



CAPE COD GUIDE TO TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION



The Association to Preserve Cape Cod is the region's leading nonprofit environmental organization, working for the adoption of laws, policies and programs that protect and enhance Cape Cod's natural resources and quality of life.

A central focus of APCC's efforts is to direct growth to our existing town centers and villages and away from critical natural resource areas. Promotion of compact village centers and protection of natural resource areas is also a primary goal of the Cape Cod Business Roundtable, a group of about 25 civic leaders who meet regularly to address regional issues.

During the past several years APCC and the Roundtable have worked collaboratively to advocate for revitalization of town centers and protection of natural resources. Over the course of our work, we determined that although towns' local comprehensive plans call for compact development and protection of natural resources, the provisions of towns' bylaws often preclude this pattern of land use. As we advocated for bringing zoning bylaws into alliance with local comprehensive plans, we discovered that the public was concerned about density and additional height in villages and that there were multiple impediments to changing zoning bylaws in general.

This publication and its companion, "Overcoming Impediments to Smart Growth on Cape Cod," provide information, insight and guidance for towns and concerned citizens who seek to establish a pattern of development that results in vibrant town centers and protection of natural resources areas. The "Guide to Town Center Revitalization" is largely based on our experiences in several towns on Cape Cod where we have worked with partners to effect zoning changes to promote village revitalization. "Overcoming Impediments to Smart Growth on Cape Cod" is the result of an analysis of the problems related to reforming zoning bylaws.

Funding for these projects was generously provided by the Barnstable County Economic Development Council to APCC on behalf of the Business Roundtable.



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Which of these is a Cape Cod Town Center?



**A. Downtown Hyannis
– revitalization in
region’s hub**

**D. East Harwich –
commercial area in
transition**



**B. Downtown Chatham
– picturesque seaside
village**



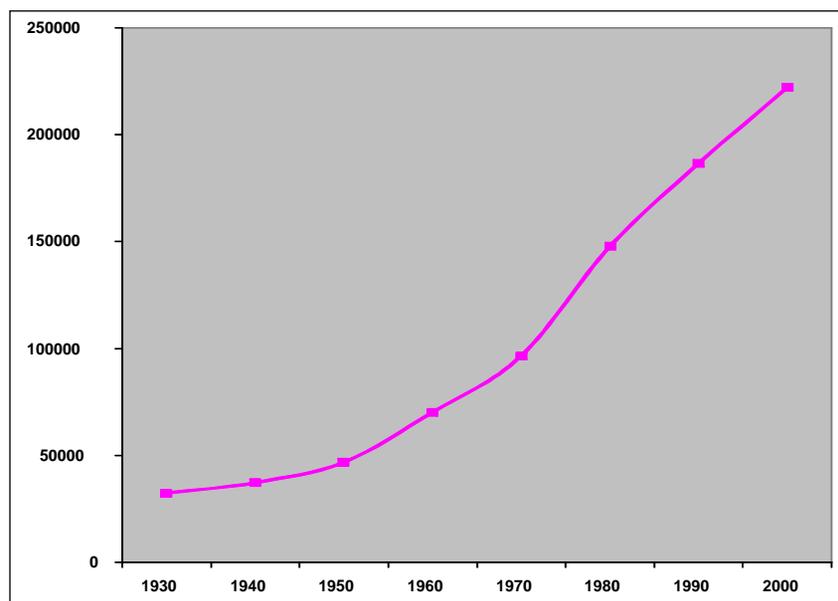
**E. Buzzards Bay
– a potential “new” gateway
to Cape Cod**



**C. Mashpee Commons
– new urbanism vision**

F. All of the above

If you selected “All of the above” you are closest to describing what the term “town center” means on Cape Cod. Beyond the short list provided above, Cape Cod’s town centers vary in size, mix of uses, character, and significance to the local or regional economy. They also vary in terms of their lifecycle of development. For example, fifty years ago downtown Dennisport was a vibrant commercial center, while the area that was to become East Harwich Village Center was undeveloped land located at the crossroads of Routes 137 and 39. Decades of growth in the Cape’s population and economy have dramatically altered these two areas, which now present very different community planning challenges.



Barnstable County's population rose nearly 600% from 1930 to 2000, fueling decades of commercial and residential development on Cape Cod. (Source: US Census)

Many different factors contribute to the vibrancy and character of a town center, but a few elements are central to the success of all town centers.

- **People live there.** First and foremost, town centers are neighborhoods where people live, work and visit. Residents have frequent opportunities for interaction with each other, fostering a sense of neighborliness and community. Residents tend to support nearby shops and businesses, which are easy to access. People living and working in town centers generate daylong activity that enhances street life and contributes to a safe and inviting environment.
- **People can walk from place to place.** Town centers are people-oriented places, with sidewalks, benches, and public places such as cafes and parks. Stores, services and public facilities are located in a relatively compact, definable area. Storefronts are close to one another so that shoppers can accomplish a number of errands without using their cars.
- **Businesses are compatible with local needs.** Markets, pharmacies, hardware stores, drycleaners, and book or video stores are among the types of community-oriented businesses that keep a town center vibrant year-round. Specialty shops, galleries, theatres and restaurants help to draw visitors from beyond the immediate community.
- **There is a reason to go there.** Public buildings, parks and anchor-type stores can be critical to the success of town centers. Libraries, post offices, town halls and community centers provide services that encourage town center activity.
- **There is a sense of place.** A successful town center has an identity or sense of place that is often reinforced by local landmarks, historic buildings, natural features or an architectural style. Getting to the town center, parking, and walking from place to place are easy, safe, and enjoyable.

Despite their uniqueness, each of Cape Cod's town centers presents opportunities to:

- Accommodate new growth that could otherwise choke sensitive resource areas and contribute to sprawl;
- Augment the supply of housing options affordable to Cape Cod's workforce;
- Develop creative and cost effective solutions to wastewater management, and more efficient management of traffic and parking; and
- Create vibrant and attractive economic centers.



The villages of old Cape Cod, such as Chatham above, were densely built places where people lived, worked and purchased goods and services. Many villages featured multi-story, mixed-use buildings.

Revitalizing Cape Cod's Town Centers

Town centers make economic and fiscal sense for communities. Compact development patterns reduce the fiscal costs of building and servicing infrastructure such as roadways, wastewater systems and utilities, as well as the costs associated with delivering services such as police and fire protection. Town centers also create opportunities for greater diversification of the local tax base.

Many communities on Cape Cod recognize that solutions to some of the most costly and complex community problems—curtailing sprawl, protecting natural resources, and meeting needs for wastewater treatment, economically diverse housing and enhanced transit service—can all best be addressed within a vibrant, compact, mixed use development pattern characteristic of a town center. The question for each of these communities is whether local zoning and land use policies are in place to benefit from these opportunities.

The Cape Cod Commission's *Regional Policy Plan* and most towns' Local Comprehensive Plans call for the creation or revitalization of vibrant town centers. However, Cape Cod communities continue to struggle to accomplish this objective. Creating vibrant town centers depends on a number of different factors. While some of these factors are market driven and beyond the scope of local and regional policy, communities do have opportunities to marshal community resources to encourage investment in vibrant town centers.

Communities can articulate a cohesive community vision for their town center; put in place policies, regulations and incentives to implement that vision; and support public and private investments in infrastructure to support desired land uses. The successful blend of these factors will vary for each town center. However, the experiences of several towns demonstrate that successful town center revitalization is often guided by the following planning principles:

- Principle 1:** The town center planning process must be community driven and rooted in a broad-based community vision for the area.
- Principle 2:** Policy decisions that affect regulation and investment should be based on accurate assessments of what could occur if current zoning is left in place, and of market conditions that drive investment.
- Principle 3:** The planning process should encompass not only zoning and land use, but also infrastructure planning and natural resource protection.
- Principle 4:** Public and private investment decisions should be integrated and respective roles and expectations in the revitalization process should be clearly defined.
- Principle 5:** There should be a commitment and clear path to implementing regulatory changes and public-private investment decisions.

Town center planning involves a series of interrelated steps that begins with a statement of the community's vision and an evaluation of the amount and type of new business and residential growth that can be supported in the town center. Zoning follows these first steps and should embody both the vision and an understanding of market trends and opportunities. Zoning should provide specific methods of managing and offsetting impacts generated from town center growth. With zoning in place, public and private investments made over time in land uses, resource protection and infrastructure can fulfill the community vision and market opportunities.

The purpose of this guide is to describe the process of town center planning in a step-by-step format that integrates successful strategies and experiences from several Cape Cod communities. The guide is intended to be a useful resource for citizens, businesses, economic development committees, planning officials, and property owners interested in initiating or participating in a town center planning or revitalization effort.

Each section of the guide describes one of five steps in the continuum of enhancing or revitalizing a town center. The final section of the guide provides case studies from several communities. The sections of the guide are organized as follows:

Step 1: Get Started...

- 1.A** Identify a Community Vision
- 1.B** Design an Interactive and Inclusive Planning Process
- 1.C** Set Preliminary Planning Goals
- 1.D** Define the Study Area

Step 2: Gather Data...

- 2.A** Analyze Current Zoning and Design Guidelines
- 2.B** Undertake a Build-Out Analysis Under Current Zoning
- 2.C** Assess Market Opportunities

Step 3: Discover a Vision...

- 3.A** Define Desired Growth Potential and Preliminary Zoning Concepts
- 3.B** Identify Comparable Offsets

3.C Visualize Zoning Concepts

Step 4: Create the Tools and Incentives....

- 4.A** Create a Town Center Bylaw
- 4.B** Create Design Guidelines and a Process for Design Review
- 4.C** Plan and Prioritize Infrastructure Improvements

Step 5: Coordinate Implementation Actions...

- 5.A** Create Opportunities for Cooperative Marketing and Promotion
- 5.B** Explore Public and Private Resources and Financing Options

Case Studies and Resources...

- Dennisport Village Center
- East Harwich Village Center
- Main Street, Orleans Village Center
- Hyannis Main Street Village Center
- North Falmouth Village Center

Step 1. Get Started

A Note about Community Involvement

- 1.A Identify a Community Vision
- 1.B Design an Interactive and Inclusive Public Planning Process
- 1.C Set Preliminary Planning Goals
- 1.D Define the Study Area



Citizens at a visioning forum listen to a presentation of village center design concepts for the Orleans Main Street Village Center. Following the presentation a facilitator led the audience through a series of questions about what they liked and disliked about the area and compiled responses and ideas into a vision "wish list."

A Note about Community Involvement

Principle 1: The town center planning process must be *community driven* and *rooted in a broad-based community vision* for the area.

This first planning principle lays the cornerstone for any successful community planning effort. It states that the desire to change or alter the existing town center must come from the community. A neighborhood organization concerned about traffic congestion and safety, or a local economic development committee wishing to spur investment in an area are examples of community groups on Cape Cod that have come forward seeking change in their town centers.

This planning principle also states that the community must agree on a broad vision for the future of their town center. Arriving at this vision is an iterative and inclusive process that begins with listing concerns, questions, and desires and ends with general consensus and a conceptual vision to guide future growth in the town center. Consensus on a future vision is rarely easily achieved. Typically, the community visioning process requires many meetings over several months.

The purpose of this section is to highlight some of the elements of a successful community visioning process. An inclusive and well-organized visioning process encourages community ownership of the outcome and sustained involvement in the steps needed to implement the vision. It is important to stress that community involvement begins with the visioning process, but does not end there. Community involvement is the common thread through all five steps outlined in this guide. Information and analysis generated during each of the five steps nurtures and directs community involvement in the development of policies that are responsive to the community's vision.

1.A Identify a Community Vision

A first step in developing a community vision is to convene a public visioning meeting of stakeholders—residents, property owners, business operators, town officials and others—to voice their desires, experiences, questions and suggestions and draw up a “wish list” for the future of the town center. Through subsequent public meetings the wish list can be refined into a broad vision.

Many visioning sessions begin with a presentation of basic information to orient participants to the area and acquaint them with the overall scope of the planning effort. This information can include:

- A map depicting the rough boundary of the town center area;
- A summary of existing conditions within the area; and
- General information about widely accepted “town center” or “Main Street” planning concepts reinforced with visual examples from other communities.

An experienced facilitator and a meeting recorder will help the community achieve consensus on a vision. It is important that meeting participants feel free to put any idea on the table, even if it seems impractical.

The ideas generated during the visioning session should be compiled and presented at a subsequent session to ensure that the developing vision accurately reflects the community's ideas, concerns and suggestions. This process provides the opportunity to raise questions, discuss trade-offs that are apparent in the different ideas, and identify issues that require further study or analysis.

A question that may come up early in the community discussion is the boundary of the town center. Where does it begin and end? Maps depicting boundaries or broad areas at this stage provide helpful orientation, but it is important to note that boundaries may change as discussions go forward.

Community concerns that are often heard at early meetings include highly visible problems, such as traffic congestion, pedestrian safety and building vacancies. A skilled facilitator can incorporate these issues while exploring broader questions of what participants like or dislike most about the area, what types of businesses or public amenities they would like to see, and how much and what type of housing is desired. Different strategies used by facilitators are described in the Orleans and East Harwich case studies found at the end of the guide.



Participants in a vision forum for the East Harwich Village Center acted as citizen planners creating their own ideal version of the center. (Photo courtesy of Bill Galvin, Cape Cod Chronicle)

The goal of the initial community discussion about the town center should be to invest stakeholders in framing the general ideas that will guide the planning process. Information generated through other steps discussed in this guide—such as conducting a build-out analysis or generating computer visualizations to help participants

“picture” their future town center—can assist the community in refining their initial ideas into a community vision.

1.B Design an Interactive and Inclusive Public Planning Process

A visioning process that engages many different stakeholders ensures that a variety of points of view are heard early on, so that different viewpoints that may require more analysis and discussion can be highlighted and addressed. Broad-based public involvement needs to be sustained to build political support for revitalization strategies, whether they involve zoning changes or public investments in infrastructure. An active, broad-based planning process has the added value of media appeal, contributing to a positive “buzz” about revitalization efforts that will contribute to future marketing of the area.

Make it Community Driven

A community-based organization such as a civic association or town committee is often the first to raise awareness of the need for town center planning. Once a planning effort is launched, the group responsible for managing the process can change. On Cape Cod there are several examples where the community group that initiated interest in planning remained involved in shaping and managing the public planning process.

The Dennisport Revitalization Committee was among the first to raise awareness of the need to revitalize Dennisport. Ultimately they worked with the Dennis Economic Development Committee to develop the Dennisport Village Center district bylaw. A group of North Falmouth neighborhood residents alarmed about proposals for upscale condominiums to replace existing buildings spurred interest in revisiting zoning for the area. The East Harwich Community Association convened a vision forum to discuss rapid unplanned growth in the East Harwich commercial area. In each of these cases the community group responsible for initiating interest in town center planning retained a key role as a partner in the planning process.

Identify a Leadership Group

Once underway, a town center planning process needs consistent leadership capable of (1) assembling and analyzing information; (2) framing critical questions and managing communications among the stakeholders; (3) developing consensus on key points and (4) generating the work products that keep the process moving forward. Leadership can come from a town board or committee, citizen group, business association, chamber of commerce or combination of any of the above.

The planning board and town planner lead the Orleans Main Street Village Center visioning process, with input from many community organizations. In Dennis, the local Economic Development Committee (EDC) coordinates development of town center zoning bylaws in concert with the town planner. In East Harwich, the East Harwich Village Center Collaborative, consisting of the town planner and one member each from the East Harwich Community Association, Business Roundtable, Cape Cod Commission and Association to Preserve Cape Cod, is coordinating the process.

While the form and make-up of a leadership group may vary from town to town, the key to successful leadership is objectivity in that one set of interests is not promoted over another; consistency in that the leadership remains in tact from start to finish; and legitimacy in that the leadership is recognized by town officials and other key stakeholders.

Promote Diverse Participation

The initial task of the leadership group is to identify whom to bring into the planning process. The list of stakeholders is likely to include nearby residents, business owners, and property owners who will be directly affected by decisions that alter land use or other regulations. Local officials, who will adopt or implement new regulations, such as planning boards, boards of health, public safety officials or boards of selectmen are also stakeholders. Residents who do not live near the center need to understand how revitalization can benefit the town through increased tax revenues, enhanced housing opportunities, or creation of community amenities.

Longer term, the stakeholders may grow to include regional patrons of the town center who would benefit from knowing how the area might be enhanced, whether it is by a more attractive setting, greater convenience, or a more desirable mix of stores and services.



Interested citizens listen to a presentation on the Dennisport Village Center bylaw at a spaghetti supper sponsored by the Dennis EDC. (Photo courtesy of D. Fortier, Dennis Planning Department)

Different stakeholder groups bring different perspectives to the planning process. Engaging diverse stakeholders early on in the planning process helps to set realistic goals that reflect actual economic and quality of life conditions, rather than assumptions. Otherwise, planning may proceed without consideration or accommodation of issues that may emerge in the broader public debate. Community residents can speak about patronizing and living near the town center and how the area could be enhanced. Business and property owners can raise awareness of economic investment considerations and how they would be affected by local zoning proposals.

It is often difficult to encourage property owners who live outside the community, or business operators busy with managing their operations to attend and participate in visioning meetings. However, it is essential to involve these stakeholders in town center visioning as they may be directly affected by changes in town center zoning.

Early and persistent overtures are critical to engaging property owners and business operators in the visioning process.

Information and perspective from business and property owners supplies a useful litmus test for zoning proposals. A Dennisport property owner provided information about rents and rehabilitation costs that helped to evaluate the feasibility of proposed use and dimensional standards in the draft zoning bylaw. In Orleans, computer-generated visuals of possible zoning changes presented during a community-visioning forum prompted a Main Street property owner to explore similar redevelopment of his property.

Employ a Number of Outreach Strategies

Broad-based community input is needed throughout the planning process to respond to information and provide feedback. Different approaches are generally needed to encourage involvement of diverse stakeholders. The leadership group must develop a number of strategies and settings to accommodate public involvement by different groups at all stages of the planning process.

One-on-one or small group meetings may be preferable for property owners or business operators before they are comfortable participating in public discussions about policies that may affect their investment.

Facilitated citizen planning forums are a good way to bring diverse stakeholders together, generate good ideas, and engender ownership and interest at all stages in the planning process. The forums are also opportunities for media coverage of the process and the issues, which, in turn, helps to inform and attract citizen participation.

Citizen planning forums work best when they have (1) a venue that is comfortable and convenient; (2) a focused agenda designed to engage participants in a dialogue, rather than simply present information; and (3) facilitators able to manage the meeting and record and assess input received. An important value of citizen forums is that they can be convened as needed during the planning process, and help to demonstrate progress toward planning goals.

Written comments may be preferable for residents who shy away from speaking at a public forum, but who would mail or email comments to the leadership group.

Opinion Surveys can provide a snapshot of issues and concerns at the beginning of the planning process. Surveys can be distributed to residents, business owners, property owners or patrons of an area. Professional surveys, such as was undertaken as part of the Market Study for Downtown Hyannis (RKG Associates, Inc.)¹, can provide important information about issues of concern or desires of residents, business owners or other key stakeholders. Alternatively, a questionnaire can be designed, distributed and tabulated by the leadership group or municipality. The town of Orleans undertook a community survey to assist development of their local comprehensive plan that included a number of village center issues. The town of Barnstable annually surveys residents to gauge public opinion on a range of topics related to land use and transportation.

Campaign style outreach strategies are helpful when town meeting or town council action is required, usually in the implementation stage of the planning process. Seeking approval of a zoning bylaw, which requires a 2/3 vote to pass in Massachusetts, can be compared to running a political campaign where the candidate—in this case the bylaw—must have a clearly articulated message, cogent responses to opposing view points, and venues for getting out to the voters. Campaign-style strategies include:

- Mailing or hand delivering informational fliers;
- Making presentations to local committees, civic groups, or key individuals such as property owners;
- Placing displays and brochures at public libraries and stores;
- Writing letters or opinion articles for the local newspaper;
- Developing petitions of support; and
- Participating in or creating special events.

¹ Market Analysis for Hyannis, MA, RKG Associates, Inc., February 2003.

On-going public relations is necessary as most town center planning efforts span several months or even years. It is crucial that public interest and support be cultivated throughout this process. On-going communication to stakeholders concerning public meetings or events, and other milestones in the planning process should be maintained. Effective public relations strategies include:

- Announcements to the media (print, radio, local cable access);
- Posting information on the town website, or creating a special website or internet group where citizens can access information about the planning process, such as reports or PowerPoint presentations;
- Providing information through the local cable access station; and
- Printing and distributing informational materials to condense information about any proposals forthcoming from the planning process, such as its benefits over current conditions, and where changes would apply (generally appropriate prior to major meetings or forums).

1.C Set Preliminary Planning Goals

Planning for a town center should proceed around a clear set of goals that support the emerging community vision. Goals could include improving the visual appeal or cohesiveness of the area; improving traffic and pedestrian safety; altering the mix of businesses; promoting a mix of residential and commercial uses; or allowing for greater density of development, to be offset by density reductions outside the town center. Preliminary goals can be put forward by the leadership group, but should be refined through an inclusive public process.

Most often a planning process will involve multiple goals that require different types of analyses. There are several key questions to consider when developing planning goals.

What is the desired scale of change? For example, a goal to increase overall density in the planning area and offset that new density by preserving outlying areas will require a different and

arguably more extensive type of analysis than a goal to improve the look of building facades or enhance the mix of businesses. Goals also need to be prioritized. While the examples noted above are both worthy planning goals, the emphasis or level or priority placed on either one will influence the extent of planning analysis and the degree of potential zoning changes required.

Are the goals realistic? The community's initial vision wish list should be creative and ambitious. As the vision is refined, it is important to determine if the underlying goals can be reasonably achieved through changes in zoning and investment. As a hypothetical example, a goal to see Route 28 in Yarmouth look more like Route 6A in Yarmouth Port would not be realistic given intrinsic aspects of the roadways and their role in the local and regional economies. However, enhancing the cohesion of existing land uses and strengthening nodes along Route 28, as proposed in the town of Yarmouth's Route 28 Revitalization Study, is an outcome that could be achieved through changes in zoning and investment.

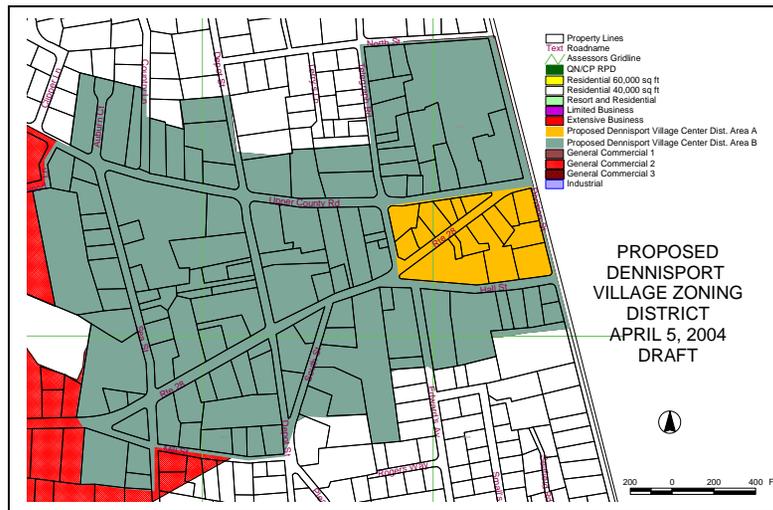
Are the goals complimentary? Different goals in the planning process should reinforce each other. A market study done for the Hyannis Village found that two goals of the revitalization effort—increasing tourism traffic and increasing year round residents downtown—would actually work at cross-purposes. Planners resolved this difference by refining the focus to be developing regional cultural attractions as a draw for seasonal visitors and also as an enhancement for area residents.

1.D Define the Study Area

Having a set of clearly defined planning goals helps to delineate the boundaries of the study area. If the community's goal is to enhance the aesthetic appeal of an area with only limited changes in land uses and density, a smaller, more focused area may make sense. If the community's goal is broader in terms of promoting compact development with offsetting reductions in density outside of the village center, then a larger study area may be needed to provide enough meaningful opportunities for achieving economic revitalization, housing affordability, and comprehensive wastewater

treatment. For example, the East Harwich village center study area includes several hundred acres of undeveloped residential land adjacent to the commercial zoning district. Planning the commercial and residential areas in a comprehensive manner provides greater potential opportunities for density offsets, shared wastewater treatment and open space protection.

Delineation of a core or sub-districts within a planning area is another strategy for dealing with differences in character and function within a larger town or village center, as well as the transitions to surrounding districts. The Hyannis Village zoning districts consist of seven sub-districts differentiated by the dominant residential, commercial or institutional character. The Dennisport bylaw identifies a smaller core area within the overall district in which height allowances are greater, thereby attracting investment to the core area first and focusing height where it would be physically more cohesive.



Dennisport core sub-district (Area A) is where maximum building heights are allowed.

Step 2: Gather Data

2.A Analyze Current Zoning and Design Guidelines

2.B Undertake a Build-out Analysis Under Current Zoning

2.C Assess Market Opportunities



This figure depicts one of the conceptual land use scenarios presented to citizens for the East Harwich Village Center.

2.A Analyze Current Zoning and Design Guidelines

Principle 2: Policy decisions that affect regulation and investment should be based on accurate assessments of growth potential if current zoning is left in place, and of market conditions that drive investment.

The second town center planning principle asserts that town center policy decisions should be based on an assessment of how much and what kind of development could take place under current zoning, and of current and anticipated market conditions that will influence investment decisions. Often residents think that a town center that has not changed recently is already fully developed or “built-out,” when in fact significant additional density would be allowed under current zoning. Build-out and market assessments help the community understand what could reasonably be expected to occur in an area if no zoning changes take place and development occurs under existing local zoning and market conditions.

As the planning process unfolds, it is often found that the outcome of these analyses does not match newly stated community planning goals. For example, the existing bylaw may discourage housing in the town center, or allow an undesirable use, or allow buildings to be set back from the road with parking lots in front when these are the very things community members have indicated they would like to see changed.

For the Orleans Main Street Village Center visioning forum, APCC’s Whitlock Intern created computer-generated visuals of what Main Street buildings could look like with additional stories and if the buildings were located closer to the road. She also demonstrated that the existing zoning code would not allow this type of development. This analysis identified specific provisions of the zoning bylaw that needed to be addressed in the planning process.

2.B Undertake a Build-out Analysis Under Current Zoning

Build-out analysis calculates (1) how much development could occur on any remaining vacant parcels, and (2) the incremental additional development that could occur on parcels where an existing structure is not the maximum size allowed under current zoning. The analysis can also reveal how much additional traffic and wastewater could be generated by development allowed under current regulations.

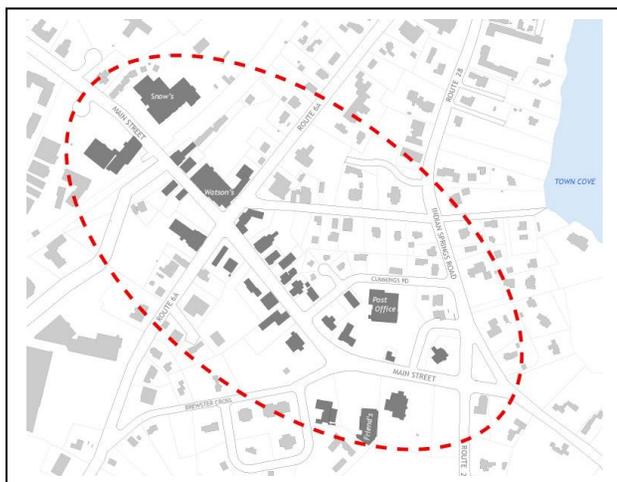
A build-out analysis, especially when depicted visually, dramatically illustrates what could happen if town center planning and zoning revisions do not occur. A build-out analysis also provides an important baseline for assessing future build-out scenarios under different zoning configurations discussed during the planning process.

Calculating build-out requires an understanding of applicable zoning laws governing building dimensions and uses, and the configuration and intensity of use of existing developed buildings. It also requires a set of assumptions about how factors such as parking requirements, wastewater restrictions and expectations of market conditions would affect what could be built under current regulations. A local or regional planning department or design firm familiar with the application of zoning laws usually completes the build-out analysis. The U.S. EPA Green Communities Program has a section called “How to Do a Build-Out Analysis” posted on the program website: www.epa.gov/greenkit/build_out.htm.

Once build-out numbers are known it is possible to calculate potential impacts from that additional development. These impacts include the number of automobile trips and the amount of wastewater that additional development would generate and that would need to be managed. Traffic and wastewater numbers need to be assessed in terms of the capacity of existing infrastructure—current roadway layout and wastewater management facilities—since that is what is currently in place to handle such impacts. However, the calculations also provide a frame of reference for assessing possible modifications to infrastructure, and whether those

modifications could enhance management of traffic and wastewater overall. An example would be a proposal to introduce centralized wastewater treatment in an area currently served by septic systems. In such a case, the additional wastewater resulting from added density supports use of a more efficient and effective technology throughout the town center.

At this stage in the planning process, calculations of impacts based on build-out numbers are rough approximations. More refined analysis of traffic and wastewater impacts are needed once actual zoning concepts are proposed.



A constraints analysis conducted by the Orleans Planning Department demonstrated that significant development potential in the Main Street area would come from infill and redevelopment of underutilized parcels. It also identified parking and wastewater regulations as constraints to full build-out.

Local examples of build-out analyses include the Dennisport Build-out Analysis, West Dennis Comparative Build-out Analysis, Orleans Village Center Constraints Analysis, and East Harwich Village Center Build-out Analysis. Information regarding those analyses is available through the respective town planning departments.

2.C Assess Market Opportunities

Planning and zoning proposals should include an understanding of how the town center contributes to the local or regional marketplace. The amount and type of commercial development allowed in a town center should be related to potential market demand. For example, it wouldn't make sense to create a bylaw that would allow 40,000 square feet of commercial office space if the estimated demand would support only 10,000 square feet. However, zoning should not be purely market driven. A town center should not be zoned to the maximum square footage dictated by consumer demand if that level of build-out would over stress the local infrastructure or diminish community character.

Market Leakage/Surplus Analysis is one of many ways to assess market demand for an area. 'Leakage' from within a market area occurs when consumer purchasing power within the market area exceeds the supply of goods and services provided by existing businesses, sending customers outside the market area to spend those dollars. Conversely, there is a market surplus when the supply of goods and services exceeds purchasing power. Sales and income data are used to quantify consumer leakage or surplus within a market area. This type of analysis can be applied to the market area as a whole and to categories of commercial or retail businesses within the market area, based on averages of sales per square foot in other markets.

Essentially Market Leakage/Surplus Analysis entails looking at the consumer purchasing power within a trade area and figuring out how much of that purchasing power is needed to support a store or mix of stores. Alternatively, it can be used to demonstrate how much of that purchasing power is being captured by the store or stores and how much of it is leaking into different markets. This analysis makes it possible to determine if the market can support a certain type of store, and how big that store should be.¹

¹ *A Successful Main Street: Creating the Right Economic Mix*, a presentation by Peg Barringer, November 2004.

Focus groups and **merchant or consumer surveys** are other strategies for obtaining information regarding perceptions of the strengths, weaknesses and potential opportunities for a town center. Some market studies will include surveys to provide a reality check against analysis of trade area data. An overview of focus group and survey techniques can be found online at the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, Center for Community Economic Development (www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/dma).

A Successful Main Street: Creating the Right Economic Mix

At APCC's 2004 *Designing Cape Cod* conference, downtown market analysis expert, Peg Barringer, (currently with FinePoint Associates, pegsquare@aol.com) outlined key elements of a successful town center:

Mix Matters

The mix of businesses should capitalize on the potential to create synergy among the offerings in downtown - providing shoppers with opportunities to buy many items in one trip and to comparison shop for goods and restaurants.

Build on What You Have

When thinking about desired new businesses, think about what complements the existing business clusters. In other words, who's coming downtown and what else can we sell them? Consider new types of goods and services people would be looking for. New businesses should reflect what the market would support.

Look to Sales Leakages for Opportunity: Evaluate Competition

Sales leakage exists when purchasing power within the trade area is larger than the sales of the district. Determine the types of goods and services that show the greatest leakage and think about what can be done to capture some of that lost share - like adding merchandise lines to existing businesses and recruiting new enterprises with better prices and higher quality. Another way to expand sales is to attract non-resident market segments such as tourists, employees and other visitors.

Use Zoning to Concentrate Commercial Activity and Reinforce Nodes of Activity

Clustering commercial activity to create a critical mass of businesses is needed to sustain a customer base. Close proximity of businesses results in more market support through sharing of customers. Zoning can also help to avoid blank walls and expanses of parking that create dead spots along the street front and help ensure that stores look open for business.

Real Estate Should Fit the Business, Not the Other Way Around

Stores need to be the right size for the business; larger retail space doesn't always mean more sales, just higher cost. Businesses should be located in a town center according to function and foot traffic. First floor locations should be reserved for pedestrian activity generators where they can benefit from walk-in trade and also generate customer support for other businesses. Offices and other non-walk-in trade businesses should be located in upper floors.

Increase the Rooftops to Increase the Market Support

Residential density increases buying power in the area. The closer new housing is to a commercial center the greater the likelihood that new residents will support it. Encourage mixed use with housing in the district. Create a destination that draws customers from outside the trade area.

Step 3. Discover a Vision

3.A Define Desired Growth Potential
and Preliminary Zoning Concepts

3.B Identify Comparable Offsets

3.C Visualize Zoning Concepts



Visual depiction of proposed 42-foot height allowance created for the Dennisport Village Center planning process by APCC's Whitlock Intern. (Visual by Kate Kennen for APCC)

3.A Define Desired Growth Potential and Preliminary Zoning Concepts

Principle 3: The planning process should encompass zoning and land use, but also planning for infrastructure and resource protection.

The third town center planning principle asserts that planning a town center must include assessing infrastructure needs and addressing resource protection. The build-out and market analyses in Step 2 lay the basis for community discussion about how much and what type of new development fits the community vision, the types of new infrastructure that would be needed to support new development and the strategies needed to balance—or offset—the impacts of new town center growth by reducing growth potential in areas outside the town center.

Many communities balk at the idea of added density in their town centers due to concerns about traffic, congestion, and a growing sense of urbanization. Mention of additional development potential evokes images of more of the same type of sprawling commercial growth that characterizes many town centers. However, density, in the sense of closeness or compactness of development, is very much a part of the Cape Cod tradition. Many of the benefits of town center land use stem from a compact development pattern. These benefits include more efficient infrastructure and a vibrant combination of commercial and residential activity that utilizes less land area. Multi-story buildings are typical in most New England villages. From an economic standpoint, height allows more intensive use of land for the individual investor, and the opportunity to attract a more vibrant mix of uses.

The desired growth potential should include an amount and mix of development that can be expected to (1) respond to community planning goals, (2) create an economically vibrant center, and (3) be supportable by existing and reasonable expectations of future infrastructure improvements. Possible zoning changes to promote that desired growth could encompass changes in allowed building heights, setbacks or lot coverage, as well as changes in allowed

uses. (Some specific components of town center zoning bylaws are discussed in detail in Step 4.)

It often requires analysis and discussion of several iterations of possible zoning changes to reach consensus on a targeted amount of development potential and associated impacts that fit within the range of the community vision.

Once preliminary zoning concepts are identified they can be used to project a revised build-out and associated traffic and wastewater impacts, which can then be weighed against build-out and impacts under current zoning.

This comparative analysis provides guidance for identifying whether new growth potential in the town center needs to be offset by reductions in growth potential outside the town center.

3.B Identify Comparable Offsets

Discussions of development potential need to include an assessment of impacts from that development and how they will be managed through infrastructure improvements or offsets. Offsets provide a means of ensuring that targeted development density in a town center does not overwhelm infrastructure, natural resources or community character. Offsets can also guard against sprawl by limiting the amount of commercially zoned land located outside of a town center.

Offsets can take different forms, including:

- ***Additional open space purchases outside of growth centers.*** The town of Dennis used Land Bank funds to purchase the Seaview Playland property, which was included as an offset in the Dennisport Village Center Growth Incentive Zone application to the Cape Cod Commission.
- ***Demolition of existing structures to reclaim open space and open up views and vistas.*** The town of Yarmouth included reclamation of views as a component of the Route 28 Activity Centers Study.

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- **Reduction in commercial development density outside of growth centers through downzoning.** The town of Orleans reduced the intensity of commercial uses along a section of Route 6A between two regional commercial centers, Skaket Corners and the Orleans Marketplace.
- **Transferring development potential from sensitive areas to designated regional growth centers.** Falmouth and Mashpee each have a Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) provision in their zoning bylaw, although application of this policy has been extremely limited. Barnstable and Harwich are other communities looking at TDRs as a possible component of Hyannis and East Harwich village center plans, respectively.



Zoning for compact town centers with offsets helps communities direct growth away from sensitive natural resources.

3.C Visualize Zoning Concepts

For most people it is difficult to translate the language of a zoning bylaw dealing with building height, setbacks or lot coverage into a vision of what an area would look like if these conditions were met.

Today computer-generated realistic visualizations of alternative zoning concepts are available to help stakeholders “see” the type of development that would result from new zoning regulations, and how those changes could alter the character of their town center. These

STEP 3: DISCOVER A VISION

visualizations are a powerful tool that provides a way of testing the visual appeal of different height and setback requirements, and of demonstrating how well the concepts fit with surrounding buildings and the character of the area.

Development of computer-generated visualizations requires specialized training and software. As a result, this technique is not usually available to Planning Departments unless provided by a consultant.

APCC’s 2004 Whitlock Intern, a landscape architect, worked with the Dennis town planner and the Dennis EDC to develop 3-D visualizations of Dennisport as an attractive, walkable, active village center using the actual height and dimensional standards of the proposed bylaw for the new Dennisport Village Center.

All the architectural elements required for a village with New England charm were taken into consideration in the illustrations—proposed setback requirements, roof pitch, traditional building materials, building heights and landscape particulars. Side by side visual comparisons were made of existing conditions in Dennisport and how Dennisport could look with the 35’ two story and 42’ three story building heights allowable under the proposed zoning changes.

In 2005, another APCC Whitlock Intern, an architect, developed realistic visualizations for the town of Orleans to illustrate how changes in zoning could lead to a more pedestrian-friendly downtown. The 2005 intern also developed visualizations for the village of North Falmouth illustrating mixed use.

Examples of visualizations for Dennisport, Orleans and North Falmouth are on the following pages.

Dennisport Village Center

APCC worked with the Dennis town planner and the Economic Development Council to create visuals of three-story structures on existing sites. The visualizations served to allay fears about added height and built support for the local bylaw.



Existing conditions.



Visualization depicting a 42-foot height limit with partial third floor.

(Visuals by Kate Kennen, 2004 APCC Whitlock Intern)

Main Street, Orleans

The Orleans Planning Board convened a community visioning forum featuring a presentation of village center design concepts and an analysis of local zoning developed by APCC's 2005 Whitlock Intern. Visualizations of multi-story mixed-use, which were shown for specific properties, helped to engage local property owners in the planning process.



Existing conditions.



Visualization of two-story building closer to the street.

(Visuals by Juliana Gamble, 2005 APCC Whitlock Intern)

North Falmouth Village Center

A committee of neighborhood residents, with assistance from APCC and APCC's 2005 Whitlock Intern, sponsored neighborhood visioning forums to develop proposed revisions to the town zoning bylaw intended to preserve the character of this historic village center.



Existing conditions.



Visualization depicting possible 2nd floor mixed use development.

(Visuals by Juliana Gamble, 2005 APCC Whitlock Intern)

Step 4: Create the Tools

4.A Create a Town Center Bylaw

4.B Develop Design Guidelines and a Process for Design Review

4.C Plan and Prioritize Infrastructure Improvements



Existing conditions Hyannis Main Street (above)
Visualization showing opportunities for redevelopment (below)
(Visuals by Kate Kennen, Kennen Landscape Architecture,
for *Town of Barnstable*.)

4.A Create a Town Center Bylaw

Principle 4: There should be a commitment and a clear path to implementing regulatory changes and public-private investment decisions.

The fourth planning principle underscores the importance of creating a bylaw that will effect the desired changes in the town center.

Once a community has reached consensus on its vision for a town center, it is time to ensure that the vision is reflected in the town's zoning bylaw. The creation of zoning bylaws or bylaw revisions to implement a town center vision builds on all of the planning analysis and public discussion described in Steps 1 through 3. Once implementing zoning has been drafted, it must undergo extensive public review and discussion, and may be amended during this process.

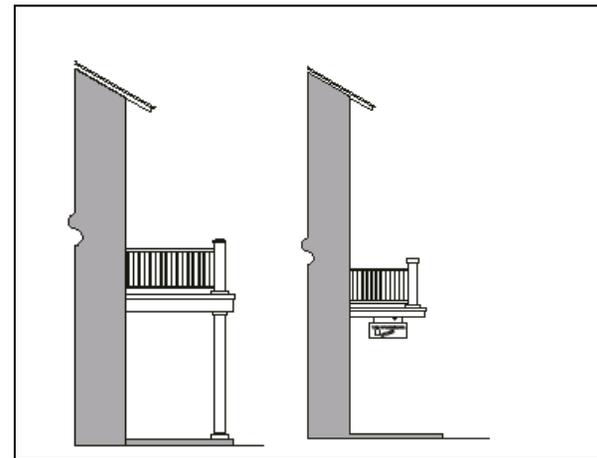
There are a number of different approaches to crafting zoning to implement a community's town center vision:

- Insertion of a village center district bylaw as a new section of the existing bylaw (Hyannis Zoning Districts, Dennisport Village Center District, Falmouth Business Redevelopment District). A new district bylaw replaces pre-existing zoning that may have applied in the area, except where noted in the new bylaw.
- Creation of an overlay district as a new section of the bylaw (Harwich Center and Harwichport Village Center Overlay districts). An overlay district superimposes new requirements beyond those of the underlying, pre-existing zoning.
- Creation of a new district designation (V-C district, GB-1, etc...) that fits into the structure of the existing zoning bylaw (Chatham, Bourne, Orleans).

Any of these approaches can implement new zoning concepts. Selecting the right approach depends on the structure of the local

zoning bylaw and the specific objectives of the town center zoning initiative.¹

The effectiveness of new town center zoning depends on how it addresses key elements of town center building form and land use including dimensional standards such as setbacks, heights and lot coverage; the mix of commercial and residential uses allowed and encouraged; and requirements for pedestrian amenities and treatment of parking and access.



This figure from the Dennisport Village Center bylaw illustrates how open-air balconies may extend beyond the build to line, but not the property line.

Dimensional Standards

Dimensional standards such as setbacks, building height and lot coverage are key to a compact and pedestrian friendly village center. Smaller setbacks move buildings closer to the street or sidewalk and closer to each other, enhancing street life and adding to the pedestrian experience. Increased height allows for a larger amount of development for the given building footprint. Lot coverage controls how much of the site can be utilized by the building and parking, and how much must remain open space.

¹ Village-Style Development Bylaw/Ordinance for Towns in Barnstable County, Massachusetts. Cape Cod Commission Model Bylaws and Regulations Project. November 2002.

The Village-Style Development Bylaw/Ordinance for Towns in Barnstable County, Massachusetts developed by the Cape Cod Commission (www.capecodcommission.org) identifies two main strategies to establish dimensional standards in a town center. One is to relax dimensional standards within the village center to allow greater flexibility. This seems logical given that most town center zoning seeks to encourage more compact development than the pre-existing dimensional standards would allow. The assumption is that by relaxing standards, developers and planning boards would agree to employ smaller setbacks or greater height to enable fuller utilization of lots. In such a case, a planning board can evaluate proposed building dimensions in the context of those of surrounding properties.

The other approach is to stipulate dimensional standards that are based on an analysis of existing or desired dimensional characteristics in the area. Zoning in most Cape Cod towns establishes maximum or minimum standards for heights, setbacks, and lot coverage.

Front yard setbacks or build to lines vary on Cape Cod but most new zoning seeks to reduce setbacks in town centers. Setback standards stipulate how far from a lot line or boundary a building must be located. Build to lines address building placement by requiring that buildings be built up to a certain point, often close to or equal with a property boundary or right of way. For example, the Hyannis Village Business sub-district allows for 0 foot front and side setbacks to encourage buildings to be located close to the street and each other. Bourne also allows a minimum 0 foot setback in its Village Business (V-B) zone. In the core sub-district of the Dennisport Village Center, at least 50% of the front facing building façade must meet a “build to” line located 10 feet from the street right of way. Otherwise buildings in Dennisport can be located 25 feet from the street.

Most town centers contain a combination of newly built or redeveloped structures and pre-existing buildings. Since part of the objective of the front yard setback is to reinforce a street edge that is appealing to pedestrians, determining a setback must take into account the setbacks of existing buildings that are considered

desirable or that are likely to remain a part of the town center fabric for years to come.

Increasingly, towns are seeking to allow greater building height in town centers to support a vibrant mix of uses while utilizing less land. Added stories can help recapture the historic character and architectural detail of an area. Multi-story buildings located close to the street and to each other create opportunities for better architectural design, are more pedestrian friendly, and reduce land consumption. From an economic standpoint, height allows more intensive use of land for the individual investor, and the opportunity to attract a more vibrant mix of uses.

A number of factors need to be carefully weighed in selecting an appropriate building height in a town center, including the size of existing buildings, width of roadways and capacity of existing or planned infrastructure. In most cases, the heights proposed match historic building heights in the village. Setbacks, balconies, colonnades and rooflines are among the design features that can be used to ensure that buildings with added stories retain a human scale and blend with traditional Cape Cod architecture.

In most cases, the maximum height allowed in a bylaw is tied to meeting certain requirements or “performance criteria” that are defined in the zoning. For example, in Dennisport the maximum height applies only to parcels in the core sub-district that are mixed use buildings and provide affordable housing opportunities. The third floor allowed under the bylaw is only a partial floor, and cannot exceed 65% of the floor area immediately below.

Lot coverage refers to the amount of a lot that can be utilized by the building and parking area. In residential zones on Cape Cod, the maximum lot coverage ranges 20%-30%; in town centers lot coverage tends to be much higher, to promote compact development and full utilization of parcels. Lot coverage in town centers, ranges from 60% in the Falmouth Redevelopment District, to 80% in Harwichport, 90% in downtown Chatham and up to 100% in parts of Hyannis Village and the Bourne Village Districts.



This figure from the Dennisport Village Center Bylaw illustrates how building massing must be broken up to maintain a village scale along the streetfront.

Mixed Use Elements

Previous sections of this guide note the importance of the right mix of uses for a successful town center. Zoning bylaws govern the uses allowed in a town center as well as the dimensions of a building. The term “mixed use” is frequently used in a discussion of town centers. Mixed use is most often used to imply that a mix of residential and commercial uses is allowed. It is sometimes used to mean a mix of different types of commercial activities, such as retail and office. In town centers the mix of uses should include businesses, shops, residences, services and public places that attract people during the day and evening. For each town center the exact mix of uses will vary depending on market factors as well as the community’s vision for the area (see Step 3).

A mix of residential and business uses in a town center, even in a single building, offers important economic and community benefits. Businesses benefit from having a base of customers living nearby. A steady stream of residents contributes to a more vibrant and safe atmosphere. Property owners benefit from greater utilization of property and a diversified source of income from one building.

The process of creating town center zoning requires a careful review of uses that are desired. Often the pre-existing zoning is a general business designation allowing many types of businesses. However, some of these may conflict with a pedestrian oriented center. Others may not benefit from, or enhance, pedestrian foot traffic.

Car sales, large appliance sales and service, and wholesale businesses are among the types of businesses that may not enhance activity or benefit from being in a town center. In such cases the bylaw can be amended to discourage or prohibit those uses in the future, while enabling existing businesses to remain as pre-existing non-conforming uses. New or revised zoning can make uses considered compatible with the town center “as of right” or “principle allowed uses.” Uses that are not clearly as compatible and that may require more scrutiny on a case-by-case basis can be required to obtain permission through a special permit.

The right mix of uses will depend on many factors unique to the town center but should be planned to generate pedestrian activity, provide shoppers with opportunities to buy many items in one trip, and create synergies and opportunities for other nearby businesses.

Some town center zoning bylaws provide additional use-related stipulations to enhance the pedestrian experience and overall character of the town center. Hyannis, Dennisport and Bourne town center districts require retail uses on the ground floor along the main street as a way of encouraging foot traffic along the street. Some bylaws, such as the Business Redevelopment District in Falmouth, limit the size of individual retail stores to prevent large box stores and encourage a greater variety of retail shops.

Housing Options

Town centers provide opportunities for a variety of housing types, including town houses, “top of the shop” apartments, “live-work” units, duplexes and small-lot single-family homes. Locating housing units on upper floors, or in multi-unit structures can lower the land costs per residential unit and provide a greater opportunity for housing that is affordable to the average family. The daily number of automobile trips is reduced when people can walk to stores, services and employment opportunities. Residences in and near a town center promote activity throughout the day and week, and provide a ready market of customers for town center businesses.

Housing is a principal allowed use in the Dennisport Village Center, Falmouth Business Redevelopment and five of the seven Hyannis Village zoning districts, although allowed densities vary. By

comparison, apartments incidental to commercial space are allowed by special permit in Harwich Port and downtown Chatham, and multifamily housing is allowed by special permit as part of a mixed use development in Bourne.

The Dennisport bylaw makes the provision of housing a requirement for achieving the maximum density allowed under the new bylaw. The base residential density in the district of one dwelling per 40,000 square feet can only be exceeded if 25% of new units created are deed restricted as affordable units. For every 5,000 square feet beyond a net increase of 2,500 square feet of commercial space, one new dwelling unit is to be created within the district.²

Pedestrian Amenities

Town centers are people-oriented places that were originally designed with pedestrians, not automobiles, in mind. New town center bylaws strengthen requirements for landscaping, sidewalks, and pedestrian connections between and through buildings, parking areas and public spaces, making pedestrian movement safer and more enjoyable. Limiting the number of curb cuts allowed onto busy streets is another way to reduce traffic congestion and enhance pedestrian safety.



Amenities such as porches and seating provide attractive options for pedestrians to enjoy a town center.

Zoning for the Hyannis and Dennisport village centers offer examples of a proactive approach to providing pedestrian amenities. Zoning for

the Hyannis Village districts requires that projects comply with the Downtown Hyannis Design and Infrastructure Plan, which

² For partial units, less than 0.5 of a unit rounds down to the next lower whole number of units and 0.5 of a unit or greater rounds up to the next higher whole number of units.

enumerates a number of façade treatments and design features intended to enhance the visual and pedestrian experience in the district. These include using arcades, pedestrian level display windows, and store entrances to add visual interest, breaking up the massing of larger storefronts, and using internal functions (such as a bank or deli) as a minor storefront in a longer façade.

The Dennisport bylaw requires provisions of “public” areas for all new commercial developments other than the re-use of existing space. Public areas include landscaped greenbelts, sidewalks, patios or courts, and can also include areas for outdoor cafés, all of which increases the street-oriented activity. The bylaw also requires one new pedestrian amenity (e.g., public art, clock tower, water feature, fountain or plaza) per 100,000 square feet of gross floor area.

Access & Parking

Regulation of automobile access and parking is another way to re-enforce a safe and pedestrian-oriented town center. Several town center bylaws limit curb cuts on main roads. Zoning in the Hyannis Village Business sub-district allows a curb cut on Main Street only if it leads to parking for more than twenty-one cars. Dennisport Village Center allows only one curb cut per lot on Route 28.



Public parking in a town center promotes parking to access a number of different shops.

Reduction of onsite parking requirements is built into several town center bylaws. The reduction is possible because the mix of uses, particularly residences near shops

and employment, reduces reliance on automobiles. Shared use parking, including use of off-peak and satellite parking, is strongly encouraged in the Dennisport and Falmouth bylaws; and in the

Hyannis Village zoning districts the overall amount of parking required for a project can be reduced if reliance on shared use parking can be demonstrated.

Town Center Bylaw Checklist

A zoning bylaw should ensure that new growth reinforces compact development and prevents sprawl outside of the town center. When reviewing a proposed bylaw, the answer to each question should be YES!

Are the boundaries of the town center clearly defined?
Do heights allow for the desired density of mixed-use development that is based on an accurate assessment of build-out?

Is there a means of offsetting added density by protecting areas outside the town center from further development?

Do front and sideyard setbacks help to strengthen the street edge and reinforce pedestrian connections between buildings?

Are uses at street level geared toward creating a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented experience?

Is housing allowed on upper floors?

Is parking located in the rear and on the sides of buildings, or does it utilize shared or municipal parking areas?

Are curb cuts onto major streets limited, and shared between differing landowners?

Is the creation of open spaces and public areas encouraged or required?

Are there requirements for ample landscaping?

Are design or architectural guidelines set forth for new construction or redevelopment that promote Cape Cod or New England-style architecture?

4.B Create Design Guidelines and a Process for Design Review

A successful town center has an identity or sense of place that is reinforced by local landmarks, historic buildings, natural features or an architectural style. Building design is an important element in achieving visual cohesion in a town center. National studies have demonstrated a link between attractive, walkable, pedestrian-friendly business districts and improved business activity, higher sales and increased property values.³

Elements of Town Center Design

The site plan lays out the location of structures and parking areas on a property. Setbacks or “build to” lines indicate how a structure relates spatially to the road, and from side and rear lot boundaries. Site design also dictates where parking is located on a property and how vehicles and pedestrians access the property and structures. A site plan also identifies the location of open space, utilities, signs, sidewalks and lighting.

Appropriate site design depends on many factors specific to a property and its surroundings. Common objectives for site design in town centers include:

Locating parking on the street, as well as behind and on the side of buildings, not in front. Encouraging shared parking areas, curb cuts and driveways;

Minimizing front and side yard setbacks so buildings can be located closer together, providing stronger visual and pedestrian connections;

Preserving existing natural and historical features and views; and
Providing for potential future development in the area.

A cohesive architectural style greatly enhances the aesthetic appeal of a town center and improves its efficient use of land. Design

³ Economic Development and Smart Growth – 8 Case Studies on the Connections between Smart Growth and Jobs, Wealth and Quality of Life in Communities. International Economic Development Council. Washington, D.C. August 2006.

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Step 4: Create the Tools

features such as the shape and orientation of buildings, roof style and pitch, materials used, and the pattern of doors and windows all contribute to the character of a village. Many towns are establishing or tightening architectural design standards and instituting design review processes to ensure cohesiveness of design, and to reduce the influence of corporate-driven architecture.

The Dennisport Village and Hyannis Village Zoning District bylaws include certain design specifications in the body of the bylaw. These include standards for roof pitch, façade length, dormers, lighting, awnings, loading areas, landscaping, and ground floor transparency. Both bylaws also include references to separate design guidelines developed in tandem with the bylaws.

Design guidelines can help ensure that roof pitches reflect styles of architecture typically found in New England villages and which add variety and visual interest along the streetfront.



Compliance with the Downtown Hyannis Design and Infrastructure Plan applies to new development and redevelopment, except for single-family houses, within the Hyannis Village Zoning Districts. The plan provides design guidance for developers concerning site design, lighting, signage, and building architecture encompassing massing, design of pedestrian frontages, design of mixed use buildings, details, materials, colors and historic structures. The plan also provides recommended strategies, some of which are codified in regulation, for infrastructure development including wastewater, water supply, storm water, open space, cultural amenities, traffic and parking, and waste disposal.

The Dennisport Village Center Site and Architectural Guidelines address a comparable range of architectural and site design elements as the Hyannis plan. In the Hyannis and Dennisport examples, compliance with design standards set forth in the documents is determined by the respective town planning boards.

Other towns maintain a design review process that is separate from a specific town center bylaw or ordinance. The Orleans Architectural Review Board and Chatham Historic Business District Commission (HBDC) are two examples of town-wide design review. HBDC review applies to visible alteration of commercial projects within most of the commercially zoned areas in town. In Orleans, the Architectural Review Board reviews visible projects requiring a special permit or building permit other than for single or two-family homes or where a superseding review such as the Old Kings Highway District Commission applies.

Important elements of architectural design include:

Building facades (storefronts) and rooflines should be broken up to avoid the effect of an expansive structure;

Building design and materials should relate to the dominant or planned historic architectural theme, and should relate to adjoining or nearby structures;

Setbacks, porches, colonnades, and the placement of building entries can be used to make the pedestrian level experience of a building more appealing;

Landscaping should blend with the dominant or planned streetscape for the area, screen unattractive views, and offer potential for storm water treatment; and

Sidewalks and public spaces should be designed to enhance the enjoyment and convenience of pedestrian connections.

4.C Plan and Prioritize Infrastructure Improvements

Principle 3: The planning process should encompass not only zoning and land use, but also infrastructure planning and resource protection.

Town centers don't change overnight. It can often take several years for a critical mass of public and private investment to occur and lead to noticeable change. Each new development or renovation that is guided by new town center zoning and design criteria adds to the process of revitalization. In some cases, private projects will include elements, such as a sidewalk, lighting, pedestrian amenities, roadway improvements or a wastewater treatment facility that will contribute to revitalization. Because investments can be made over a period of years and involve different parties, it is important to have an overall plan for infrastructure so that individual investments are coordinated and compatible.

Local Comprehensive Plans are required to include analyses and recommendations about a community's long-range land use, growth management and infrastructure needs. However, often these plans address a community's large-scale infrastructure needs, and do not provide sufficient detail to guide public and private investment in town center revitalization.

Growth Incentive Zones (GIZs) are a mechanism for coordinating public and private infrastructure investments within a town's growth management planning. GIZs are nominated by one or more towns and approved by the Cape Cod Commission and County Assembly of Delegates. The GIZ provides towns with a flexible tool for directing growth to town centers where the necessary supporting infrastructure is located or can be more efficiently provided, and offsetting added density by reducing growth outside of those areas.

With an approved GIZ towns can request modification of thresholds and standards for projects that otherwise would qualify for Cape Cod Commission review. This streamlining of the project review process is an incentive intended to attract investment in the GIZ. The

application process for a GIZ requires that communities quantify and identify public and private actions that will ensure that infrastructure is timed to be in place to accommodate new growth.

The Downtown Hyannis Growth Incentive Zone was the first to be approved on Cape Cod. The application provides a detailed district-wide assessment of existing and proposed infrastructure to handle wastewater, water supply, storm water, open space, cultural amenities, and traffic and transit. The application references the Hyannis Design and Infrastructure Plan (DIP), which, as noted above, provides guidelines for developers of individual projects to ensure project investments are consistent and meet required standards.

The GIZ application and the DIP are both available online at the town of Barnstable website, www.town.barnstable.ma.us, Growth Management Department home page. More information on the GIZ is also available on the Cape Cod Commission website, www.capecodcommission.org.

A **District of Critical Planning Concern (DCPC)** is another planning tool available to assist communities in coordinating comprehensive land use and infrastructure planning for a town center. Like the GIZ, a DCPC is nominated by one or more communities and approved by the Cape Cod Commission and County Assembly of Delegates. A key benefit of the DCPC is that it allows for a time-limited moratorium on certain types of development within the district (excluding single family homes) to enable the community time to put in place comprehensive implementing regulations to achieve the community's vision. Implementing regulations could encompass changes in zoning, board of health regulations and conservation commission regulations, among others. DCPCs can be established for natural resource protection, transportation management, economic development, town center revitalization, or historic preservation, among other reasons. Even before a GIZ or DCPC is applied for, communities can coordinate land use and infrastructure planning for a town center.

For example, the East Harwich Village Center planning process includes the development of alternatives for land use and

infrastructure at the same time. Planners have considered provisions for low impact design features such as rain gardens and shared parking facilities, identified areas for centralized wastewater treatment, pedestrian/bicycle ways and new roadways to enable traffic to bypass the busy intersection, and frontage for improved land use (see East Harwich case study).

Centralized wastewater treatment that is adequate to handle compact growth is vital to the success of town centers. Yet most town centers on Cape Cod do not have centralized wastewater treatment in place even as towns embark on comprehensive wastewater planning to address this need, it is not clear whether centralized treatment in town centers will be provided through public or private investment or a combination of both.

Several options for coordination of wastewater planning and infrastructure development are addressed in the report *Enhancing Wastewater Management on Cape Cod: Planning Administrative and Legal Tools*.⁴ The report addresses a range of options for coordinating the development of wastewater infrastructure. The optional strategies range from the creation of a special wastewater management district to develop and manage facilities, to the enactment of a local bylaw that would require private developers to coordinate with the town in developing wastewater capacity that could tie in flow from neighboring areas. The full report is available on the Cape Cod Commission's website, www.capecodcommission.org.

⁴ Prepared for Barnstable County by Wright-Pierce, et al, 2004.

Step 5: Coordinate Implementation Actions

**5.A Create Opportunities for
Cooperative Marketing and Promotion**

**5.B Explore Public and Private
Resources and Financing Options**



*The Hyannis Main Street Business Improvement District (BID) is one of only two BIDs in Massachusetts.
photo courtesy of Hyannis Main Street BID)*

5.A Create Opportunities for Cooperative Marketing and Promotion

Principle 5: There should be a commitment and clear path to implementing regulatory changes and public-private investment decisions.

While some new investment may occur before or soon after new zoning is in place, it can often take several years for a critical mass of public and private investment to lead to noticeable change. During this time, businesses and property owners can work together and independently to maximize opportunities created by revitalization and to coordinate public and private investment decisions.

Cooperative activities such as shared marketing initiatives are often begun, managed and funded by participating businesses. Merchants/business associations, business improvement districts, and economic development industrial corporations are three types of organizations that can assist in promoting town center revitalization. Chambers of commerce also provide an important venue for developing interest in and support for revitalization.

Merchants or business associations provide a mechanism to market the town center as a destination, create advertising efficiencies and cost savings for members, promote activities to attract patrons, and provide a unified voice in addressing policy issues that affect business vitality in the area.

Merchants associations are membership organizations that are usually funded exclusively by private resources such as member dues. They often are entirely volunteer-driven, although a few have staff support. Some operate under the umbrella of the local chamber of commerce, while others are separate entities. They can be incorporated with officers and a board of directors or be structured as a less formal affiliation.

Chatham Merchants Association

is a membership organization under the umbrella of the Chatham Chamber of Commerce. The activities of the CMA are privately funded through membership dues. The CMA organizes two major seasonal events, *Christmas by the Sea* and *Spring Fling*. They also obtain bundle marketing rates in local media outlets. The CMA is volunteer-based and is managed by a ten-member board of directors.

Harwichport Merchants Association

is an informal unincorporated association of village business owners. The main activity is the sponsorship of *Music in the Port*, a weekly festival of street music that attracts significant additional patronage to the center during the summer months.



Economic development industrial corporations (EDIC)

are established under state statute to implement local economic development projects in accordance with locally approved economic development plans. Town meeting or town council must first vote to establish an EDIC. Towns voting to form an EDIC must receive state certification and approval. EDICs can hold and sell property, and

borrow or invest money, or issue bonds. Towns on Cape Cod that have active EDICs include Bourne, Falmouth and Mashpee.

Bourne Financial Development Corporation

is a 501(c)(3) organization established by an act of the Massachusetts' legislature upon a recommendation of Bourne town meeting. The BFDC mission is to promote the common good and general welfare of the town of Bourne and to improve the living standards of its citizens by fostering the improvement and development of employment and educational opportunities. The BFDC is governed by a 15-member board of directors, three appointed by the Bourne Board of Selectmen, the others elected by the BFDC members. The BFDC has a range of powers assigned to it by the legislation, including that of acquiring, holding and disposing of property, receiving donations, borrowing money, issuing bonds, making loans, and cooperating with other organizations, public or private. The BFDC now operates with a part-time executive director. Recently the BFDC hired a firm to conduct a market study, density analysis, and fiscal impact study for Main Street Buzzards Bay.

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a designated geographical area in which property owners initiate, manage and finance supplemental services that include marketing and public relations; maintenance beyond that which is provided by the municipality; capital improvements; public safety enhancements; promotion and special events; and promotion of zoning or ordinance changes. BIDs are established under MGL Chapter 40 O. They are privately financed but towns can contribute resources and in-kind support. Each member of a BID is assessed a fee, and members can opt out of membership. A BID is managed by a board of directors and often has staff support. More information regarding formation of BIDs is available from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, Division of Community Services. The publication "Business Improvement Districts – A Guide to Establishing a BID in Massachusetts" is available online at <http://www.ma.gov/dhcd/publications/bid398.pdf>.

Hyannis Main Street BID

is active in the review of regulatory and government issues, and helped to create the first mixed-use zoning ordinance for downtown Hyannis. The BID also helped leverage significant public funds for capital improvements along Main Street, including new drainage, wider sidewalks, street furniture, street lights as well as design and construction of the "Walkway to the Sea." Business development activities include acquiring funding for a district market analysis, and bringing trolley/shuttle service to Hyannis. The BID is also involved in marketing, events programming, security enhancements, and maintenance and beautification projects. The Hyannis BID currently has a thirteen-member board and a staff of four.



5.B Explore Public and Private Resources and Financing Options

A number of county, state and federal programs provide financial support for planning and redevelopment activities associated with town center revitalization. The applicability of a specific program depends on a number of project-specific factors. A partial list and brief description of these resources follows.

Local Resources*Community Preservation Act (CPA) Funds*

The CPA enables communities to establish a local Community Preservation Fund through a ballot referendum that is dedicated to open space protection, provision of low and moderate income housing, and historic preservation. Revenue for the fund is generated by a local property tax surcharge of up to 3% and a state match of about \$25 million annually to participating communities. For more information contact: town-sponsored Community Preservation Act committee.

LCP Implementation Grants

The Cape Cod Commission awards small grants to towns to assist in implementing approved Local Comprehensive Plans. For more information contact: Cape Cod Commission (www.capecodcommission.org).

State Resources*Tax Increment Financing*

Massachusetts' version of Tax Increment Financing allows municipalities to provide flexible targeted incentives to stimulate job-creating development. The TIF Plan, completed by the municipality, describes proposed public and private investment in the TIF Zone, and is agreed upon by the municipality and all the private owners in the TIF Zone. The municipality and the prospective Certified Project candidate agree to a property tax exemption based on a percentage of the value added through new construction or significant improvement for a period of no less than five and no more than twenty years. The real estate taxes generated by the new increased assessed value are then allocated by the agreed-upon percentage of value added to one or more of three categories. The categories are: exemption from real estate taxes, payment of real estate taxes, and payment of betterment fee in lieu of real estate taxes to finance related infrastructure. For more information contact the Massachusetts Office of Business Development. (www.MA.Gov)

District Improvement Financing (DIF)

The District Improvement Finance Program (DIF) is a public financing alternative available to all cities and towns in the

Commonwealth. The DIF enables municipalities to fund public works, infrastructure and development projects by allocating future incremental tax revenues collected from a predefined district to pay project costs. For more information contact: Massachusetts Office of Business Development. (www.MA.Gov)

Smart Growth Zoning Districts or Chapter 40R

This legislation enables municipalities to establish smart growth zoning districts in which higher density housing production is encouraged as long as it is consistent with smart growth principles. In exchange, communities can obtain state housing incentive payments. For more information contact: Massachusetts Office of Housing and Community Development. (www.Ma.Gov)

Community Development Action Grant (CDAG)

The Community Development Action Grant program (CDAG), funded by the Commonwealth, provides support for publicly owned or managed projects in areas where private investment will not otherwise occur without the CDAG grant. The goal is to stimulate economic development activities that will attract and leverage private investment, create or retain long-term employment and revitalize distressed areas. For more information, contact the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. (www.Ma.Gov)

Public Works Economic Development Program (PWED)

PWED was established to help fund transportation infrastructure that would stimulate economic growth. For more information, contact the Executive Office of Transportation. (www.eot.state.ma.us)

Federal Tax Credits*Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)*

Created by the Tax Reform Act of 1986, the LIHTC program gives state and local LIHTC allocating agencies the equivalent of nearly \$5 billion in annual budget authority to issue tax credits for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental housing targeted to lower-income households.

Historic Preservation Tax Credit

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit program provides federal income tax incentives for the rehabilitation of historic income-producing properties. Under the provisions of the Tax Reform Act of 1986, a 20% tax credit is available for the substantial rehabilitation of commercial, agricultural, industrial, or rental residential buildings that are certified as historic (www.state.il.us/hpa/ps/taxcredit.html).

V. Case Studies

Dennisport Village Center

East Harwich Village Center

Main Street, Orleans Village Center

Hyannis Main Street Village Center

North Falmouth Village Center

Please Note: The following case studies are intended to provide an overview of planning highlights covered in this guide, and are not intended to represent a complete accounting of issues and proceedings associated with any of the planning efforts.

Dennisport Village Center

Leadership:

Town planner and Dennis Economic Development Committee (EDC) (with input from Dennisport Revitalization Committee, Dennis Chamber of Commerce, Dennisport property owners, APCC and Business Roundtable).

Key Issues:

Revitalization of Dennisport as a walkable, living and shopping community was an objective of the town’s local comprehensive plan. Once a thriving village, recent years had seen a downturn in the village economy. Median commercial and residential rents were well below rents in other areas of town. The creation of the Dennisport Village Center bylaw was an opportunity to apply smart growth concepts needed to bring vitality and activity to the area.

Visioning Process:

The bylaw was developed over two years through an open public process led by the EDC, involving town boards, local businesses and property owners, civic groups and design professionals. Extensive technical analyses were undertaken to evaluate many aspects of the proposal. Dimensional and setback requirements were evaluated using state-of-the-art computer aided architectural modeling. Wastewater generation under maximum build-out conditions was calculated, demonstrating that with the existing groundwater conditions, there was ample area in the district to treat all wastewater through traditional septic systems. Features of the bylaw included:

- Allowance for second and partial third stories in a portion of the district to provide opportunities for affordable residences;
- Limits on curb cuts, wider sidewalks, bike racks, and multiple shared parking areas;
- More efficient and environmentally sound wastewater and storm water management; and
- Higher standards for architectural design and use of high quality building materials.

A key issue that surfaced in the public review of the bylaw was the question of building height. Although the proposal sought a modest seven foot increase in only a portion of the village center, some voiced concerns that the increase would allow structures that would be out of character with Cape Cod and the surrounding area. The town planner and EDC worked with APCC’s 2004 Whitlock Intern to create visuals of three story structures on existing sites within the village, which helped to allay concerns about visual impacts and built support for the bylaw.



To promote public awareness during the bylaw’s development, the EDC sponsored an Internet site where drafts of the bylaw, related studies, information and meeting announcements

could be posted and comments submitted. In preparation for town meeting, the EDC and the Dennisport Revitalization Committee co-sponsored a spaghetti supper for area residents and visitors. The supper was free of charge (donated by local businesses) and featured an informational presentation and materials describing the bylaw. Informational fliers about the bylaw were distributed at the Dennisport Post Office and through local businesses.

Lessons Learned:

- The use of realistic visualizations to depict what a proposed partial third floor and reduced setback standards would look like was instrumental in obtaining community support for compact dimensional standards (see pages 17, 20).
- Involvement of a property owner interested in redeveloping his property was very beneficial to the bylaw creation process. It enabled the town planner and APCC Intern to explore the

financial and design implications of different dimensional requirements to test their feasibility in a real life application.

- The EDC utilized a number of creative approaches to educating the community about the bylaw proposal and gaining input, including the spaghetti supper and the Internet chat group.

East Harwich Village Center

Leadership:

East Harwich Village Center Collaborative (consisting of town planning department, East Harwich Community Association (EHCA), Cape Cod Commission, APCC and the Business Roundtable).

Key Issues:

The East Harwich commercial district is undergoing rapid development without the benefit of a plan. The dominant development pattern consists of freestanding, single story commercial structures and multiple curb cuts that do not engender a pedestrian accessible village identity and do not address workforce housing needs. Significant additional development potential exists in the area, which is likely to follow the same growth pattern unless there are changes in regulation, policy and infrastructure.

The commercial area is surrounded on three sides by large tracts of undeveloped land. Planning for these undeveloped lands needs to be coordinated with planning for the commercial district to ensure that the areas complement each other, provide opportunities for compact development with appropriate offsets, and include an effective transition zone to nearby single-family residential areas.

Visioning Process:

Concerned about rapid development and traffic safety and congestion at the fast growing intersection of Routes 39 and 137, the EHCA convened a forum to address the need for a vision and comprehensive plan to guide future land use in the area. The initial forum provided the impetus to form the collaborative and to seek a grant from the Barnstable County Economic Development Council's three year Regional Economic Development Pilot Project. Year 1

grant funds were used to develop a land use and infrastructure vision for the area, which are the focus of implementation efforts in years 2 and 3. Public visioning forums have been very well attended. At the forums, facilitators help citizens identify what they would like to see in the village center. Forums are publicized through direct mailings, posters at local businesses, press releases to local media, email announcements to area property owners, businesses and residents.

At early forums, participants discussed the desired elements of their center, including greater pedestrian access, a variety of unique shops and restaurants, and more open space. At a subsequent forum, alternative land use scenarios depicting different configurations of commercial, residential and mixed-use buildings



and frontage roads were shown to participants. To address continued concerns about growth, additional public workshops were held. In one, participants heard what would happen in the district if the town did nothing to change current zoning, and were presented with

various planning tools and other options for managing growth. Another forum featured detailed visualizations of the district created by APCC's 2007 Whitlock Intern. They showed what the district would look like at build-out under existing zoning, and how it could look if village style zoning was adopted.

The visioning process yielded a list of development principles and land use and infrastructure concepts that will be refined and used as the basis for creating new zoning bylaws, design guidelines and an infrastructure implementation plan.

Lessons Learned:

- A local citizens group, the EHCA, initiated the planning process and retained a strong role in the planning collaborative. This

helps to ensure that community issues are addressed and integrated throughout the planning process.

- The planning collaborative involves local and regional members, which provides a broad range of perspectives and expertise on issues.
- The planning process is comprehensive in that it considers the interplay between land use and infrastructure needed to support the village center. It also encompasses adjacent undeveloped land that may enable use of transfer of development rights or other offset and incentive strategies.

Main Street Village Center, Orleans

Leadership:

Orleans Planning Board and Orleans Planning Department

Key Issues:

Orleans' Main Street Village Center is a central gathering point in the community and plays a role in the daily life of many residents. The area is located around the intersection of Main Street and Route 6A, and is a heavily trafficked area. Route 6A connects the Main Street area with regional shopping destinations approximately one mile in either direction. Residents' concerns about the Main Street area included traffic congestion and safety, insufficient public parking, wastewater impacts, and a lack of affordable housing options.



Visioning Process:

In 2005, the Orleans Planning Board convened a community visioning forum with assistance from APCC and the Business Roundtable. At the forum APCC's 2005 Whitlock Intern presented village center design concepts. She identified a number of areas

where the Orleans bylaw conflicted with compact development standards, and provided computer generated visuals of what specific buildings in the area could look like with added partial stories and smaller front setbacks. The forum succeeded in its objective of drawing helpful input from a range of citizens and area property owners, who expressed support for increased height so long as it was accompanied by stringent design standards and affordable housing. A sample visualization of a multi-story mixed-use development for one village center property helped to encourage one property owner to pursue a similar type of redevelopment.

Following the forum, the Orleans Planning Department developed a detailed constraints analysis to quantify and characterize development potential in the Main Street area. The analysis demonstrated that significant added density could come from infill and redevelopment of existing buildings. It also pointed out that full development potential was limited by parking and septic requirements.

The public visioning process and subsequent constraints analysis helped provide a foundation for zoning amendments approved at the 2007 town meeting that created more opportunity for production of housing units in the village center, including development of a partial third floor.

Lessons Learned:

- The town sought public input prior to drafting zoning amendments, which enabled the town to incorporate the issues of most pressing public concern, such as affordable housing into the process.
- The use of realistic visualizations of town center concepts at an early stage of the planning process helped to inform and engage citizens and property owners in forming a common vision for the area.
- The detailed constraints analysis enabled the community to gain a clear picture of development pressures in the area, and to

review and discuss zoning proposals with an understanding of how they would affect local infrastructure needs.

Hyannis Village Districts

Leadership:

Town of Barnstable Growth Management Department

In developing a vision for the area, the town sought input from the Hyannis Main Street Business Improvement District (BID), Hyannis Area Chamber of Commerce and Hyannis Civic Association, among other local and regional groups.

Key Issues:

Although part of the region's commercial hub, and a major destination for medical services and access to transportation, downtown Hyannis was increasingly characterized by vacant and underutilized buildings. The once vibrant downtown area was being drained of commercial and residential activity, and was challenged to attract investment needed to spark revitalization.

Visioning Process:

In 2002 the town hired RKG Associates to assess market and demographic potential and identify policy changes and infrastructure improvements that would help to revitalize the area. The consultant used an analysis of trends in socioeconomic (population, income, employment, wage), market real estate (supply, demand, values for residential, retail, commercial property) and tax base indicators (assessments, building usage and zoning) to provide the basis for recommendations. The consultant also surveyed property owners, local stakeholders, and merchants. As part of this process, the town developed a working advisory group made up of diverse local and regional representatives to work with consultants



and the town. The consultants' recommendations included: simplifying and consolidating the zoning code for the area, creating design guidelines linked to density bonuses, providing bonus densities for site assemblage, eliminating parking requirements for businesses and creating a municipal parking garage.

Following the study results, the town sponsored a series of public input sessions. The results of the RKG study, work group comments and public input provided the basis for developing proposals for zoning changes and an accompanying design and infrastructure plan. The zoning changes consolidated the downtown into seven zoning districts, each with a distinct function-based character. The design and infrastructure plan provided specifications for site design, building massing and design, as well as standards for water, wastewater, stormwater management and other infrastructure elements.

The town council adopted the zoning and design and infrastructure plan in 2005. Subsequently, the town applied for designation of downtown Hyannis as a Growth Incentive Zone, the first area on Cape Cod to receive this designation. With the GIZ designation, the town was able to reduce the uncertainty associated with investment in downtown Hyannis, which had been identified as a major impediment to investment.

Lessons Learned:

- By conducting the RKG study early in the process, the town had the benefit of a solid understanding of market dynamics and demographic-based consumer needs. It also had an assessment of barriers to revitalization from the consumer, property owner and business owner perspectives. This provided invaluable insight into the reasons for the area's decline, impediments to investment, and the strategies needed to turn things around.
- The exhaustive analysis that led to the development of the zoning and design and infrastructure plan provided a foundation for the rigorous and detailed GIZ application process. Barnstable's depth of planning resources far exceeds that available to most other Cape Cod towns, highlighting the need to

make more technical assistance available in order for towns to take advantage of the GIZ option.

North Falmouth Village Center

Leadership:

Leadership in the planning process is provided by the North Falmouth Village Association consisting of local residents, with technical assistance from APCC.

Key Issues:

North Falmouth, at the crossroads of County Road and Old Main Street, is identified in the Local Comprehensive Plan as a historic village center, yet existing zoning allowed sprawling residential development and a mix of uses incompatible with village centers. North Falmouth residents became alarmed about proposals for upscale condominiums to replace existing buildings. They were concerned about the potential loss of community and historic character, and the loss of convenience of having some neighborhood-serving businesses nearby.

Visioning Process:

Neighborhood residents concerned about traffic safety petitioned the town for a four way stop sign, and then formed a committee to work



with the Planning Board to review existing zoning and propose recommendations to preserve community character. With assistance from APCC and its Whitlock Intern, the committee hosted a visioning forum for residents, during which visuals were used to illustrate different levels of density and mixed uses that could result from existing and newly proposed zoning changes. A historic

village center bylaw was proposed at the 2006 town meeting but failed to pass. Residents hope to bring the issue forward in the future.

Lessons Learned:

- Neighborhood residents initially came together to address traffic safety. As the visioning process unfolded, residents began to see beyond immediate needs, such as traffic signage, to consider larger issues of density, mix of uses, and building height as elements of preserving community character.
- Visualizations provided a powerful tool for understanding what the area would look like if growth continued under existing regulations, and what it would look like under different proposed zoning scenarios.
- An initial bylaw proposal failed at town meeting due to concerns that property owners had not had enough time to review it, underscoring the need for extensive outreach and communication to involve all stakeholders in the development of proposals.

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www.apcc.org

Buzzards Bay Village Association
www.buzzardsbayvillageassociation.org

Bourne Financial Development Corporation
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Hyannis Main Street Business Improvement District
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http://www.epa.gov/greenkit/index.htm

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http://www.smartcommunities.ncat.org/
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