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### **Historical Background of Manhasset Bay**

#### **Early Settlement to the Early 1900s**

Until the 1600s, the land around the Bay was inhabited by the Matinecock tribe of the Algonquin Indians who used the Bay for fishing and shellfishing. The tribe had a fishing village in what is now the "miracle mile" along Northern Boulevard. At the time, this area, which was known as Sint Sink, was traversed by an old trail that was used for travel from Queens to eastern Suffolk.



**courtesy of the Garvies Point Museum**

In the 1600s, the Dutch and then the English settled around the Bay and made fishing a major industry. The Bay was first called Schout's Bay by the Dutch settlers and then Howe's Bay by the English settlers. Because the early settlers farmed and grazed on the thousands of acres around the Bay, it later came to be called Cow Bay while the Port Washington peninsula was called Cow Neck. In the 1600s and 1700s, patents granted the Town of North Hempstead ownership and underwater rights in the portions of the Bay encompassing the area south of Barkers Point to Toms Point.

In 1895, the Long Island Rail Road began service to Manhasset and with this came an increase in growth and development in the surrounding area. Then in 1907, Manhasset was designated as the Town of North Hempstead seat and about this time the Bay's name was changed again, to Manhasset Bay.

By the early 1900s, the Bay had become known as the "shellfish garden of New York City" because of large areas with clam and oyster beds. However, while fishing and shellfishing continued as important economic activities, the growth and development around the Bay also resulted in a growing commercial and recreational boating industry.

#### **The 1920s to 1940s**

Beginning in the 1920s and up to the 1940s, there was a shift in the economic activities on the Bay from fishing and shellfishing to commercial and recreational boating. The commercial boating activity in the late 1920s was fairly substantial. For example, in 1927, over 700,000 tons of materials and supplies were moved into and out of the Bay. Of this, approximately 80 percent involved outgoing shipments of sand and gravel from Port Washington to New York City in support of massive construction projects there.

The other 20 percent of shipments involved incoming supplies delivered by barges mostly to the Manhasset/Great Neck area of the Bay in support of the growing population and associated development. These incoming supplies included brick, asphalt, lumber, coal, fuel and other construction materials needed to satisfy the rapid growth and development that was taking place along the north shore of Nassau County. These materials were off-loaded in Manhasset and Great Neck and trucked along Northern Boulevard. During this time, other important economic activities on the Bay included recreational boating and yachting at a number of marinas and yacht clubs, as well as the Navy testing PT boats and torpedoes in the Bay just prior to World War II.

### **Post World War II Development**

Following the end of World War II to around 1970, there was even more growth on the two peninsulas, as well as most of the Town of North Hempstead and the rest of Nassau County. During this three-decade period, the Town's population nearly tripled from 83,385 in 1940 to 235,007 in 1970 (LI Almanac, 1998). During this time boating activities increased with the increases in population, but the nature of the boating changed with less commercial and more recreational. This change was in large part due to shift in sand mining activities from Manhasset Bay to the Hempstead Harbor area. One important commercial use of the Bay that continued during this time, was the seaplane flights in and out of the Bay area. Little is known about swimming in the Bay during this time, but it is known that a number of beach clubs, and homeowner associations and yacht clubs provided bathing opportunities to their members. Therefore, this was obviously also an important activity on the Bay.

### **The 1970s to the Present**

After population growth and development peaked around the Bay in the early 1970s, (it decreased 10% between 1970 and 1990) the Bay became one of the busiest embayments in the region with the Bay accounting for approximately 16 percent of all the marinas, boat yards and yacht clubs in the entire Long Island Sound region. Eventually, in 1994, due in large part to this extensive boating activity and associated economic importance, the State of New York designated Port Washington as a historic center of marine activity and Manorhaven as an area for concentrated development in its Coastal Management Program. In addition, the New York State Legislature approved the Historic Centers of Maritime Activity Act which designated Port Washington and 16 other communities on Long Island as a Historic Center of Maritime Activity.

## **Baywalk Park Proposal and Background Information**

### **Description of the property or project being proposed:**

The Port Washington North Bay Walk Park Project consists of 1.7 acres of waterfront property; 1.42 acres owned by the Village of Port Washington North, and .28 acres owned by the Town of North Hempstead. The project area is bordered by Manhasset Bay and Sheets Creek to the west, and a 4 lane county road, Shore Road, to the east. Heading north, it begins at the Dayton Park and ends at the Gulfway Marina.

### **History**

These waterfront properties were once owned by private individuals and companies for commercial use, including a marina, an oil transfer station, and a marine hardware store. Many of these businesses failed to properly maintain their property and its shoreline. Much of the land was neglected. Over the past 4 years, Port Washington North has been aggressively acquiring property worth an estimated \$2,500,000 along its waterfront to preserve and restore its shoreline and its natural beauty and convert it into usable open space and recreational use for the entire community of Port Washington. To date, all the land in the project area is now publicly owned.

### **Goals for Park**

The Village's goal and that of the Town of North Hempstead is to turn this area into an active waterfront park, encouraging walking, jogging, bicycling, rollerblading, nature observation and education, fishing, boating, kayaking, and creating a destination point for a proposed Town of North Hempstead Blueway trail.

### **Park Details**

The project area has 2 piers. The southern pier is owned by the Town of North Hempstead and is in very poor condition. The northern pier is owned by the Village of Port Washington North and is structurally sound, but in need of renovation. The northern pier will be redesigned to be used for fishing, launching and receiving boats, and observing the scenic Manhasset Bay.

We expect the use of this park to be significant once it is built. This park will attract the over 35,000 residents in the Port Washington community, as well as neighboring Villages within the Town of North Hempstead who wish to view the unique vista of this maritime north shore community. We also expect the park to attract the patrons of the shopping center and restaurants across the street from the park. Stop & Shop has agreed to allow cars to park in their lot for those wishing to use the park. Pedestrian traffic will also come from the 250 senior homes being built in the vicinity of the park. The Mill Pond Acres will be completed within a year, and expects to house roughly 400 seniors who will be walking distance from the park.

The only other park in the area is the Town owned Manorhaven Park, located off Manorhaven Blvd. in Manorhaven.

The Bay Walk Park focuses on two important areas: creating an active waterfront park with access for individuals, families, children, the handicapped, and the elderly, and protecting and preserving and protecting its shoreline.

### **Cost and Construction Details**

The total cost of the project is roughly \$2,800,000. It has been broken down into 2 phases.

Phase 1 is the construction of the walkway, restoration of the northern pier, and shoreline stabilization in certain area. It also includes landscaping the area with irrigation, and lighting. The highlight of Phase 1 is the meandering 10' wide walkway that is pushed as far away from Shore Road, and as close to the water, as possible. The walkway will include a "nautical history tour" of Manhasset Bay using artistic inlays, sculptures, and signage to depict the waterfront's rich history.

Phase 2 involves possibly replacing the southern pier, erosion control, installation of a kayak launch, and installing park amenities to create an active waterfront park on the undeveloped old Lewis Oil parcel across from Stop & Shop. Aspects such as building the walkway and stabilizing areas that boarder it go hand in hand. Lighting, for aesthetics and safety concerns must be addressed and coordinated as well.

Once completed, we believe the Bay Walk Park will create a dynamic synergy with the residents and the businesses that lie within our community. Given the proximity of the project to County owned road, Shore Road, we would hope that the County would provide some of the vital funding this projects needs to move forward as a neighboring municipality and valuable stakeholder.

[Click here to download an 8 MB PDF map with the proposed work](#)

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**The Village of Port Washington North**

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