

RECREATIONAL BOATING PLAN NEW BEDFORD HARBOR



HARBOR DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



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PREPARED BY
CLE ENGINEERING, INC.
15 CREEK RD.
MARION, MA 02738
(508) 748-0937
www.CLEngineering.com

PREFACE

This Recreational Boating Plan was developed during the summer of 2009 and was vetted through Harbor Development (HDC) public meetings held in August 2009 as well as thru Municipal Harbor Plan Meetings and Workshops in 2009. Comments received during those meetings were incorporated and the following document includes updates to reflect conditions as of May 2010.

INTRODUCTION

The 2009 New Bedford / Fairhaven Municipal Harbor Plan (Harbor Plan) identifies the expansion of recreational boating infrastructure and amenities as a way to increase the volume of recreational boaters in New Bedford waters. The increase in recreational boaters is an opportunity to have significant positive economic impacts to the area. However, the New Bedford Harbor Development Commission (HDC) recognizes that these expansions and enhancements must be implemented with consideration of the traditional working port areas to minimize conflicts or interference and ensure that the various waterfront industries compliment one another as opposed to competing with one another.

The HDC has identified that currently there is limited infrastructure for the transient boater coming to New Bedford. It is the intent of the HDC to provide better amenities, increased berthing and launch services to better accommodate boaters and to allow local businesses to reap the economic potential that could stem from recreational boaters exploring the City of New Bedford. As such, the HDC has retained CLE Engineering, Inc. (CLE) to develop this Recreational Boating Plan to identify the following:

- **Current assets**
- **Planned infrastructure improvements**
- **Implementation strategy**
- **Rate structure**
- **Program Strategy for marketing and operations for recreational boating in New Bedford**

This plan is intended to provide an initial step for outlining a vision for recreational boating in New Bedford and will serve as the base for developing infrastructure and operational improvements to enhance and increase recreational boating in New Bedford.

CURRENT HDC ASSETS THAT SUPPORT RECREATIONAL BOATING:

In support of recreational boating, the HDC has identified that following categories that promote and support recreational boating in New Bedford:

- **Moorings (Seasonal and Transient)**
- **Launch Services, Harbor Patrol and Water Taxi Landing Sites**
- **Boat Launching Ramps**
- **Dinghy Docks and Storage Racks**
- **“Car Top Boat” and Crew Boat Infrastructure**
- **Pump Out Facilities**
- **Harbor Markers including Entrance, No-Wake Zone and Moorings**

The following sections address each of these components and describe current infrastructure, planned improvements, implementation strategies and associated user fees.

◆ **MOORINGS (Seasonal and Transient):**

SEASONAL MOORINGS:

● **Current Seasonal Moorings:**

Pursuant to the general authority under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 102, Section 21, et seq., Chapter 91, Section 10A, and Chapter 43B, Section 13, and all other applicable legal authority, the City of New Bedford by and through the HDC is authorized to issue temporary, annual permits to the public for the mooring of vessels and related structures under such terms, conditions and restrictions that may be deemed necessary. Pursuant to the foregoing authority, the HDC currently administers a mooring program that assigns a location within one of ten areas for the temporary placement and use of moorings within the tidal waterways of the City of New Bedford. The HDC maintains waiting lists for each of the mooring areas within the harbor.

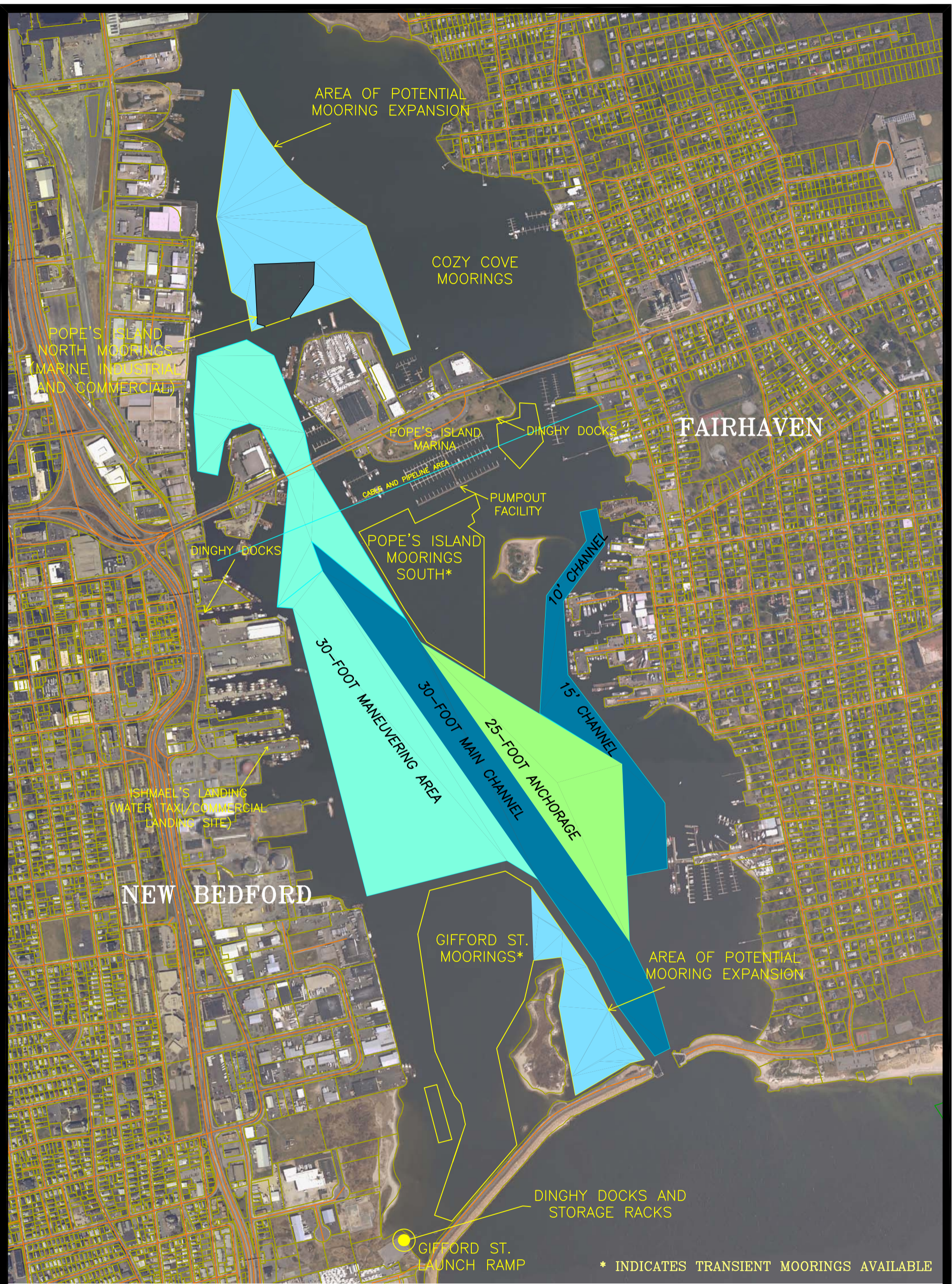
Currently there are 496 mooring locations for assignment through this program in accordance with the “Official Mooring and Anchoring Regulations” adopted by the HDC. Following is a summary of existing and proposed expansion mooring areas, which are identified on Figures 1 and 2:

■ North of Hurricane Barrier (5 Mooring Areas)

Area	Total Moorings	Private / Recreational	Commercial	Marine Industrial	Municipal
Marine Industrial North	4			4	
Pope's Island North	18		4	12	2
Cozy Cove	53	53			
Pope's Island South	96	48	48		
Gifford Street	139	92	33		14

■ South of Hurricane Barrier (5 Mooring Areas)

Area	Total Moorings	Private / Recreational	Commercial	Marine Industrial	Municipal
Frederick Street	24	24			
Aquidneck Street	79	79			
Butler Flats	23	17	6		
W. Rodney French Blvd.	15	15			
Clark's Cove	45	45			
TOTAL MOORINGS	496	373	91	16	16



**FIGURE 1: RECREATIONAL BOATING INFRASTRUCTURE
NEW BEDFORD INNER HARBOR**



FIGURE 2: RECREATIONAL BOATING INFRASTRUCTURE
NEW BEDFORD OUTER HARBOR

● Planned Mooring Infrastructure Improvements:



In the mooring field south of Pope's Island Marina there is considerable demand for moorings as there is currently a waiting list in this area. Issues that have been identified in this area include a lack of adequate swing room for the existing

moorings and clearance to the existing berthing areas at Pope's Island Marina. As such, CLE worked with the HDC and existing mooring permit holders to develop plans for reorganization of this mooring field to maximize the number of vessels while maintaining adequate swing radiuses and clearances. These plans were reviewed at several working group meetings with stakeholders. The implementation of the regrid is planned for June 2010.

Several of the Gifford Street area moorings were removed to allow access for the dredging of the channel to access the boat launch ramp. As a result of the dredging, plans have been developed for reorganization of this mooring field to account for the relocation of moorings from the newly dredged channel and to maximize the number of vessels while maintaining adequate swing radiuses and clearance to existing structures. The mooring regrid for this area was completed in May 2010.

The HDC has applied for US Army Corps of Engineer Permits for authorization of commercial mooring fields within the Gifford Street and Pope's Island North and South mooring areas. Expansion of these fields including an area east of Palmer's Island and north of Pope's Island is presented in these applications. The configuration for the expanded fields is under consideration.

● Implementation Strategy for Mooring Infrastructure Improvements:

Funding for reorganization of Pope's Island mooring field is through the HDC. Gifford Street mooring reorganization is required as a result of the channel dredging and is therefore funded by an existing grant from the Governor's Seaport Council.

The transient moorings to be installed by the HDC in the Gifford Street area are funded through a Boating Infrastructure Grant and are planned for Fiscal Year 2010.

● **Seasonal Mooring Rates Voted by the HDC:**

Moorings \$150 per year

TRANSIENT MOORINGS

● **Current Transient Moorings:**

Two fields of privately operated transient moorings are currently authorized as commercial moorings under the Mooring Rules and Regulations. These fields are located within the Gifford Street mooring area and the Pope's Island South mooring area.

● **Planned Transient Mooring Infrastructure Improvement:**

The HDC is planning to install fourteen (15) transient moorings in the Gifford Street mooring area, specifically the area north and west of Palmer Island. This mooring field will include ten moorings for vessels less than 50' in length and five moorings for vessels between 50 feet and 60 feet in length. These HDC moorings will be designated as "courtesy moorings" for day usage and will be free of charge for transient boaters. The overnight fee (\$35/night) will apply to vessels that chose to use the mooring for overnight stays.

● **Implementation Strategy for Transient Mooring Infrastructure Improvements:**

The HDC was awarded a Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) from the Division of Marine Fisheries to fund a transient mooring field. Engineering is underway and installation of transient moorings is planned for June 2010.

● **Transient Mooring Rates Voted by the HDC:**

Transient Moorings thru HDC \$35 per night

◆ **LAUNCH SERVICES, HARBOR PATROL & WATER TAXI LANDING SITES**

● **Current Launch Services, Harbor Patrol & Water Taxi Landing Sites:**

From Tonneson Park off of Pier 3, Whaling City Launch currently provides launch and water taxi services throughout the inner harbor. The Harbor Development Commission employs harbor agents to patrol the harbor and provide escorts upon request.

Planned Launch Services, Harbor Patrol & Water Taxi Landing Sites:



A floating dock was installed during the summer of 2009 at Leonard's Wharf dock. It is named Ishmael's Landing. This project was funded with HDC Funds. The float system provides a commercial landing site for commercial launch or water taxi services and is conveniently located to service the Waterfront Grill Restaurant and planned Hotel. At Gifford Street, floating docks

were installed during the summer of 2009 and can also be used by water taxis. See Figure 1 for existing landing areas.

Public input has identified an interest in developing a landing site utilizing a floating dock system to provide access for boaters to Fort Taber. Any additional improvements will be based on input from the community and industry and expressed demand for expanded infrastructure.

Commercial Use of HDC Landing Facilities - Rates Voted by HDC:

Daily Rate for Water Taxi / Commercial Use	\$10 per day
Seasonal Pass for Water Taxi / Commercial Use	\$100

BOAT LAUNCHING RAMPS

Current Boat Launching Ramps:

There are currently three (3) public boat launching ramps in New Bedford Harbor:

1. East Rodney French Boulevard Ramp
2. West Rodney French Boulevard Ramp
3. Gifford Street Ramp

Planned Infrastructure Improvements for Boat Launching Ramps:

Reconstruction of all three of the facilities is planned in partnership with the Office of Fishing and Boating Access (OFBA). The HDC is also considering a longer range plan for public amenities including bathroom and shower facilities at the Gifford Street launch ramp site.

Implementation Strategy for Boat Launching Ramps Infrastructure Improvements:



The Public Access Board partnered with the City of New Bedford to conduct engineering of a ramp and float system for East and West Rodney French Boulevard Ramps in Fiscal Year 2008. Engineering and permitting is underway for both facilities. Construction funding for the East and West Rodney French Boulevard Ramps will be provided by the OFBA and is planned for fiscal year 2011 should CAP be made available for the project.

For the Gifford Street Boat Ramp facility, the Office of Fishing and Boating Access has also partnered with the City of New Bedford to conduct engineering of a ramp and float system. The PAB is scheduled proceeded with engineering and design in Fiscal Year 2010. Construction funding is anticipated to be through several sources which include a grant from the Seaport Advisory Council (voted) and the OFBA.

Boat Launching Ramp Rates Voted by the HDC:

In order to develop funding for infrastructure improvements as well as maintenance of this facility, a fee structure was considered for the launching ramps during public meetings held by the HDC. The shared use by Recreational and Commercial users of this infrastructure was assessed based on existing applications, cost of improvements, rates of similar facilities and public input. User fees were addressed as listed below as voted by the HDC.

Recreational Use

Daily Fee	\$7 per vehicle per day
Seasonal Pass	\$55 per vehicle per season
Mooring Parking Pass	\$25 per vehicle per season

Commercial Fishing Use

Daily Fee	\$7 per vehicle per day
Seasonal Pass with Commercial License	\$25 per vehicle per season

Commercial Charter Use

Daily Fee	\$20 per vessel per day
Seasonal Pass	\$150 per vessel per season

“CAR TOP BOAT” AND CREW BOAT INFRASTRUCTURE

Current “Car Top Boat” and Crew Boat Infrastructure:

Kayaks and other watercraft that are easily transported on "car tops" are an important component of recreational boating in New Bedford. The existing boat launch ramps at East French Rodney Boulevard Ramp, West French Rodney Boulevard Ramp and Gifford Street Ramp are also available for launching of "car top boats" and provide access to areas north and south of the Hurricane Barrier. To jump start the launch program for “car top boats”, the HDC is working in partnership with the Seaport Inn to develop recreational boating and is allowing launching at their facility.

Planned Infrastructure Improvements for “Car Top Boat” and Crew Boats:

Working with Community, City, State, and federal partners, plans are underway to develop the Upper Harbor for "top of car" boats and as a Crew Course. Long term infrastructure improvements include dredging, a Boathouse/Waterfront Community Center, pile supported pier and float system for launching are planned for Sawyer St. A comprehensive program plan is being developed separate, but consistent with this plan.

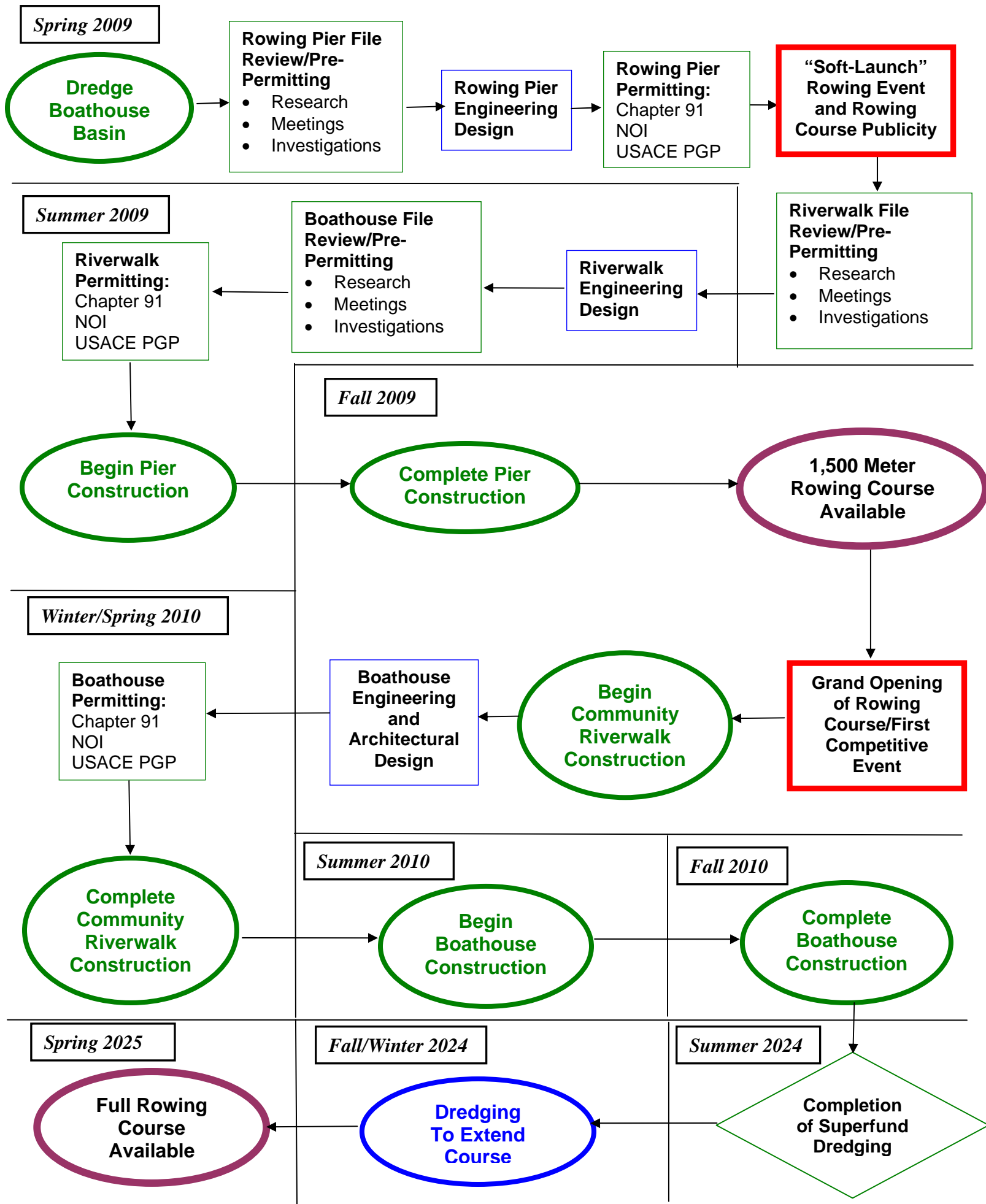
Implementation Strategy for “Car Top Boat” and Crew Boat Infrastructure:

The sequencing and planned schedule for Upper Harbor projects that support “car top” and crew boats is depicted in Figure 3: Flowchart for Upper Harbor Projects. A capital investment has been made thru a Seaport Grant for the dredging completed in the Spring 2009 for this area to support the launching of vessels. The HDC and the City are working with EPA and the Department of Public Health (State and local) to best advocate for and implement the program. Potential funding sources include the Seaport Council, Harbor Trust Funds as well as other grant opportunities.

“Car Top Boat” and Crew Boats Rates Under Consideration:

If appropriate, a fee structure will be determined as the program develops.

FIGURE 3: FLOWCHART FOR UPPER HARBOR PROJECTS



PUMP-OUT FACILITIES

Pump out services are currently available at Pope's Island Marina. HDC recently received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to complete upgrades to the pump-out house at Pope's Island Marina. This is an on-going grant program with annual grant funds to support maintenance. In addition, HDC funds were used to construct and install a float system for pump out service. Pump out service is also available to recreational boaters through Harbor Agents who patrol the harbor on a pump-out vessel and offer services to moored vessels.

HARBOR MARKERS: ENTRANCE, NO- WAKE ZONE AND MOORING MARKERS

Clearly marked channels and harbor areas is essential to support recreational boating. As such, one welcome to the Port marker and fourteen (14) channel and “no wake zone” markers are planned for installation for the safety of recreational and commercial vessels. Two (2) channel markers, or entrance to port markers, would delineate the navigational entrance into the channel path and will include the VHF channel that is monitored by the harbor attendants. “No Wake Zone” markers will also be installed to denote where vessels are required to travel at a slow speed that creates no appreciable wake. Funding for the markers is through the BIG grant that the HDC received from the Division of Marine Fisheries and installation is planned for Fiscal Year 2010.

A Seaport Grant for recreational boating infrastructure will support the procurement of port wide mooring markers that delineate the different categories of moorings using different color markers (Transient, private, commercial, marine industrial). This will assist with safe mooring and navigation throughout the harbor. The mooring balls will include a well for storing mooring pennants when not in use to aid the user in “picking up the line” and improve the useful life of the pennant line. Procurement for the mooring markers is scheduled for June 2010.

GREEN PORT INITIATIVES

One of many considerations related to attracting and maintaining recreational boaters in New Bedford harbor is improving water quality and clean up of debris along the shoreline. As such, New Bedford is continually pursuing Green Port Initiatives and grant funding to support the following:

-  **Stormwater Assessments**
-  **No Discharge Zone**
-  **Evaluation of new technologies for Vessel Pump Out**
-  **Debris Management along shorelines (including Palmer's Island Clean Up)**

OPERATIONS AND MARKETING FOR RECREATIONAL BOATING

Recreational boating in New Bedford is an important component to broaden the City's tourism efforts and showcasing New Bedford to a new audience that can have a direct impact on improving the city's image and potential new investment and development leads. As such, a strategic program to best draw and service recreational boating is in development and is summarized in the following sections.

◆ PROGRAM APPROACH

The three key program elements include waterside logistics, shore side excursions and marketing/outreach.



● Waterfront Logistics

The Harbor Development Commission is the lead agency for the handling the waterfront logistics component of the program. Key responsibilities include:

- First point of contact post outreach
- Assist recreational boaters in preparing their trip
 - ▶ Provide waterside logistical information: Inform potential recreational boaters of moorings and slips available throughout the Harbor as well as harbor side amenities (Dinghy docks; Facilities for showering, laundry, bathrooms
 - ▶ Services to include fuel, ice, etc.); VHF; Port Directory
 - ▶ Connect customers with shore side excursion coordinator
- Meet and greet recreational boaters as they arrive in Port, direct recreational boaters to moorings and/or slips and handout "Welcome to New Bedford Kits"
- Provide appropriate VHF and contact information
- Assist recreational boaters in accessing waterside amenities
- Provide waterside services (pump-out)
- Provide support to shore side excursion program and marketing/outreach personnel
- Prepare marketing material for waterfront logistics (including New Bedford as campaign for recreational boaters)

● Shore Side Excursions

The Tourism Office of the New Bedford Economic Development serves as the primary agency for coordinating shore side excursion activities for recreational boaters. Key responsibilities include:

- First point of contact for shore side excursions
- Organize an itinerary of potential excursions for recreational boaters; prepare a menu of activities that can be marketed to potential recreational boaters
- Coordinate directly with recreational boaters on their desires for their time in New Bedford and assist in planning their activities
- As applicable plan the specific activities opted by the cruiser and ensure all landside excursions components are in place upon arrival of the recreational boaters
- Provide support to waterside excursion program and marketing/outreach personnel; Prepare marketing material for shore side excursions

Response from visiting vessels has been very positive with respect to the “red carpet” treatment that the HDC harbor attendants provide on the water and the support of the Tourism Office for planning shoreside activities. This successful partnership between the HDC and Tourism Office is a key component in continuing to attract recreational boaters.

● Marketing and Outreach

The HDC, in partnership with the Tourism Office of the New Bedford Economic Development Council, markets New Bedford's recreational boating program. Key responsibilities include:

- Keep the feedback loop integrated with city departments, agencies, and vendors
- Reach out to potential boaters via attending boat shows, mailings, and phone calls
- Disseminate marketing and outreach material
- Coordinate pre-cruise days (visits to the Harbor) to encourage recreational boaters to schedule visits and/or cruise events in New Bedford
- Refer interested recreational boaters to the Harbor Development Commission Harbor Agent to coordinate their visit

SUMMARY

CLE Engineering, Inc. has developed the Recreational Boating Plan to assist the New Bedford Harbor Development Commission with outlining a vision for recreational boating in New Bedford. Improved infrastructure, amenities and operations coupled with marketing and outreach will work to attract and serve more recreational boaters and increase opportunities for growth.