetuity	Yes, Parking	Wompatuck State Park/Good
65-005	King Street	0.84	Cohasset Town of						
65-006	309 KING sTREET	6.5	Leighton Luther S & Phyllis B						
65-004	KING sTREET	.68	Cohasset Town of						
65-003	KING STREET	1.0	Cohasset Town of						
66-002	KING STREET	1.12	Sawchuck Wayne & Jenkins Leeland Trustees						
10-128		.07	Cohasset Town of	Cohasset Historical Society			Unknown	Yes	Moors' Rock Reservation/Good
102-001, 002, 003		92.45	Hingham, Town of				Perpetuity		Triphammer Pond
102-012		403	Trustees of Reservations				Perpetuity		Whitney& Thayer Woods
11-001		20.65	Scituate Rod and Gun Club				None		Sictuate Rod & Cun Club
11-099		10.7	Jerusalem Road trust				Perpetuity		Cabot & White
12-003		120.2	Scituate Town of				Perpetuity	No	Ellis Property

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12-006		2.4	Scituate Town of				Perpetuity		baily land
12-001		69.5	Jerusalem Road Trust				Perpetuity	No	Cabot & White
14-002		45.47	Scituate Town of				Limited		Tibbets Marsh of Hathaway CC
16-047		9.7	Jerusalem Road Trust				Perpetuity		Cabot & White
17-053		22.4	Jerusalem Road Trust				Perpetuity		Cabot & White
18-001		41.2	Scituate Town of				Perpetuity		Grassie Stewart
22-033, 034		5.5	Hingham Town of				Perpetuity		Lyfords Lyking Park
25-003B-5		9.9	Whitcomb Grove Realty Trust & Bartlet Field Realty Trust				Perpetuity		Whitcomb Pines
25-002		2.6	Scituate Town of				Limited		Groveland Cemetery
3-		181.3	Cohasset Golf Course				None		
30-		0.16	Cohasset Yacht Club						
32-042		0.17	Cohasset Conservation Trust				Perpetuity	Yes	Hector J. Pelletier Memorial Park/Overgrown
33-070		1.00	Hanney, W.J.				Unknown		Mill River Marine
35-046		4.84	Cohasset Conservation Trust				Perpetuity		Julia & Henry Dormitzer Salt Marsh
37-022		2.25	Fiquerido W				None		Fiquerido's Marina
37-010		9.13	Cohasset Town of	DPW			Limited	Yes, Parking	Town Wharf, Sailing Club, Government Island/Good
4-003		101.46	Scituate Town of				Perpetuity		Bassings Beach/ Briggs Harbor



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Assessors Map - Parcel	Location	Acres	Owner	Management (if different from Owner)	Zoning	Grant Received? Funding?	Level of Protection	Public Access	Type of Facility/ Condition
40-		12.15	South Shore Playhouse				None		South Shore Music Circus
43-097, 008		5.8	Unknown				Unknown		Tower School Day Camp
43-019		6.45	Hingham Town of				Limited		Hull St. Playground
44-009		0.14	Trust for Public Land				Perpetuity		Hull Shore Reservation
44-111		0.24	Trust for Public Land				Perpetuity		Hull Shore Reservation
44-028		0.38	Trust for Public Land				Perpetuity		Hull Shore Reservation
44-015		0.42	Trust for Public Land				Perpetuity		Hull Shore Reservation
44-092		0.13	Trust for Public Land				Perpetuity		Hull Shore Reservation
46-001		4.09	DCR				Perpetuity		Hull Shore Reservation
54-010, 011		28.3	Benedictine Monks				Unknown		Glastonbury Abbey
66-14		2.49	The Trustees of Reservations				Perpetuity		Whitney and Thayer Woods
7-008		17.55	Scituate Town of				Perpetuity		Hubbell
84-002		106.56	The Trustees of Reservations				Perpetuity		Whitney and Thayer Woods
92-002, 005, 007		14.2	Hingham Town of				Perpetuity		Leavitt St. Conservation Land
	Scituate		Cohasset Conservation Trust				Perpetuity	Boat only	Bassing Beach/Good
	Total Acreage	3982.19							

## **Section 6.0**

### **Community Vision**

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## **6.0 COMMUNITY VISION**

### **6.1 Description of the Process**

The general process undertaken to update the Cohasset OSRP is described in Section 2.2; however, additional information specific to the public outreach meetings is provided below.

#### **6.1.1 Public Outreach Meetings**

The public participation process for the project included three public outreach meetings: two stakeholder meetings and one public forum. The stakeholder meetings were held at the Town Hall on the evening of April 29, 2009 and the morning of April 30, 2009 to encourage broad-based public participation and facilitate information gathering, the analysis of needs, and the development of goals and objectives (Refer to the meeting notes in Appendix A). The following entities were specifically invited to the stakeholder meetings, although notice of the meetings was also provided in the Cohasset Mariner, posted at the Town Hall, and placed in all municipal mail boxes. The Board of Selectmen also emailed the heads of all Town Departments.

Community Preservation Committee	Harbor Health Committee
Conservation Commission	Cohasset Conservation Land Trust
Recreation Commission	Cohasset Land Foundation
Historical Commission	Weir River Estuary Committee
Board of Selectmen	Straits Pond Watershed Association
Planning Board	Council on Elder Affairs
Advisory Committee	Rotary Club
Department of Public Works	School Department
Cohasset Garden Club	Chamber of Commerce
Community Garden Club of Cohasset	Economic Development Committee
Amateur Gardeners	Triathlon Group
Yacht Club	Board of Health
Sailing Club	The Trustees of Reservations
Sandy Beach Association	Department of Conservation and Recreation
Golf Club	Holly Hill Farm (Frank and Jean White)
Water Resource Protection Committee	Water Department
Shellfish Warden	Harbormaster
Gulf River Association	South Shore Coalition
Sustainable Cohasset	Alternative Energy Committee

The public forum was held the evening of June 18, 2009 at Bancroft Hall (the Lightkeepers House, refer to the agenda and PowerPoint presentation in Appendix A). Notice of the forum was provided in the Cohasset Mariner and posted at Town Hall, and also provided via email to the Recreation Director's list of contacts. The focus of the forum was to engage local residents in a discussion

about open space and recreation resources in the community. Beals and Thomas, Inc. made a presentation that included a discussion of why the OSRP update is important, demographic data, open space data and open ended questions to help the audience think about what aspect of open space and recreation in the community is important.

At both the stakeholder meetings and the public forum, BTI informed local residents about the project and asked for their input regarding goals and objectives and what they felt represent the significant issues are in terms of open space, recreation and natural resources. Due to the small number of attendees at each outreach meeting, the meetings were generally conducted as round table discussions. Despite the poor attendance, significant input was provided by attendees, and different issues and discussion topics were raised at each meeting. The following noteworthy items were raised by attendees.

- Importance of preserving the existing character of the Town.
- Permanent residents are decreasing; people are less interested in preserving and more interested in making money in the short term.
- Attendees noted that wildlife is becoming sparse due to the blasting that is occurring for new development.
- Importance of preserving views and vistas, especially of the ocean. The committee discussed that this can be done through view shed easements and deed restrictions.
- Various historic paths and access ways in the Town. Attendees noted that they would like to see these paths 1) mapped with ownership determined; 2) preserved when possible; and 3) considered for their potential to link open space parcels. The question was raised, “How do you maintain public access?” on pathways and old farm roads, and attendees noted that is important to prevent new development from severing connections. Attendees also noted that there was historically a group in town that would deliberately walk the paths in order to preserve the public right of access.

### **6.1.2 Open Space & Recreation Plan Survey**

Public outreach for the OSRP update also included an Open Space and Recreation Survey prepared and distributed by the Town and analyzed by BTI. The survey was conducted between January 1, 2009 through April 15, 2009, with hard copies sent with tax bills and an online version also advertised on the Town website.

The survey was meant to gauge how the Town uses the current open space and recreation lands and to identify additional opportunities respondents would like to see in the future. A copy of the survey was mailed to every household in the community (approximately 3200 households) with the quarterly tax bills. In addition, the survey was available online through links from the Town’s

homepage ([www.townofcohasset.com](http://www.townofcohasset.com)) and the Recreation website ([www.cohassetrec.com](http://www.cohassetrec.com)). The online version was offered as a way to reach additional interested persons and to provide an opportunity for persons other than landowners to participate in the survey. In addition to typical survey questions related to open space and recreational issues, three open response questions were provided in the survey where residents could:

- Identify specific town characteristics they treasure;
- Note challenges or threats facing the Town; and
- Provide open comment.

In total, 489 responses to the survey were received; 374 paper responses were received representing a response rate of approximately 12%. This response was slightly higher than in 1996 (10%) but below the rate achieved in 2002 (16%). In addition to the paper surveys, 115 online responses were also received. However, it is difficult to compare the actual response rates due to the two survey methods used for the present OSRP update and the fact that the two previous surveys (1996 and 2002) were not available on line. Assuming that online responses were generated by households receiving a hard copy of the survey with the tax bill, the 2009 response rate would be approximately 15%.

The survey was compiled and coordinated by the Recreation Director and the results were analyzed by Beals and Thomas, Inc. Jack Buckley and his Cohasset High School Civics and Community Service class also assisted with the compilation of the survey results by inputting a portion of the paper responses into the online survey for analysis. The survey can be found in Appendix A. Highlights of the survey indicate that:

- Almost one-half of the respondents (46%) have lived in Cohasset for more than 20 years.
- There is town-wide support (91%) for the purchase of additional conservation land by the Town. There is support for the purchase of additional lands for recreational opportunities (86%). The purchase of development rights (76%) to preserve land also has wide support.
- Acquisition of lands by public or private entities other than the Town (i.e. the Commonwealth (93%) and Regional Land Trusts (95%)) was also supported.
- 89% of the respondents support the development of information about the open space and recreation resources available.

- Of those responding, 88% supported zoning changes to enhance the protection of open space with over half (54%) strongly supporting changing zoning regulations as a planning tool.
- The overall response rate to Question 4 (dealing with the various actions to preserve natural resources and promote recreation noted above) was 97%.
- Approximately 8% of the respondents indicated a desire to donate their land while 13% would consider selling at a bargain price to support conservation. In addition, there was support for conservation restrictions or tax credit/reduction as acceptable means to preserve open space, which indicates that there may be an opportunity for community outreach to identify possible donors to further the Town's conservation efforts. Note however that the number of persons responding to this question and indicating a desire to donate or sell land for conservation might be indicative that the question was misunderstood as it is unlikely that there would be that many parcels of a size and/or location suitable for conservation purposes in the Town.
- Although there was a high percentage of recognition (generally 90% or greater) of all of the conservation lands in Town the percentage of use for a number of sites tended to be low (20- 40%). Three quarters (75%) of the respondents indicated the reason they did not use the facilities was due to a lack of information about where the areas are located. In addition, 50% indicated that they were unaware of where trails went. This information, when taken in conjunction with the 89% response in support of the development of information about open space and recreation resources provides a strong indication for the need for informational outreach and mapping. Furthermore, although almost 100% of the survey respondents answered the question on the recognition of conservation lands only 34% of the respondents answered the question as to why they did not use the facilities, which may indicate that the use of the facilities may actually be higher than suggested by the survey results.
- The survey results show that most respondents are satisfied with the current recreational programs and facilities for the various age groups identified in Question 8. The age group with the largest percentage not satisfied (24%) with the recreational opportunities was teenagers.
- Many of the Town's characteristics in Question 9 scored 90% or greater as Important or Very Important with an almost 100% response rate to this question. The highest rated of all the features noted was the harbor (99% rated the harbor as important or very important).

- The respondents indicated the **need** for the following additional recreational facilities listed in Question 10 (note a 96% response rate applied to this question):
  - Bicycle/pedestrian paths (75%)
  - Boat moorings (54%)
  - River Access for canoes and kayaks (47%)

and indicated that the following recreational facilities were **generally sufficient**:

- Neighborhood playgrounds (68%)
  - Multipurpose athletic fields (59%)
  - Tennis courts (63%)
  - Beach recreation (77%)
  - Wildlife viewing/bird watching (70%)
  - Golf courses (65%)
  - Boat ramps 63%)
  - Baseball/softball fields (71%)
  - Dog walking areas (61%)
  - Fishing/shellfishing areas (61%)
- A large number of respondents took the time to thoughtfully answer the open response questions. The major comments consistently cited included:

Question 11. What characteristics does Cohasset have to make you want to live here?

- Small town atmosphere and sense of community
- Scenic and natural beauty
- Ocean setting and access to beaches

Question 12. What are the most important issues, challenges, or threats facing the Town of Cohasset?

- The overdevelopment of the Town and other development related issues such as large houses on small lots, wind turbines, stormwater, pollution and poor zoning
- Property taxes and un-affordability of homes

## 6.2 Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

In 2009, several common themes ran throughout the survey and the public participation events. Rural character, small town community feel, overdevelopment and development in previously inhospitable areas, beautiful views and significant natural areas, strong recreational amenities, lost open space connections, and a lack of information about existing open space and recreational areas were all mentioned a number of times throughout the planning process.

*As noted in the 2002 OSRP, “Cohasset is well endowed with open space/conservation areas, recreational facilities, and historic resources. Public advocacy for their maintenance and preservation is high. Increased information and education are important ways to ensure ongoing support for open space preservation. An ideal open space system would protect the water supply and wetlands resources, preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, and protect the scenic character of the town. Recreational goals include additional access to the waterfront, greater opportunities for walking and bicycling, and improved access for the disabled.”*

The broad goals cited above remain applicable based upon public input gathered during the 2009 update process. Sections 8 and 9 contain additional information pertaining to specific goals, objectives, and action items to achieve the overarching goals stated above.



**Section 7.0**  
**Analysis of Needs**

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## **7.0 ANALYSIS OF NEEDS**

The Town of Cohasset is a community that has maintained its small town charm since its incorporation in 1770. After the decline of the fishing and shipbuilding industries, Cohasset's open space and recreational amenities were historically attractive to visitors, making it an often visited summer destination. Cohasset's open space and recreation features continue to be highly valued by Cohasset residents today. Currently, there is an opportunity to continue acquiring additional undeveloped land parcels and to improve existing open space and recreational areas. During the course of this update, Cohasset residents have indicated the need for increased recreational opportunities, including better access to the water and bicycle paths, for example, have indicated a desire to create larger patches of open space, wildlife corridors and connections to neighborhoods, and have also noted that better outreach is required to encourage residents to utilize existing open space and recreational areas to their fullest potential. While newcomers to the Town cited Cohasset's charm and balance between development and conservation in comparison to surrounding towns, long-time residents noted that advancements in development methods (ledge blasting, expansion of the sewer system) threatened areas that had previously been undevelopable.

The needs of Cohasset are detailed throughout this report; a summary of some more prominent needs is provided below. Section 9 contains action items relating to the all of the needs of Cohasset identified throughout this OSRP update process.

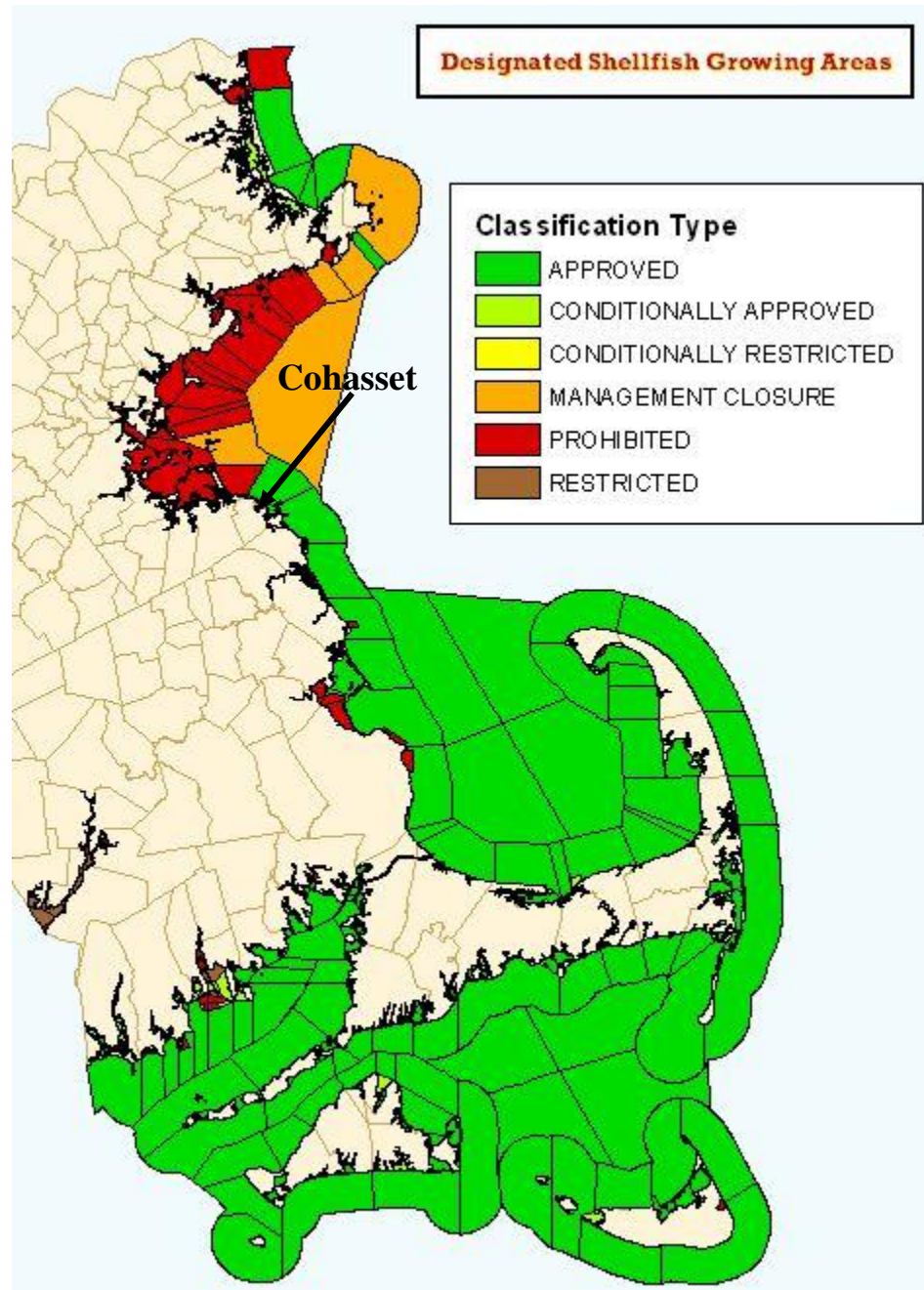
### **7.1 Summary of Resource Protection Needs**

#### **7.1.1 Water Resources**

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

Cohasset boasts a multitude of impressive and scenic waters. Some of these waters, such as Straits Pond, are impaired, as previously detailed in this report. Additionally, shellfish beds in Cohasset's coastal waters are no longer viable. However, the Division of Marine Fisheries has established Designated Shellfish Growing Areas (DSGAs), which represent areas of potential shellfish habitat extending from the tidal zone to the territorial limit of the Commonwealth. Each

DSGA is comprised of at least one classification area, ranging from approved to prohibited.<sup>120</sup>



**Image 7-1:** Designated Shellfish Growing Areas from MassGIS

<sup>120</sup> MassGIS Datalayers/GIS Database Designated Shellfish Growing Areas – October 2009. Viewed online October 27, 2009. <http://www.mass.gov/mgis/dsga.htm>

### **7.1.2 Invasive Species**

Conservation lands should be monitored for invasive species, and where found, they should be promptly removed before they establish a significant population and impact native species. Existing significant populations of invasive species should be managed to prevent their further spread if complete eradication is not feasible. Public outreach and education may result in a reduced presence of invasive species, as citizens could report existing populations, and might also avoid planting invasive or potentially invasive species in gardens if they understood the threat posed by invasives. Massachusetts implemented a ban on the sale and importation of specific invasive plants in 2006, however, existing populations will continue to spread, and prohibited plant species may be transferred between neighbors and friends.

### **7.1.3 Rare Species**

Several of the rare species known to occur in Cohasset have older records of sightings. Educating citizens regarding what rare species occur in Cohasset and gathering additional information about existing populations would facilitate decisions regarding which areas in Cohasset should be protected. Such protection could include purchasing additional lands, as well as protecting rare species on existing open space lands by ensuring that recreational use of those lands does not impact the rare species populations.

### **7.1.4 Land Resources**

Cohasset has approximately 970 acres of open space and recreational lands in the community. This represents approximately 15% of Cohasset's total land area (excluding coastal waters such as Cohasset Harbor). The largest contiguous area of open space occurs in the southwestern to south-central portion of Town, and includes state-owned conservation lands. For Town-owned parcels without a conservation or other deed restrictions, including those under the custody of the Conservation Commission, the Town could change the designation and use of the property. Therefore, working to change the temporary level of protection on town-owned open space to permanently protect it represents an opportunity to ensure that these open space areas remain in the future. However, the Town is also reserving its options on land for future needs, such as police and fire stations or schools.

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

The Town of Cohasset is experiencing growth in areas that were previously undevelopable, as previously discussed. The Town has competing needs for the remaining undeveloped areas for housing, recreation, and wildlife habitat. The land that is permanently protected will continue to provide a wide range of functions, including preservation of environmentally and culturally sensitive resources, buffering developed areas, and providing recreational opportunities, indefinitely. However, other lands are at risk and these functions may be lost. Cohasset's projected declining population may avoid increasing demands for open space and recreational areas. However, overuse at the Town's most popular areas may still occur and may lead to their degradation without implementation of management strategies and regular maintenance.

## 7.2 Summary of Community Needs

As stated in the survey, residents believe that it is important that the Town acquire more conservation and recreation land. The purchase of development rights to preserve land also has wide support. Access to the waterfront, increased pedestrian and bicycle paths, and improved information regarding existing open space and recreation areas were all noted by residents as needs. Furthermore, the addition of fields to the Town, as well as better maintenance and improvements to existing fields, are also needs voiced by the community. Increased cool weather activities are also desirable.

According to the National Park Land Standards , below is a guideline for what types of amenities a typical community should have in terms of recreation based on its population size.

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Area Needed</u>	<u>Units per Population</u>	<u>Service Area</u>
Basketball Court	7,280 sq. ft.	1 per 5,000	1/4-1/2 mile
Tennis Court	1 court	1 per 2,000	1/4-1/2 mile
Volleyball	4,000 sq. ft.	1 per 5,000	1/4-1/2 mile
Baseball	1.2 acres minimum	1 per 5,000	1/4-1/2 mile
Football	1.5 acres	1 per 20,000	20 min travel
Soccer	1.7-2.1 acres	1 per 10,000	popularity level
Softball	1.5-2 acres	1 per 5,000	1/4-1/2 mile
Multi-use Court	9,840 sq ft	1 per 10,000	1/4-1/2 mile
Swimming Pool	2 acres minimum	1 per 20,000	30 min travel
Trails	1 trail system per region		

## 7.3 Consistency with Regional and State Open Space and Recreation Plans

The Town of Cohasset routinely works with various state and regional planning agencies. The Cohasset 2009-2013 *Open Space and Recreation Plan* utilizes recommendations from several of these organizations.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) has included a land resources protection component, MetroFuture, in its regional development plan. The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is the open space plan for the entire

state of Massachusetts. Cohasset's emphasis in the *2009-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan* on environmental health, protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat, and the promotion of resident awareness of and access to open space and recreational resources is consistent with both MetroFuture and SCORP.

The Cohasset *2009-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan* contains goals, objectives, and actions that are consistent with many of MetroFuture's criteria for land resources protection. These include lands of conservation interest, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, wetlands wildlife habitat areas, areas critical to public water supplies, major wetlands, scenic landscapes, and major water bodies, rivers, and streams. Cohasset's plan focuses on water resources and wetlands, the enhancement of wildlife habitat through linkage of existing protected lands, and enhanced access to scenic landscapes, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as improved public access to the waterfront. These issues are especially relevant to the goals of MetroFuture.

Cohasset is a member of the South Shore Coalition, a sub-regional group under MAPC which also includes the towns of Duxbury, Hanover, Hingham, Hull, Marshfield, Norwell, Rockland, Scituate, and Weymouth. The Coalition discusses concerns such as the Greenbush commuter line project, solid waste, and coastal issues.

Although Cohasset is part of the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) planning region for the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), it shares many characteristics with the neighboring Southeastern Region. The 2006 SCORP recognizes Cohasset for making an important linkage and extension of the DCR Wompatuck Reservation, with the acquisition of the Whitney Woods Reservation. Additionally, the SCORP notes that private land trusts are playing important roles in a number of these towns as well, including Mass Audubon's work in Belmont, Canton and Natick, The Trustees of Reservation's properties in Hingham and Cohasset, and local land trusts in Dover and Cohasset<sup>121</sup>. The Cohasset *2009-2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan* addresses a number of SCORP planning recommendations for the MDC Region. These recommendations include:

- Improvement of water-based recreation opportunities
- Improvement of opportunities for hiking and cross-country skiing; maintenance of a balance between conservation and recreation resources
- Improvement of maintenance for open space and recreation resources
- Encouragement of protection and/or retention of "ancient ways" through an emphasis on their cultural and historic values
- Maximization of state, municipal and nonprofit agency cooperation in the protection of ecologically important lands that are connected to maintain ecosystem integrity. Publication of existing incentives available to private landowners to allow public access on private lands including the Chapter 61, 61A and 61B properties, Forest

<sup>121</sup> Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Outdoors 2006 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, <http://www.mass.gov/Eoeea/docs/eea/dcs/massoutdoor2006.pdf>, accessed August 3, 2009.

- Stewardship Program properties; encouragement of the donation or sale of conservation restrictions or access easements; and education of local assessor's offices about taxation policies of these programs to ensure assessors honor the intent of the programs
- Provision of access to open space, recreation, and historic properties and sites in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

#### **7.4 Management Needs and Potential Changes of Use**

Moving forward, in order to ensure successful implementation of the OSRP update, outstanding communication and teamwork will be paramount between Town boards, committees, staff and local residents and businesses. In order to set the stage for good communication, a specific entity in the town of Cohasset should be assigned to oversee the implementation of the overall OSRP. The best suited committees would be the Open Space & Recreation Committee and the Recreation Commission, which would work together on a regular basis.

In general regarding the maintenance of fields and playgrounds, additional funds and assistance are required. Maintenance of existing facilities should be coordinated with the applicable Town departments as well as with the groups using the fields, including groups from other towns. Additionally, the maintenance of potential future facilities should be considered prior to constructing such facilities.

Open space and recreation lands should be managed to ensure compatible use. For instance, enforcement of no pet areas in certain recreational facilities (athletic fields, for example) is lacking. Wompatuck Park has specific sections for walkers, ATV users and cross-country skiers, which serves as a good example of how to allow multiple uses that may not be compatible.

The following potential changes of use are being studied or are proposed for specific properties:

- Addition of a senior center at the current swim center property
- Redesign of the recreation area behind the library to include a non-regulation playing field
- Relocation of the CHS baseball diamond from Milliken Field

**Section 8.0**  
**Goals & Objectives**

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## **8.0 GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

### **8.1 Goals**

Over the past year, the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee has solicited the opinions of Town Officials and staff, various Town Departments and Commissions, and the public at large to develop a broad suite of goals and specific objectives for inclusion in the *2009 Open Space & Recreation Plan*. These community goals and objectives serve as a major component of this report. The following goals represent large-scale concepts; the objectives are more closely focused activities. Specific actions to implement these goals and objectives are detailed in the next chapter, Section 9 – Seven-Year Action Plan.

Throughout the process of developing this report, several ideas were consistently communicated to the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee. There is a strong sentiment that Cohasset is blessed with beautiful natural and historic surroundings. It must not be allowed to be thoughtlessly degraded or segmented by rampant construction, overuse, or neglect. Goals for Cohasset's future must include a careful dialogue on the implications of specific actions and inaction for the Town. Open space is an important component of Cohasset's environment that must be preserved and protected.

As noted in Section 6, the 2002 OSRP states that, "*Cohasset is well endowed with open space/conservation areas, recreational facilities, and historic resources. Public advocacy for their maintenance and preservation is high. Increased information and education are important ways to ensure ongoing support for open space preservation. An ideal open space system would protect the water supply and wetlands resources, preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, and protect the scenic character of the town. Recreational goals include additional access to the waterfront, greater opportunities for walking and bicycling, and improved access for the disabled.*"

The broad goals cited above remain applicable based upon public input gathered during the 2009 update process. Section 9 contains additional information pertaining to specific action items to achieve the overarching goals stated above, and the objectives listed below.

## **8.2 Objectives**

The following objectives were developed in support of the broad goals stated above:

- a. Make protection of open space a priority in all town land use decisions.
- b. Protect the natural environment, including wildlife habitats and wetlands, and preserve Cohasset's scenic beauty and local character.
- c. Improve, protect and increase recreational opportunities for residents.
- d. Improve maintenance of Town-owned open space and recreational resources.
- e. Develop greater resident awareness of conservation lands and recreational resources.
- f. Provide greater access for the disabled at key open space and recreational resources.
- g. Implement and monitor action plan items.

**Section 9.0**  
**Seven-Year Action Plan**

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## 9.0 SEVEN-YEAR ACTION PLAN

The following Seven-Year Action Plan identifies specific activities for implementation of the community goals and objectives presented in Section 8. Given the limited resources available to the Town in terms of labor and finances, these actions are presented as a “wish list” of possible activities. The Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee does not assume that all of these actions will be undertaken. This list was developed to serve as a point of departure for the Town administration and for public discourse. Town boards, commissions, or committees that would be most appropriate to implement or manage these activities are indicated in italics following each action.

### a. *Make protection of open space a priority in all town land use decisions*

<i>Actions</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>Completed?</i>
Retain the Open Space & Recreation Committee as a standing committee to advise on the potential impact of proposals on open space. <i>Board of Selectmen</i>	√							
Encourage the Planning Board to resolve status of the draft master plan for the town. <i>Open Space and Recreation Committee; Planning Board</i>	√							
Review Town Bylaws (especially zoning, building, and conservation) to assess whether they support the goals of the open space and recreation plan and other Town planning documents, and make recommendations to appropriate boards as necessary. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee; Bylaw Committee; Zoning Board of Appeals; Planning Board; Conservation Commission</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Consider a balance between natural habitat and passive recreation when developing guidelines for the use of open space. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee; Recreation Commission</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Increase public awareness of tax incentives available to private landowners who preserve open space and/or that	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	

<i>Actions</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>Completed?</i>
make that open space available to the public. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee; Assessors</i>								

***b. Protect the natural environment, including wildlife habitats and wetlands, and preserve Cohasset's scenic beauty and local character***

<i>Actions</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>Completed?</i>
Study and promote appropriate ways to preserve the unique natural features of the Cohasset landscape. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Develop and maintain a list of properties suitable for potential acquisition or conservation restriction by the Town, including those that link existing wildlife habitat, wetlands, open space, and recreation areas. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Designate the Open Space Committee as the coordinator for open space acquisition for the town. <i>Board of Selectmen</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Work to acquire selected parcels of open space using funds from the Community Preservation Act, grants, and private funding sources and working with appropriate town boards and interested groups and individuals. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee; Community Preservation Committee</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	

<i>Actions</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>Completed?</i>
Solicit and support volunteer inventory projects to identify and monitor the status, habitat, and distribution of key species such as vernal pool organisms, state listed animal and plant species, and forest-interior birds, and pursue possible grants to fund such projects. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee; conservation organizations/non-profit groups (with Town coordination)</i>			√	√	√	√	√	
Inventory the status of wetlands, coastal resources and inland bodies of water. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee; Conservation Commission; Water Department; Board of Health; Stormwater Committee</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Generate educational materials on protection of our local natural environment and recreational resources. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee; Board of Health</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Support organic lawn/turf management plan for all town-owned properties. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee; Water Department; Board of Health</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Support the restoration of shellfish beds. <i>Shellfish Warden; Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	

***c. Improve, protect and increase recreational opportunities for residents***

<i>Actions</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>Completed?</i>
Study the feasibility of “shared road” bikeways, walkways and sidewalks with proper signage for vehicular traffic. <i>Recreation Commission; Department of Public Works</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	

<i>Actions</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>Completed?</i>
Study creation of additional walking trails on conservation properties. <i>Recreation Commission; Conservation Commission; Open Space and Recreation Committee</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Improve and maintain current athletic and recreational fields and areas. <i>Recreation Commission; Department of Public Works</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Study the construction of new ball fields and play areas throughout town. <i>Recreation Commission</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Increase cool weather activities such as skating areas, warming huts, and lighting. Investigate the possibility of an indoor swimming pool. <i>Recreation Commission</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Improve access to our waterways, including our harbors, ponds, ocean front, launching ramps and mooring areas. <i>Recreation Commission; Harbormaster; Harbor Committee</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Develop and enforce field use policies, guidelines and a memorandum of understanding with all sports groups. <i>Recreation Commission</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Increase town recreational operated programs for all ages. <i>Recreation Commission</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Support Construction of a new Senior Center. <i>Elder Affairs, Board of Selectmen</i>	√	√	√					

***d. Improve maintenance of Town owned open space and recreational resources***

<i>Actions</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>Completed?</i>
Assess and improve current maintenance practices for town-owned land. <i>Department of Public Works</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	

<i>Actions</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>Completed?</i>
Determine how much revenue is necessary to maintain each recreational facility on an annual basis and work to ensure funding. <i>Recreation Commission</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Review and update annually fees associated with organizational uses of athletic/recreational facilities and explore other sources of funding for field care, both private and public options. <i>Recreation Commission; Department of Public Works</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Increase signage at all athletic/recreational facilities relative to proper use and care of facility by users. <i>Recreation Commission; Department of Public Works</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Sponsor maintenance programs and work with local groups (e.g., adopt-a-park/roadway/traffic island). <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee; Department of Public Works</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Promote and support public clean-up events. <i>Board of Health; Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Encourage dog walkers to pick up their pet's waste, and install stations with bags and trash receptacles at key open space and recreational area entrances (including cemeteries). Mark the locations of these stations on maps and brochures. <i>Board of Health</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Increase signage prohibiting dogs at athletic fields and other appropriate locations. <i>Recreation Commission; Board of Health; Town Manager</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	



***e. Develop greater resident awareness of conservation lands and recreational resources***

<i>Actions</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>Completed?</i>
Develop and publish a guide to open space resources in town, including hard copy and online maps and trail guides for recreational facilities and conservation lands. Publicize this guide on Town website and in local newspapers and make copies available at trail heads. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee; Recreation Commission</i>		√	√	√	√	√	√	
Research, locate, document, and publish a guide to historic cart paths and easements that are suitable for recreational use. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee</i>				√	√	√	√	
Continue to hold an annual event (such as the Recreation Fair) to educate residents about open space and recreation within Cohasset. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee; Recreation Commission; Conservation Commission</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Encourage the purchase of the full GIS system. <i>Board of Selectmen; Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	

***f. Provide greater access for the disabled at key open space and recreational resources***

<i>Actions</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>Completed?</i>
Create and adopt a transition plan designating certain areas for complete or near-complete accessibility. <i>Recreation Commission; Commission on Disabilities</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Ensure ADA compliance in future recreation and open space improvements. <i>Recreation Commission; Commission on Disabilities</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Include information regarding ADA accessibility of open space and recreation amenities in materials developed.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	

<i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee; Recreation Commission; Commission on Disabilities</i>								
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**g. Implement and monitor Action Plan items**

<i>Actions</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>Completed?</i>
Delegate the oversight of the OSRP to the Open Space & Recreation Committee. <i>Board of Selectmen</i>	√							
Review status of action items every year and report to the Board of Selectmen. Update action items as necessary. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Maintain an awareness of issues which affect the Town's Open Space and Recreation resources and bring them to the attention of the appropriate town boards. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Provide updates to the residents of Cohasset about progress on the goals and action items in this plan. <i>Open Space &amp; Recreation Committee</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	

**Section 10.0**  
**Public Comments**

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## **10.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS**

## **Section 11.0**

### **References**

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## **11.0 REFERENCES**

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All references used to update the Cohasset Open Space and Recreation Plan have been noted within the document as footnotes.

## **Appendices**

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**Appendix A** – Public Outreach

**Appendix B** – Cohasset Buildout Summary Information

**Appendix C** – Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program  
Information

**Appendix D** – State and National Designated Historic Sites

**Appendix E** – DEP Waste Site/Reportable Release Database

**Appendix F** – ADA Accessibility Study



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## Appendix A

### Public Outreach



## **Appendix B**

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### Cohasset Buildout Summary Information

## **Appendix C**

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### **Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program Information**

## **Appendix D**

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### State and National Designated Historic Sites

## **Appendix E**

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### DEP Waste Site/Reportable Release Database

## **Appendix F**

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### ADA Accessibility Study

## Figures

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**Map 1** Regional Context Map

**Map 2** Omitted (there are no environmental justice populations in Cohasset)

**Map 3** Zoning Map

**Map 4** Soils and Geologic Features Map

**Map 5** Unique Features Map

**Map 6** Water Resources Map

**Map 7** Conservation and Recreation Lands Map