



CITY OF GLOUCESTER
HARBOR PLAN PUBLIC MEETING #2

March 7, 2022

6:00 P.M.

Remote Meeting

Richard Noonan, Chair

MINUTES

Present Harbor Plan Committee Members: Richard Noonan (Chair), John McCarthy, Tessa Brown, Al Cottone, Vito Giacalone, Tony Gross, Tom Balf

Absent HPC Members: Katie Kahl

City of Gloucester: Sal Di Stefano, Gregg Cademartori, Jill Cahill, Gemma Wilkens

Consultant Team: Matthew Littell - Utile, Will Cohen - Utile, Taskina Tareen - Utile, Zoë Mueller - Utile, Rahi Patel - Utile, Jason Hellendrung - Tetra Tech, Richard Jabba - Tetra Tech / Fort Point Associates, Nasser Brahim - Woods Hole Group

I. BUSINESS

- A. Welcome
- B. Consultant Presentation
 - a. Where we are in the Process
 - b. Engagement to Date
 - c. Foundational Trends & Influences
 - i. Infrastructure & Flood Risk Needs
 - ii. Sector-Specific Economic Opportunities
 - d. Economic Development Goal Setting
 - i. Live Zoom Opinion Polling: Observations, Questions & Initial Ideas
- C. Next Steps
- D. Q&A Discussion
- E. Adjournment

II. WELCOME

- 1. Taskina Tareen of Utile welcomed participants, City staff, Harbor Plan Committee members, and attendees.

III. CONSULTANT PRESENTATION

- 1. Taskina began by asking meeting attendees to complete a poll which asked how attendees related to the harbor planning process.
 - a. 24% of attendees were property or business owners within the study area, 15% of attendees were workers at businesses within walking distance of the study area, 59% of attendees were recreational users of study area features, 52% of attendees were Gloucester residents beyond walking distance to the study area, 28% of attendees were Gloucester residents within walking distance to the study area, and 9% of attendees were none of the above.
- 2. Taskina summarized the public engagement conducted through the harbor plan process to date and reminded attendees that they could submit comments on the harbor plan website at any time. She also summarized the themes that were important to the public: public access, economic development, etc.
- 3. A second poll asked attendees to pick their top priority for the meeting and choose three issues/themes that attendees would like the plan to address.
 - a. Question 1: What is the main thing you hope to get out of this meeting?
 - i. 31% answered: General information and awareness of the plan

- ii. 2% answered: Ask questions of the City and consultant team
 - iii. 29% answered: Hear what others are saying and thinking
 - iv. 13% answered: Advocate for a specific issue or approach
 - v. 20% answered: Advocate for an approach or prioritize a specific area or site
 - vi. 4% answered: Discuss trade-offs and priorities with other community members
- b. Question 2: What are the top issues/concerns/themes that you would like this plan to address? (Select top 3)
- i. 36% answered: Water-dependent uses
 - ii. 47% answered: Fishing, shellfishing, and seafood processing
 - iii. 24% answered: Blue tech, life sciences, R&D
 - iv. 18% answered: Essential public services and infrastructure investment
 - v. 24% answered: Development, tourism, and hospitality
 - vi. 27% answered: Public access and wayfinding
 - vii. 40% answered: Resilience
 - viii. 31% answered: Ecology
 - ix. 7% answered: Technical assistance and capacity building
 - x. 36% answered: I4C2 and public property development

4. Foundational Trends and Influences

- a. Matthew Littell of Utile then presented the plan framework, which contained four main layers: foundational trends and influences, economic development goal setting, sub-area character and potential, and implementation tools

b. Infrastructure and Flood Risk Needs

- i. Matthew then presented information on resilience impacts of the planning process. He presented maps showing flood impacts to the harbor area, including current flooding risk areas and projected areas of flood risk by 2050. The resilience section of the presentation emphasized that Gloucester Harbor needs to prepare businesses for increased frequency and depth of flooding and protect critical infrastructure.

- ii. A third poll asked attendees to address their opinions related to resilience and the risk of flooding.

1. Question 1: What kind of actions to increase resilience do you think would have the biggest impact on ensuring Gloucester's water-dependent businesses can survive, thrive, and compete in the global market?

- a. 14% answered: Technical assistance to support business and property owners
- b. 40% answered: Financial support to implement flood risk adaptation
- c. 19% answered: Investment in protecting truck access road infrastructure
- d. 21% answered: Investment in protecting the water control pollution facility
- e. 7% answered: Investing in shared resources for temporary technical solutions

2. Question 2: What frequency of flood damage and loss would make you likely to take substantial actions such as moving/selling, elevating, or flood proofing your home or business? Check all that apply.

- a. 30% answered: Daily
- b. 33% answered: Once/month
- c. 44% answered: Once/year
- d. 51% answered: Once every few years
- e. 12% answered: Once in 10 years
- f. 7% answered: Once in 20 years
- g. 2% answered: Once in 30 years
- h. 2% answered: Once in 50 years
- i. 12% answered: No frequency would make me take such a measure

5. Sector-Specific Economic Opportunities

6. Matthew Littell continued the presentation, summarizing the existing economic development findings from the planning process. Gloucester's blue economy was centered on living resources, marine construction, transportation, and ship and boat building. Gloucester's small parcel sizes limited its opportunities in several other marine-related sectors.

- a. Living Resources**

- i. Zoë Mueller of Utile presented the Living Resources section of the economic development findings. Gloucester's fisheries activity levels have performed better than other New England ports and the US fishing industry as a whole. However, it is undergoing a shift from groundfishing to lobstering and small-scale operations with a higher per-pound value. The Harbor's seafood processing industry is also consolidating, while the industry as a whole is shrinking nationally. Slim margins and unpredictable catches increase economic uncertainty for local fisheries.
 - ii. Several needs and opportunities were identified, including the need for harbor infrastructure to adapt as the fishing market shifts, encouraging hybrid seafood processing and seafood wholesale, and exploring shared harbor infrastructure.
 - iii. A poll was conducted to ask attendees how they captured value from fishing.
 1. Question: Which of these ideas do you think are promising strategies to capture more value from fishing and shellfishing? Check all that apply.
 - a. 70% answered: 100% fish strategy
 - b. 68% answered: seafood co-op
 - c. 9% answered: other (share your idea in the chat)
 - d. 7% answered: none of the above

- b. Tourism & Recreation**

- i. Zoë continued onto the tourism and recreation section of the findings. Gloucester has the largest concentration of whale watching businesses in the Northeastern US. Since 2014 there has been: growth in charter fishing which created demand for dock space and additional assets such as the Beaufort Hotel serving as anchors for the Harbor area.
 - ii. Tourism in Gloucester is highly seasonal and the Harbor is a key part of the tourism industry. An opportunity exists to leverage tourism and recreation as economic engines without undermining marine industrial uses, as well as to finance infrastructure investment for water-dependent industrial uses.
 - iii. A poll asked attendees to share their opinions on possible strategies for leveraging tourism in and around the Harbor.
 1. Question: Which of these ideas do you think are promising strategies to foster growth in the local tourism industry in a way that leverages tourism and recreation as economic engines for the harbor without undermining marine industrial uses? Check all that apply.
 - a. 61% answered: shoulder season extension programming
 - b. 48% answered: targeted wayfinding and pedestrian infrastructure improvements
 - c. 20% answered: other (share your idea in the chart)
 - d. 7% answered: none of the above

- c. Blue Tech + Research & Development**

- i. Blue Tech and Research and Development (R&D) opportunities such as growth in the ocean observation market, as well as other marine-related research and technology markets. An opportunity exists for Gloucester to build capacity and technical expertise to support adaptation of Gloucester's fishing industry to new and emerging technologies. There is also an opportunity to support innovation in the Blue Tech sector on the harbor and uplands (including downtown).
 - ii. A poll asked attendees to share their opinions on possible strategies to foster growth in the Blue Tech sector in Gloucester.

1. Question: Which of these ideas do you think are promising strategies to foster growth in blue tech, life sciences, and research and development activities in Gloucester? Check all that apply.
 - a. 86% answered: Expand presence of institutional research
 - b. 77% answered: Ocean innovation and development space
 - c. 41% answered: Deployment center for marine construction and monitoring
 - d. 11% answered: other (share your idea in the chart)
 - e. 5% answered: none of the above
 - d. Zoë summarized that sector-specific opportunities relied largely on foundational collective shifts in approach and strategy to the Harbor, such as building capacity, attracting resources, and aligning regulatory and planning documents to support the desired outcome in a unified way.
- 7. Economic Development Goal-Setting**
- a. A poll asked attendees to share their opinions on ideas to build local capacity for various sectors and purposes.
 - i. Question: Which of these ideas do you think are promising strategies to build local capacity to execute business development, promote innovation, drive marketing, and conduct recruitment at the scale necessary to “move the needle?” Check all that apply.
 1. 54% answered: Non-profit development corporation
 2. 41% answered: “Port Authority”
 3. 38% answered: Municipal capacity
 4. 13% answered: none of the above
 5. 8% answered: other (share your idea in the chart)

IV. NEXT STEPS

1. Planning Process (ongoing)
 - a. Regulatory Opportunities
 - b. Sub-area Opportunities & Recommendations
2. Upcoming Meetings/Outreach
 - a. HPC Meeting #8
 - b. Public Meeting #3 - Draft Plan Recommendations
3. Project Feedback
 - a. Social Pinpoint Map
 - b. Comment forms
4. Stay connected via the website: <https://harborplan.gloucester-ma.gov/get-involved/>

V. Q&A DISCUSSION

1. **Live Question and Answer (verbal questions)**
 - a. Robert Gordon, a Gloucester resident, asked how to bridge the gap between the massive cost of rebuilding infrastructure and the costs of sea-level rise.
 - i. Matthew replied that the sea level rise is incremental and that there is state and federal money available to address resilience measures. He noted the importance
 - ii. Kevin Hively noted the need for expertise or look at innovative financing techniques for redevelopment or shoring up of existing infrastructure and buildings. He emphasized that it will require creativity through public-private partnerships to execute.
 - b. LJ Rigsby, a Gloucester resident and business owner, noted that there are innovative projects happening around the world related to dam building and barriers, and other technologies to protect harbors.

- i. Gregg Cademartori replied that the City has focused on project-based floodproofing of critical infrastructure. He also noted that there were largely private lots on the Harbor, requiring coordination between public and private entities.
- c. Susanne Altenburger stated that innovation in the fishing industry was important. They emphasized that Gloucester's fishing vessel stock was aging rapidly and advocated for a local technical skills and education program dedicated to teaching skills needed for marine-industrial uses.
- d. Valerie Nelson reiterated how local businesses were adapting to issues like sea level rise and how she was impressed by that adaptability. Valerie also reiterated problems with I4C2 and asked if the process could consider wetlands adaptation options.
 - i. Kevin Hively said that Valerie's points were well taken. He believed the determining factors moving forward was building strategies related to insurance and new funding mechanisms.
- e. Deborah Eliason said that the information at the meeting was helpful. Deborah reiterated the four themes of the Gloucester Harbor Plan process. They stated that the discussed proposals didn't completely address all themes. They emphasized thinking of a wider range of solutions to address the Harbor Plan themes, such as a civic center.
- f. Marcia Hart, a Gloucester resident, complimented the planning team on their focus on the value of the marine industry. Marcia said that water-related industries such as tourism and fishing could coexist and be mutually beneficial. They emphasized that they enjoy tourism in Gloucester, but a balance between fishing industries and tourism must be maintained, so that one industry does not negatively impact the other. Marcia also asked the planning team and committee to consider tourism impacts on residents. They also did not support the use of the I4C2 parcel for a performance venue.
- g. Patti Page did not support the use of the I4C2 parcel for a performance venue. Patti emphasized the need for more information about the process. Patti encouraged everyone to consider the impacts to local businesses that may result from the Harbor Plan.

2. Chat Box Question and Answer (typed questions)

- a. Question/Comment: It doesn't matter to me, but it may to others -- are the polling results anonymous or the respondents identified?
 - i. Response: They are anonymous and will only be analyzed, summarized and shared at the group level, not the individual level.
- b. Question/Comment: Have you encountered pushback from the public on climate change concerns? In other words, are a significant number of members of the public downplaying climate change as an issue in terms of planning for the harbor?
 - i. Response: Our team has received no public comments that downplay or question the extent of climate change or sea level rise. People who work on the waterfront have anecdotally noted the increased frequency of flooding, and we have specifically heard this multiple times through our stakeholder outreach meetings. There are uncertainties as to when and how much sea level rise will occur.
- c. Question/Comment: Just FYI, on Live Poll #3, when we moved (within Gloucester) about 5 years ago, we were careful to buy on high ground (~100' elev) so our property is not at risk, so my "daily" response is only because we've already taken action.
- d. Question/Comment: why is biotech included in the blue economy sectors
 - i. Response: There is a distinct marine biotech sector that is involved in looking at using biotech tools to develop drugs, materials (for example, adhesives), and genomic sequencing of fish to ensure species labeling accuracy. Accordingly, we consider it part of the blue tech economy, which is a subset of the overall blue economy.
- e. Question/Comment: why is tourism listed if it is not allowed, that's confusing me
 - i. Response: Tourism, in and of itself, is not prohibited. Activities like viewing the harbor, and general access to the harbor, are permitted. Activities like whale watches also take

place in Gloucester. Restaurants and other recreational amenities are also present. Additionally, there are areas on the harbor that are not themselves part of the Designated Port Area.

- f. Question/Comment: Expanding support of CAM and Maritime Gloucester for better reach, programs, etc. interactive kiosks that combine live stories, history, etc. along harbor walk, engaging arts and culture community for more “live” and focused programs on history, now, future
 - i. Response: Great idea thank you
 - g. Question/Comment: What about conservation and biodiversity? (re Blue Tech poll)
 - i. Response: Gloucester has several organizations and individuals involved in this. One way this will affect the harbor plan is the degree to which these efforts expand and will need space which might otherwise be wanted for other uses.
 - h. Question/Comment: I am also following proposed zoning changes that could increase population density in certain neighborhoods. Could some of the future harbor development (in whatever form it takes) include affordable housing as a mixed use?
 - i. Response: Residential uses are strictly prohibited in the designated port area, which was created to protect, preserve, and enhance water-dependent marine industrial uses without interference.
 - i. Question/Comment: LJ Risby, Ward 2 resident, business owner on Main St: There is technology happening now to protect harbors, and Gloucester is an excellent potential case study - wondering if we have considered the potential for barriers in Gloucester as an innovative solution?
 - i. Response: We have tried to focus on municipal infrastructure and more project based. Shoreline protection is a predominantly private property issue. At the state level, there may be ways to partner on infrastructure, if the harbor is prepared for a more macro-based solution. Funding would be a major consideration
 - j. Question/Comment: Speaking of “Fleet”—Given the enormous, dangerous pollution of the Ocean by Plastics (See the Doc. “Plastic Ocean”) and the development of recycled plastic building materials, is there any possibility that GLO’s fleet could be used to provide recycled ocean plastic for this purpose, and/or become a producer of these construction materials?
 - i. Response: Thank you for this question. While in theory this could happen in Gloucester, this option brings with it other questions we’d still need to consider. Once plastic is brought to shore, it needs to be processed and otherwise dealt with, and it is not immediately clear that this is an option that the community would want. In addition, the economics of this method may be more cost-effective in other parts of the world, so it is not immediately clear that this business is a significant source of economic growth potential.
3. Matthew Littell encouraged all attendees to submit additional comments on the website.
 4. Rick Noonan said he was encouraged by the level of participation in the meeting.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

1. Tony Gross made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded.
2. Roll Call:
 - a. Richard Noonan (Chair)-Yes
 - b. John McCarthy -Yes
 - c. Tom Balf -Yes
 - d. Tessa Brown -Yes
 - e. Al Cottone -Yes
 - f. Vito Gialcone -Yes
 - g. Tony Gross -Yes