

REPORT ON  
SCITUATE HARBOR DEVELOPMENT  
AND  
MASTER PLAN

Prepared by

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To the Board of Selectmen and Citizens of Scituate:

The Harbor Development Committee, originally appointed by the Board of Selectmen in October 1955, was subsequently appointed as a permanent committee under Article 52 by vote of the Annual Town Meeting held in March 1956. Terms of reference are to recommend and plan for the future development of the Scituate Harbor area.

A brief report, dated January 23, 1957, covering the work of the Committee for the past 15 months, has been submitted to the Board of Selectmen and will be published in the Town Annual Report for 1956. The following report is intended to accompany the Master Plan, dated January 1957, prepared by the Committee and now submitted herewith for consideration by the Town.

I. INTRODUCTION

The appointment and terms of reference contained in the above-mentioned Article 52 were interpreted by the Committee to mean that it was to serve purely in an advisory capacity with the task of covering the following primary factors:

The study and preparation of a comprehensive Master Plan for adoption by the Town to control and promote the future growth and development of Scituate Harbor and adjacent areas, with particular reference to dredging, land reclamation, navigation and mooring areas, waterfront protection, town pier and waterfront structures, highways, traffic control and automobile parking areas, land and water recreational facilities, fishing and boating industries, business and commerce, sources of potential revenue, aesthetic considerations of the area, and matters generally pertinent to the over-all project.

In order to prepare a Master Plan, it was first necessary to prepare a composite base plan of the entire harbor area showing present conditions as could most readily be obtained from existing town maps and other sources. Upon this base plan has been superimposed in the form of a Master Plan the main features presently considered desirable or necessary for the long-range development of the harbor area. These features are briefly described hereinafter and for convenience are taken generally in a clockwise direction commencing from the harbor entrance off First Cliff.

## II. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Committee accepted as axiomatic the fact that Scituate Harbor is, and will continue to be, the most important natural

asset of the Town. It follows, therefore, that this asset should be exploited to the maximum extent possible for the overall economic benefit of the Town.

The permanent population of the Town is expected to approach 20,000 in the next 25 years and 30,000 thereafter, with a corresponding increase in the demand for school and recreational facilities. This growth, coupled with the ever-increasing ownership of motor vehicles and pleasure craft, both locally and throughout the country, will undoubtedly exert a strong demand for ready access to the sea and for the shore-based facilities appropriate thereto.

As may be seen from the coastal chart (U.S. C. & G. S. No. 1207), Scituate Harbor is conveniently located between the northern ports (Boston, Marblehead, Gloucester, etc.) and those to the south (Provincetown, etc.) including the Cape Cod Canal. The important fishing grounds of the Stellwagen Bank lie directly to the east in the Atlantic Ocean, thus making Scituate Harbor the nearest mainland port. For these reasons, Scituate Harbor is considered as an important harbor of refuge for both pleasure craft and the fishing industry.

The need for a comprehensive Master Plan covering the development of the harbor area is believed long overdue. Partial plans, such as the "Bailey Plan," dealt only with special localities. However, had this particular plan been adopted and carried out, the traffic problem on Front Street would have been much less than it is today.



In the absence of a Master Plan to guide and control development, the tendency is for construction to proceed along haphazard lines which, in turn, create additional problems in one form or another. Subsequent correction is either impossible, or can be undertaken only at great cost to the Town.

A Master Plan makes possible the orderly development of the area in the best interests of the Town as a whole. Moreover, it will be of great assistance when seeking State and Federal aid for additional dredging and harbor improvements. It should also prove of considerable value to the Town government and its department, to the various Town boards and Committees, to commerce and trade organizations, to industrial and business concerns, and to all those who may wish to foster and promote the economic well-being of the Town, together with attractive and desirable living conditions.

### III. HARBOR BASIN AREA

Breakwaters. Extension of the north breakwater by 500 feet, and of the south breakwater by 150 feet will provide improved protection inside the harbor from easterly storms.

Fairways. A main navigation fairway, 300 feet wide and located slightly south of the present channel, will provide direct access to the Town pier and the south basin. Leading off from this main fairway are secondary fairways to serve the piers of the U. S. Coast Guard, the Scituate Harbor Yacht Club, Dwyer's Landing, and Gilley's Boat Yard.

Small Outboard Boat Area. A special area, 1,500 feet long by 500 feet wide, is shown in the northern section of the harbor. If dredged to a depth of about 4 to 5 feet below Mean Low Water, this area may be reserved for general and competitive use by small outboard craft. Dredging to a greater depth would encounter hard material, making the work more difficult and costly.

Mooring Areas. Dredging the area south of the main fairway and marking off the secondary fairways will provide increased mooring area in the north basin. Enlargement of the south basin will substantially increase the over-all harbor mooring capacity.

South Basin. Dredging in the south basin to the limits indicated on the plan will more than double its present size and provide a well protected inner harbor for small craft.

#### IV. EASTERN AND SOUTHERN SHORES OF HARBOR

Land Reclamation. Dredged material deposited on the marshlands lying adjacent to the south basin on the north, east and south sides will produce approximately 25 acres of reclaimed land suitable for subsequent zoned development as described below.

Industrial. The reclaimed spit of land opposite the Welch Company Wharf is shown as zoned for industrial development. An area of 30,000 sq. ft. is provided for the fishing and lobster industry, while an area of 80,000 sq. ft. is provided for boat repair and storage yards served by appropriate landings and marine railway facilities extending into the south basin.



Commercial and Business. Four business blocks, totaling approximately 313,000 sq. ft., are provided as shown on the plan. This additional area will double the existing business area along Front Street and together form a relatively compact shopping district adjacent to the harbor.

It will probably take a number of years to complete the land reclamation and allow for settlement of the fill. During this period, suitable portions of the area could be used for other purposes of a less permanent nature but suited to the locality. Ultimate development, if in the form of business blocks, would be under strict control as to layout, types of business and architecture, to ensure that property values of nearby residential areas are enhanced and that aesthetic values of a high standard are maintained.

The proposed Town sewerage scheme could be economically adapted to serve this new business area due to its close proximity to the Kent Street sewer main and the treatment plant to be located near the Driftway.

Yacht Marina. A yacht marina of 115-berth capacity is shown along the easterly shore of the south basin and in close proximity to the proposed new business area. Additional berths may be added as the need arises.

Yacht Clubs. Space for prospective private yacht and boat clubs is provided adjacent to the Coast Guard pier. Such clubs should increase in number in step with growth of the Town's population.



Esplanades and Streets. Easy access to the eastern and southern perimeters of the harbor waterfront is provided by means of wide esplanades and streets, with parking for approximately 1,500 cars between the First Cliff breakwater and the traffic circle shown at the junction of Front and Kent Streets. Traffic flow is indicated by arrow signs.

Buffer Zones. Buffer zones of varying widths and planted with park-type trees and grass separate the residential areas on First and Second Cliffs from the reclaimed land proposed for development.

#### V. AREA SOUTH OF EDWARD FOSTER ROAD CAUSEWAY

This entire area is shown as reserved for recreational and similar amenities. Principal features include the following:

Small Boat Basin. A "small boat basin" of irregular shape and approximately 15 acres in area provides the central motif. Water depth is controlled by means of a specially designed dam adjacent to the Edward Foster Road bridge. The tidal range within the basin would be limited to the upper 2 or 3 feet of the tidal range within the harbor. A roadway and broadwalk circumscribes the basin giving easy access to the water.

Boathouse and Pier. Near the northern end of the basin on the east shore a boathouse, pier and car parking area are provided.

Swimming Beach and Pavilion. Near the center of the east side of the basin provision is made for a swimming beach, backed

by a sun-bathing area and pavilion containing dressing rooms below and overhead grandstand suited to view aquatic competitions. Proximity to Peggotty Beach permits of joint usage of the dressing rooms for both sea and basin swimming. Ample car parking area is provided along the basin perimeter roadway, supplementing the presently inadequate parking area serving Peggotty Beach.

Youth Recreational Center. On the north side of an extension to Ridge Hall Road is shown an area designated as a "Youth Recreational Center." This center would include outdoor and indoor recreational facilities as may be considered desirable or necessary at the time of implementation. Alternative use of this area can be made in accordance with the future needs of the Town.

Main Car Parking Area. Between the proposed Recreational Center and Meeting House Lane extension is located the principal car parking area, comprising approximately 3 acres. This car park will serve both the Center to the south and the multi-purpose playing field to the north.

Multi-purpose Playing Field. This feature includes a 300' x 300' baseball field, a football field and an athletic track. An "L"-shaped pavilion with grandstand above and dressing rooms and service rooms below is also shown. When necessary, the pavilion may be extended along the southern and western sides of the field.

Junior Playground. The existing playground located at the corner of Kent Street and Edward Foster Road is retained,



but is enlarged and provided with a small pavilion with adjacent car park.

Roads and Streets. Kent Street is shown as doubled in width, with the existing trees along its east side being retained within a median strip. Access roads of adequate width and convenient location are provided to serve the general area. Traffic flow is controlled as shown by arrow signs.

Parks. Areas not otherwise occupied by special facilities are considered as park land to be planted with suitable trees, grass, shrubs and evergreens.

## VI. WEST AND NORTH SHORES OF HARBOR

Traffic Circle. A rotary traffic circle is shown at the intersection of First Parish Road, Front Street, Edward Foster Road and Kent Street. The existing gasoline service station is retained within the circle, thereby increasing its business potential.

Satuit Brook Highway. A 60-foot wide, 4-lane highway is shown leading west along the valley of Satuit Brook. This highway is intended to provide improved access to the harbor area and to augment the increasingly inadequate roads now in use. This new highway should connect directly with Route 3-A and be of the limited or controlled access type.

West Esplanade. Traffic congestion on Front Street, which serves the main shopping district of the harbor area, has already reached intolerable proportions and calls for measures

or relief. The possibility of widening Front Street along its west side has been considered but rejected for reasons of uneconomic return and the presence of high ground immediately adjacent. The most logical alternative for a lasting improvement consists of extending the Cole Parkway seawall in a northerly direction as shown on the plan. Such extension would provide a wide esplanade, taking in the Welch Company Wharf and the present Town pier, and connecting with Jericho Road at Gilley's Boat Yard.

An esplanade 100 feet wide will permit of two 10-foot wide sidewalks, two 22-foot curbside diagonal parking strips and three 12-foot traffic lanes (all one-way). The sidewalk adjacent to the waterfront would be provided with benches conveniently spaced.

The area of the Welch Company Wharf required for inclusion in the esplanade is approximately equivalent to the reclaimed triangular area off the northwest corner of Cole Parkway, thus providing a basis for an exchange. Existing waterfront property north of the Welch Company would be enlarged and provided with a second main road frontage.

Dyer's Wharf and boat service facilities are shown relocated on the water side of the proposed esplanade and the released area used to provide a one-way connection for traffic proceeding south on Front Street.

North of Dyer's Wharf a valuable business corner lot is formed with frontage on all sides. A rotary traffic circle controls traffic flow as indicated by arrow signs. Connection with Jericho Road is made by extending the esplanade along the existing waterfront, but with a reduced width of roadway. Parking capacity would be increased to the extent of approximately 200 cars.



Town Piers. A second Town pier to serve the enlarged south basin is shown located off Cole Parkway.

The existing Town pier is to be repaired in the near future under a joint Town and State financial arrangement. As a result, it is expected that the life of the pier will be extended perhaps another five years, but regardless of the exact period, the time will arrive when a new pier will have to be constructed. Construction of the West Esplanade and New Town Pier projects will permit of relocating the pier generally as shown on the plan. Exact layout and design details can be determined in accordance with requirements at that time.

Jericho Road Area. It is contemplated that Jericho Road will require widening between its intersection with the proposed West Esplanade and Hatherly Road to provide for the expected increase of two-way traffic. Improved traffic flow at the intersection of Jericho and Beaver Dam Roads is obtained by rotary movement as shown by the arrow signs.

A new highway connection between Beaver Dam Road and Hatherly-Jericho Roads is also provided and ties in with the proposed new parking areas shown on the plan. The Town-owned land on the waterfront north of the Dwyer property was originally acquired for a parking area and this purpose should be carried out under a high order of priority. A specific recommendation covering this improvement has already been submitted to the Board of Selectmen.

Bathing Beach. Improvement of the existing bathing beach and the provision of an off-street parking area is shown on the east side of Jericho Road in the section lying north of the Scituate Harbor Yacht Club.

Cedar Point. The existing swampy marshland lying in the interior of the Cedar Point area is recommended for reclamation with suitable material dredged from the area designated as "Small Outboard Boat Area."

Provision is made for a pier and club house to serve the northern section of the harbor, with access along the existing groin raised to a suitable height. Presently vacant lots on the south side of Light House Road in the vicinity of the groin should be acquired to serve as off-street parking areas. Filling behind the riprap wall in areas of erosion should be carried out as soon as possible to improve the unsanitary and poor drainage conditions now existing.

Small Boat Launchways. Provision of small boat launchways at Light House Point, Jericho Road and Cole Parkway has already been recommended to the Board of Selectmen.

## VII. CONCLUSION

A Master Plan, by its very character, is of a continuing nature, and is constantly subject to revision as needs change and opportunities arise to improve upon and implement successive features. For the present, it is believed that the plan now submitted constitutes a co-ordinated scheme for the orderly development of the harbor area, while being at the same time sufficiently flexible to permit modification and revision without sacrificing the objective of the over-all plan. It is recommended that the Master Plan be adopted in principle and that proper organization



and funds be programmed for early implementation of selected initial phases.

It is further recommended that arrangements be instituted to obtain complete annual records and statistics of all craft using the harbor. The data pertaining to each vessel as appropriate would include such information as type, size (length, beam, draft), tonnage, home port, origin and destination of voyage, days or hours spent in Scituate, number of crew and passengers, pleasure or commercial craft, etc. Statistics of this nature will be of immeasurable help in determining economic justification when seeking State and Federal aid for dredging and harbor improvements, and in the planning and construction of shore-based facilities.

With the completion of our work, this Report and accompanying Master Plan are,

Respectfully submitted,

SCITUATE HARBOR DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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