

# Port of New Bedford looks to its future

Mayor Jon Mitchell, City officials, and members of the New Bedford Harbor Development Commission today announced the change in the agency's name to the New Bedford Port Authority and released a draft strategic plan for public input.

In recognition of the growing scale and complexity of the Port of New Bedford, and the evolving role of the agency in supporting port's vitality, the HDC voted recently to change its name to the New Bedford Port Authority (NBPA).

Along with the change in name comes expanded roles and responsibilities for the Port Authority, with a particular focus on increasing marine industrial and other commercial activity in the port, in addition to effectively managing the nation's top commercial fishing port.

For much of its history, the Harbor Development Commission has operated in practice as a traditional harbormaster organization similar to those in much smaller ports, primarily to maintain the municipal piers. There is a growing consensus for the agency to expand into a more sophisticated waterfront economic development agency. In response the HDC moved to establish the NBPA, with its mission "to create business and job opportunities in Greater New Bedford by facilitating the growth and diversification of maritime industries in and around the Port of New Bedford, while strengthening the physical, economic and cultural connections between the Port and the City."

The Port Authority's draft strategic plan also released this morning, calls for six major strategies for the Port Authority:

- Provide superior direct services to harbor users, offering services as good as or superior to those offered in other East Coast ports and working collaboratively with public safety agencies to ensure port security and public safety along the waterfront.

- Ensure harbor users have access to useful and well-managed infrastructure, instituting best practices for management and maintenance, and upgrading port infrastructure facilities through planning, development, and securing funding; as well as urging state investment in state-owned resources that support the port, including State Pier and the New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge.

- Promote industry growth and diversification through business development and recruitment, continuing to facilitate communication between maritime businesses in the Port and others with potentially mutual interests, working closely with local, state, and federal economic development agencies, and extending and convening networking across industries in New Bedford, especially among the commercial fishing and offshore wind industries.

- Advocate for state and federal policies that further the interests of Port users, continuing to advocate for fair regulation of the fishing industry, and to advocate for the construction of NOAA's new Northeast Science Center to be constructed in New Bedford to promote better understanding between federal regulators and the commercial fishing industry.

- Promote and market the Port, taking full advantage of the enormous branding potential of New Bedford's status as America's top commercial fishing port by launching and funding a marketing campaign for New Bedford seafood, working with the City's Marketing and Tourism Department to promote New Bedford's recreational boating assets, and facilitating thoughtful supporting uses in the central waterfront; and

coordinating with MassDevelopment and MassCEC to market the international terminals in the Port of New Bedford.

- Employ a business model and manage practices to sustain the mission of the NBPA, continuing to operate consistent with the New Bedford Way, the City's statement of organizational values that emphasizes accountability, integrity, innovation, continuous improvement, teamwork and respect; building sufficient capacity to execute its mission, and working to secure new sources of revenue, and ensure that its service fees are set at competitive levels; and strengthening the NBPA's partnerships with the City and other government agencies to amplify its resources.

A public meeting to solicit input for the draft Plan will be announced shortly.

"A range of economic development opportunities have emerged in recent years alongside the Port of New Bedford's continued dominance in the commercial fishing industry. We want to make sure New Bedford stays #1 in fishing, but we also want to seize these new opportunities so that the port remains the major driver of the regional economy that it is today.

The Mayor added, "The Port of New Bedford represents fully 2% of the entire Massachusetts economy, so we all have a stake in maximizing its contribution to the City and region."

"The name change to the New Bedford Port Authority reflects its new role and is an important step in reinforcing the relevance of our harbor and waterfront, and their significant role in economic development in the city," said Joseph Tavares, a New Bedford Port Authority commissioner.

"When the Harbor Development Commission was created over 60 years ago, our organization had a narrow focus in line with the reality of the port in 1957." said Ed Anthes-Washburn, Executive Director of the New Bedford Port Authority. "This name change signals the broader scope of what we do day to day

that has evolved over the decades. More than just commercial fishing, cargo, recreational boating and ferry operations, we also handle business development, land use planning, policy advocacy, marketing, branding and innovation initiatives. The New Bedford Port Authority moniker reflects the current diverse, dynamic and vibrant port we manage today.”