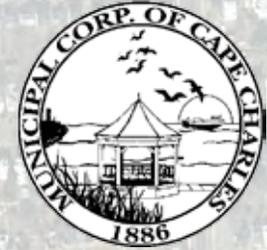


HARBOR AREA CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN + DESIGN GUIDELINES

Town of Cape Charles, Virginia



RENAISSANCE PLANNING GROUP

August 4, 2006

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PURPOSE + INTENT



This report brings together general goals and objectives for the future development of the Cape Charles Harbor Area. It comprises both a Conceptual Master Plan that describes general land use and development objectives, along with a set of Design Guidelines for new development or redevelopment in the area.

The report is organized into two components. The first part – the Conceptual Master Plan – sets out an overall vision and land use and design concept for the area. It is described in terms of an overall Framework Plan and a set of detailed illustrative site plans. The second part – the Design Guidelines – lists a set of design criteria for the form and character of new development in the area. Together, these two components are intended to guide the direction of public and private investments in the area so that they contribute to improving the overall economic vitality, visual character and quality of life in the area. The ideas laid out in this document represent a long term vision for the Harbor Area, one dependent upon market conditions as well as critical public investment.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Conceptual Master Plan and Design Guidelines serve as a tool for use by the Town Council and Planning Commission in guiding the future character of the harbor area. Implementation of the ideas and recommendations of this document can be accomplished through a variety of different options, including:

- Comprehensive Plan – This document could be adopted as an addendum to the comprehensive plan, as a more detailed area plan for the harbor and surroundings. Once adopted as an addendum to the comprehensive plan, it can serve as guide for development proposals as they are received.
- Historic Harbor Overlay District – The Harbor Area may be incorporated within a new historic district overlay by the Town.
- Amendments to Existing Zoning Districts – Existing zoning districts may be amended to reflect the guidelines and recommendations of this document.

These options represent different means of implementing the intent of the Conceptual Master Plan and Design Guidelines in such a manner that would be most effective for ensuring their relevance and continued use into the future. Ultimately, the Town – through review by the Town Council and Planning Commission – will decide on the specific methods for implementing the recommendations in this document. However, any change in the Town's current statutes intended to implement this plan must still go through the full public process as required by State code before it can be put into place.

PUBLIC PROCESS

Both parts of this report are based on an extensive public input and consensus-building process undertaken by the Town to ensure that a variety of issues were considered and that the plans were founded upon a broad spectrum of public support. The meetings and workshops included the following:

- Site tour and discussion with the Town Staff and Planning Commission – January 31, 2006
- Kick-Off Meeting with Town Officials and Stakeholders – January 31, 2006
- Interviews with key landowners and “stakeholder groups” – January – February, 2006
- Public Workshop # 1: “Creating a Vision for the Future of the Cape Charles Harbor Area” – February 28, 2006
- Public Work Session # 2: “A Design Framework for the Cape Charles Harbor Area” – March 28, 2006
- Joint Town Council and Planning Commission Work Session on Conceptual Design – March 29, 2006
- Joint Town Council and Planning Commission Work Session on Draft Future Land Use Plan – May 22, 2006
- Town Council and Planning Commission Presentation on Final Conceptual Master Plan – July 11, 2006

All the meetings – with the exception of the individual stakeholder interviews – were advertised in advance, were open to the public and were well attended. Participants in the workshops worked through a series of mapping and planning exercises to affirm the collective vision for the future of the Harbor Area, and the overall master plan and design guideline drafts were presented to the Town and public, with comments and feedback from the meetings incorporated into the final drafts.

INTRODUCTION

The working waterfront served as the hub of marine activity and transportation in Cape Charles from its beginnings in the 1880’s until well into the second half of the 20th century when transportation changes altered its role as a transportation hub. Recently, many waterfront areas throughout the country have experienced a resurgence of economic activity, centered partly on ventures such as water-related businesses, retail, housing, recreation and tourism. For Cape Charles, new development and redevelopment in the Harbor Area holds the promise of restoring prosperity to the waterfront while maintaining a traditional focus on the history and heritage of the area and its water-dependent industries. This potential for renewed prosperity in the area brings with it a need to ensure that new development on the waterfront is designed in a way that maintains the historic visual character that has given Cape Charles its unique appeal and quality of life.

Old aerial view of the Ferry and Terminal Building

THE HARBOR

Currently, the Town has a working harbor and railroad infrastructure that are valuable economic assets for Cape Charles. Industrial activities at the harbor include Bayshore Concrete Products Corporation and the Bay Coast Railroad. Local watermen also make use of the harbor, and recreational use of the harbor is heavy, especially during summer months. The harbor's economic benefits to the Town include both its current industrial and recreational use, as well as its strong potential to attract future industrial activity and tourists to Cape Charles.

Originally used to serve as an unloading and transshipment point for the railroad, the harbor continues to serve this function today. The harbor has a predominantly "hard edge" on the water side, with extensive bulkhead as well as commercial docking facilities. The Town owns a portion of the harbor and leases 51 boat slips to recreational boaters and commercial watermen. Two public boat launching ramps are also located at the harbor. The harbor is dredged to 18-19 feet, except for a portion at the northeast end, which is dredged to seven feet. The main channel into the harbor is approximately 18 feet deep and 500 feet wide, extending 2.7 miles from the harbor entrance. The channel is well-marked and provides good access to the harbor. Dredging of the harbor is performed periodically by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with spoils deposited at a nearby spoils site.

THE RAILROAD

The Bay Coast Railroad is headquartered in Cape Charles, which serves as the facility and equipment maintenance center for the Railroad. The Railroad runs approximately 3,500 cars per year, and has the capacity for approximately 13,000 loaded cars per year. The Railroad is linked to Norfolk by way of daily ferry operations, with barge capacity for 25 railroad cars. From the Norfolk terminal, the Railroad connects with CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern rail service. From its terminus in Maryland, the Railroad also connects with Norfolk Southern rail service. Rail and shipping connections from Cape Charles could potentially offer links to more than 250 ports and 60 shipping lines around the world.

THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Town of Cape Charles has one of the most unique collections of historic buildings of any town on the Virginia Eastern Shore. The historic core of the Town was designated a National Register Historic District in 1989, in recognition of its large concentration of historic nineteenth and early-twentieth-century residential and commercial architecture. The majority of the original structures built in the community are still standing, with few alterations. A 1980s survey revealed that of 568 buildings, fewer than 40 were less than 50 years old. Many houses in the historic district have been bought and renovated to serve as summer or retirement homes or Bed and Breakfasts. The commercial area on Mason Avenue has experienced renovation and adaptive reuse, as shops, restaurants and hotels are being built to serve the increasing number of tourists who visit Cape Charles and the Shore. The historic district is both a source of pride and a key component of quality of life that can translate into economic development support for the undeveloped areas of the Town, such as the Harbor Area. As the Harbor Area builds out, it is important that new development is sensitive to, and supportive of the rich architectural tradition and small town quality of life in the historic district.



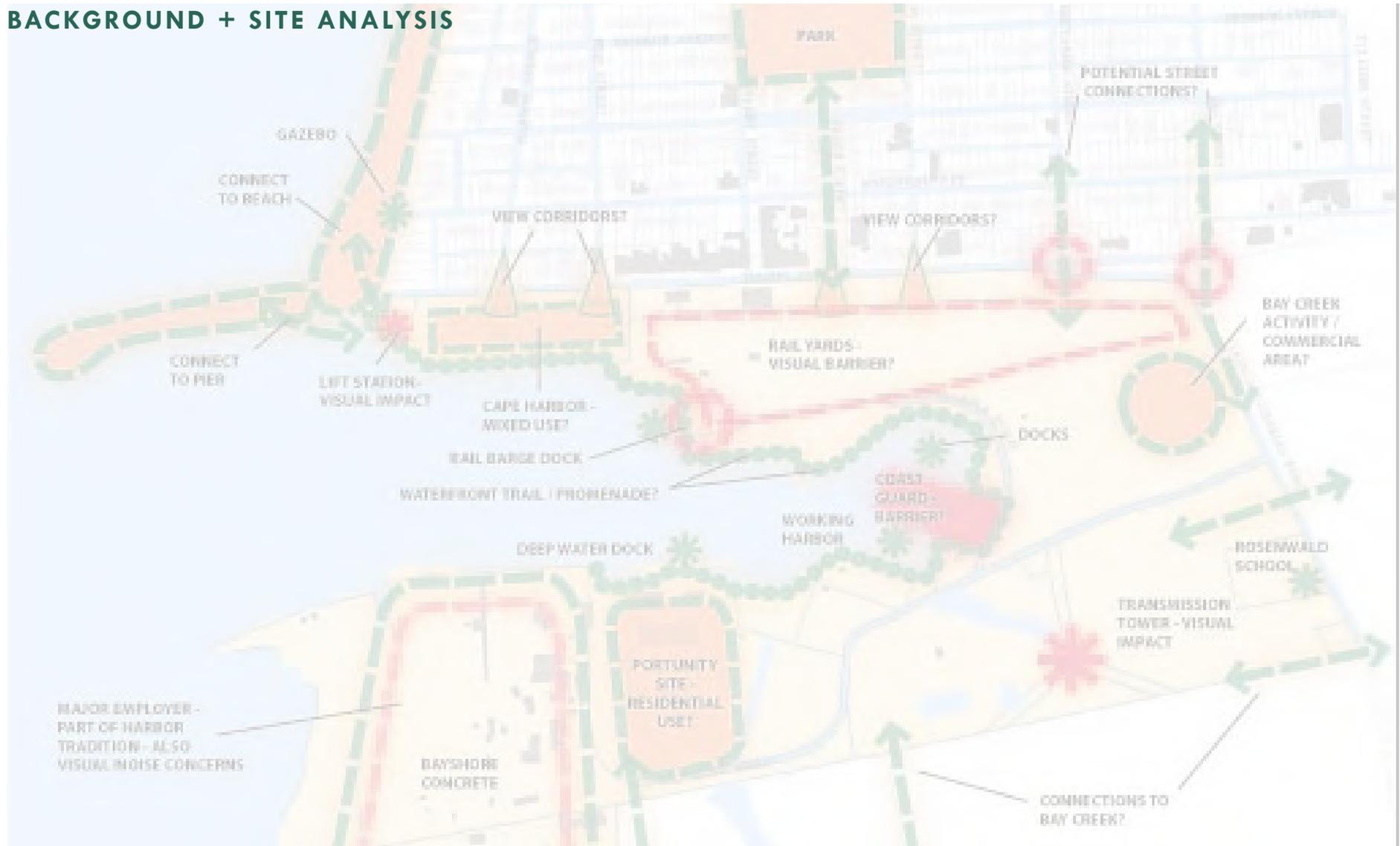
VISION

The vision of the Cape Charles Harbor Area is to provide a vibrant working waterfront that is both a strong economic benefit to the Town with compatible new industry and employment uses, and a strong public and recreational value, with public gathering places and access to the water, a place for people to conduct business and to live, meet, relax, encounter nature, and learn of Cape Charles' working maritime and rail heritage and its strong historic traditions. The vision for future development and revitalization in the Harbor Area is that it is architecturally and visually compatible with the Town's historic built fabric and design character, while still reflecting the best contemporary design and development practices.

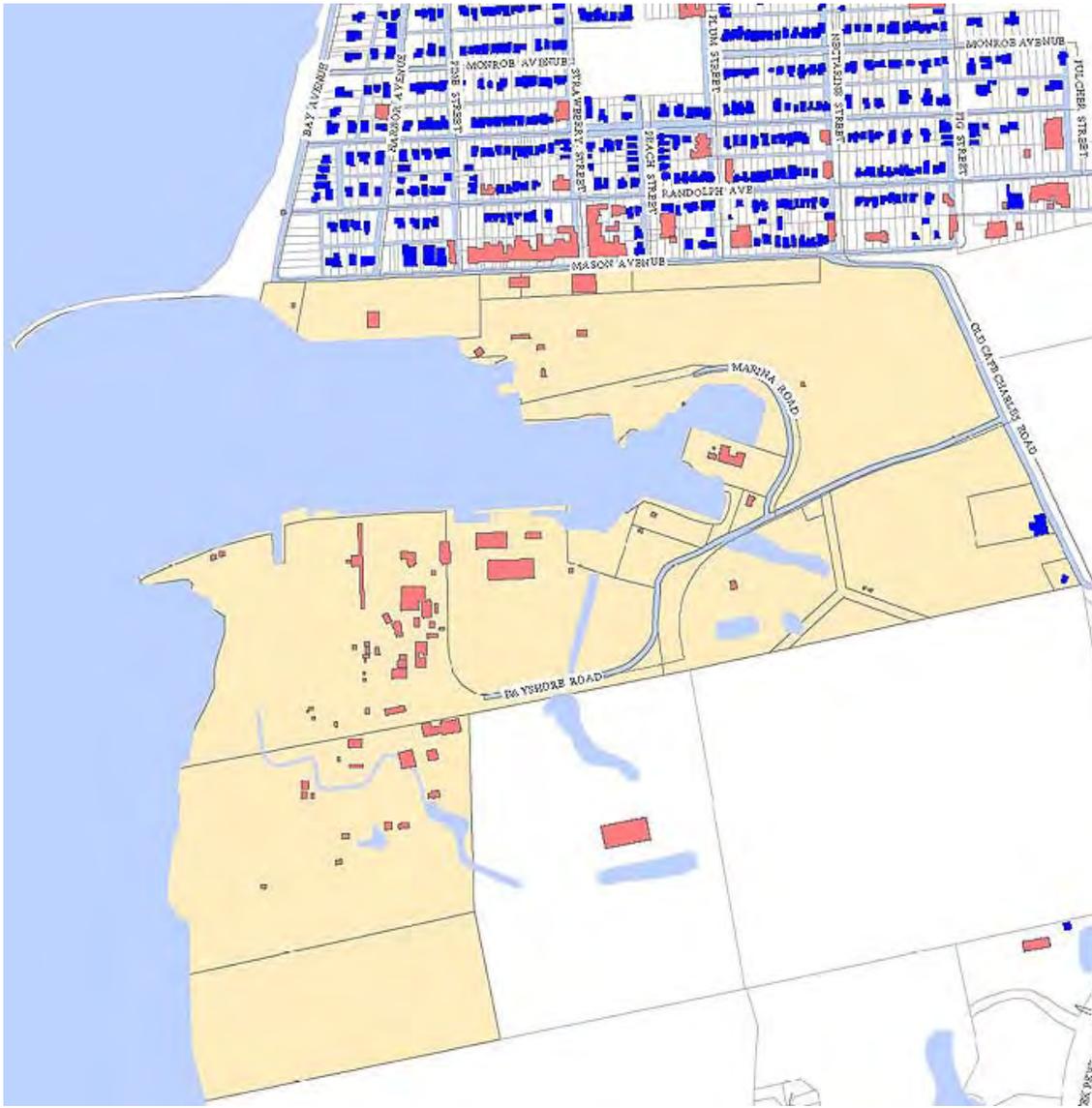


I. CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

BACKGROUND + SITE ANALYSIS

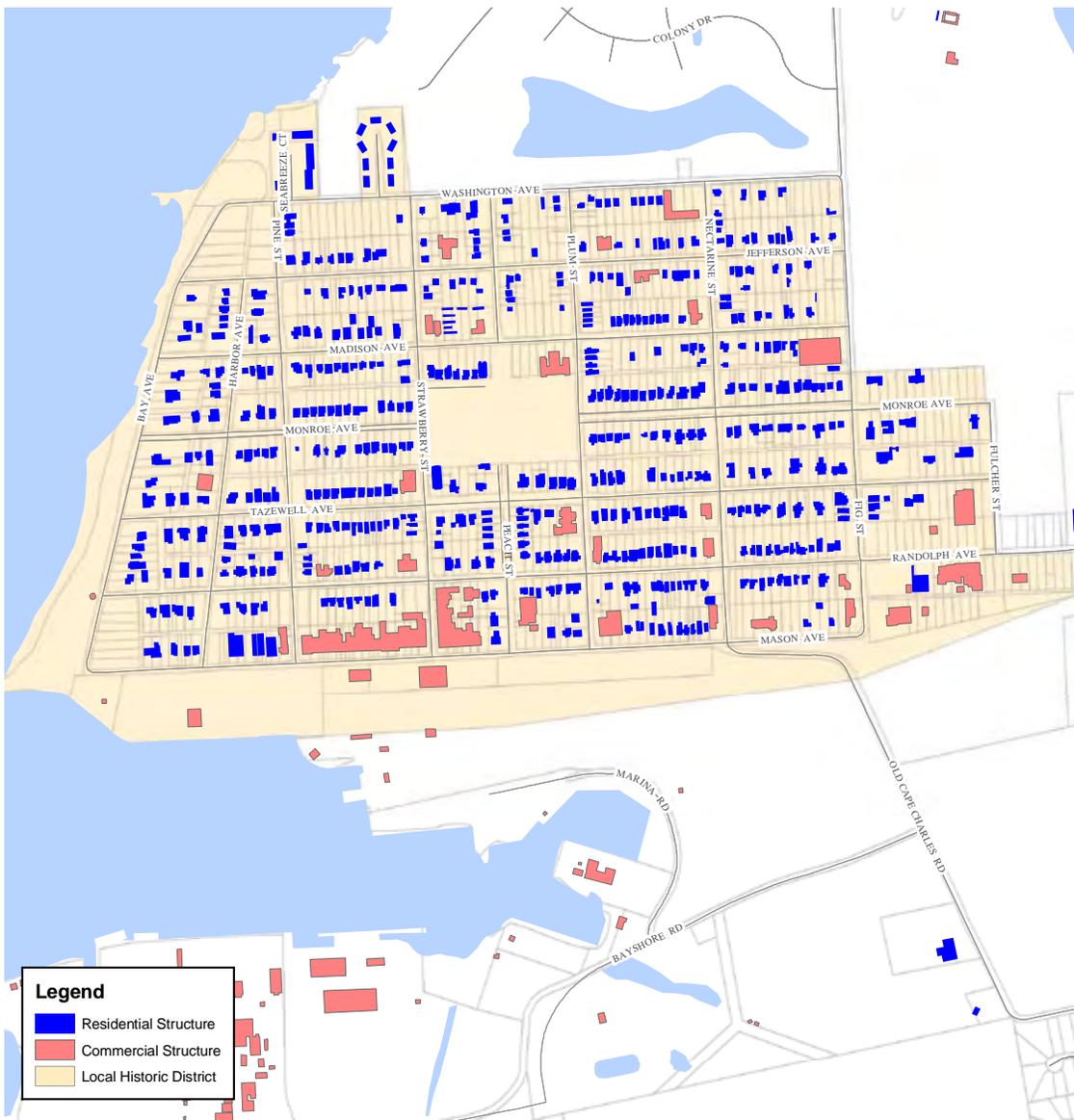


STUDY AREA



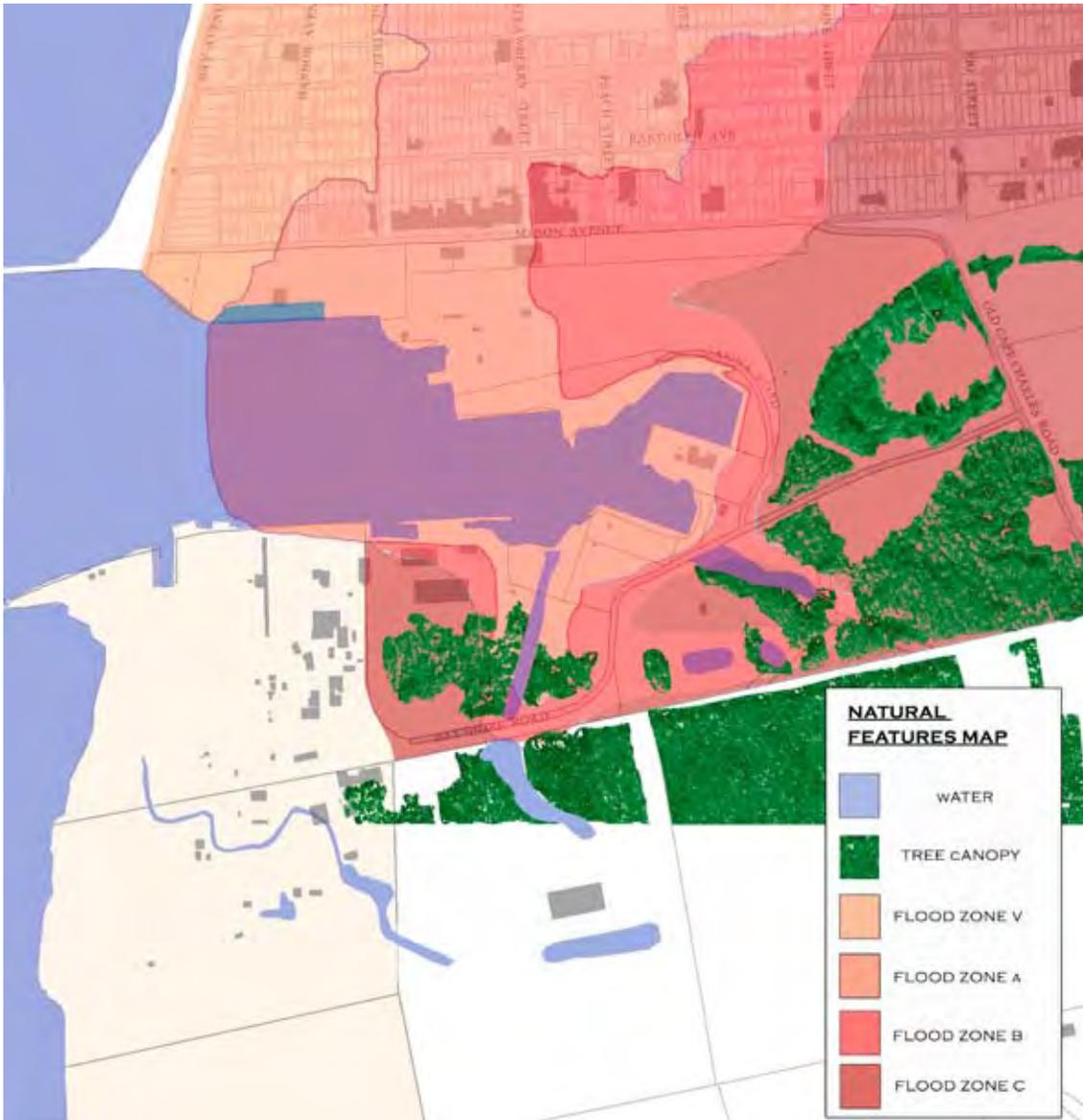
The project study area encompasses the entire harbor area, and stretches from the Town beach, on the north, to the Bay Creek development on the south and east. It also includes the south side of Mason Avenue, the rail yards, and the Coastal Dune Preservation Area.

EXISTING HISTORIC DISTRICT



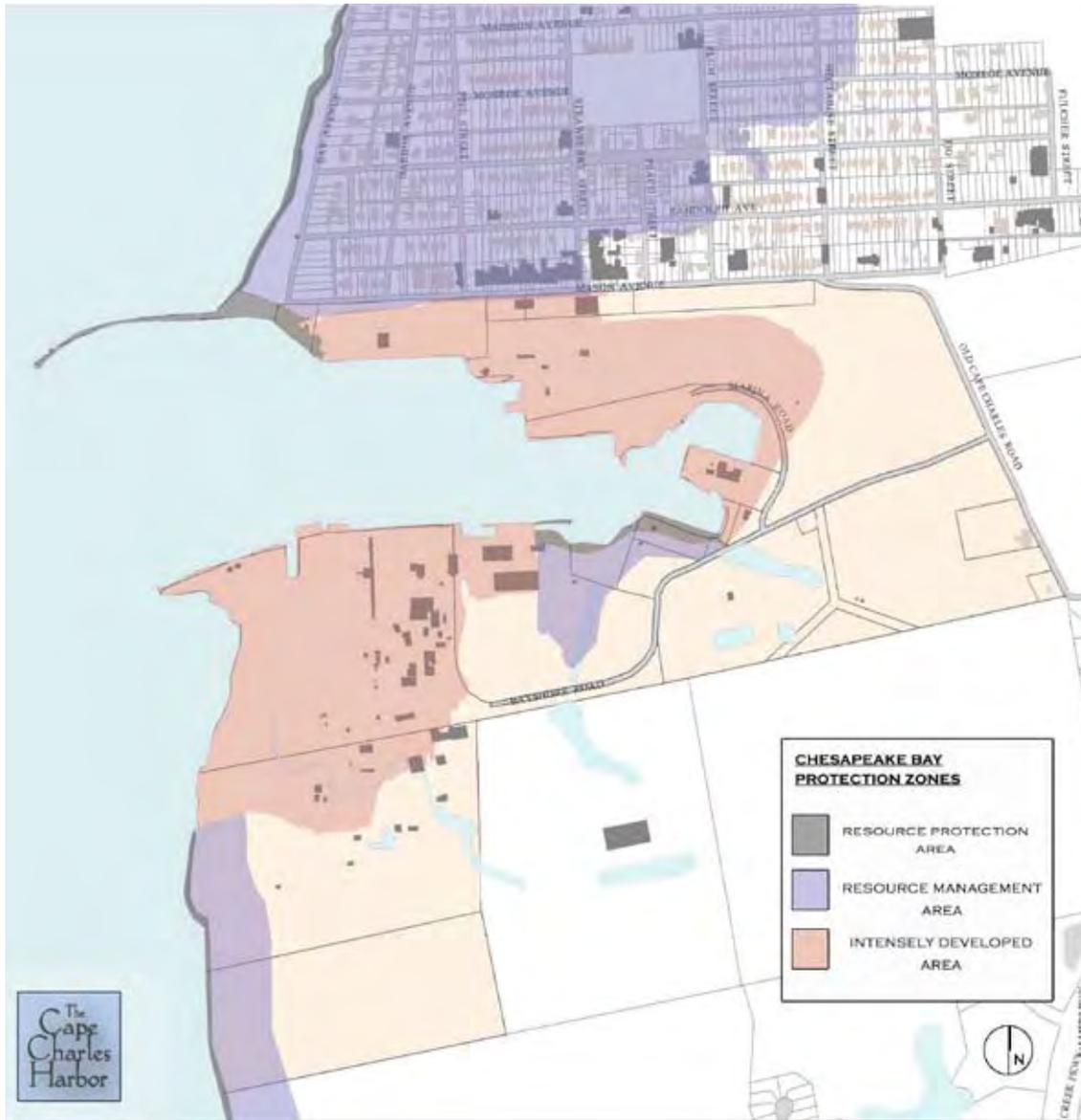
The existing Town Historic District is generally north of the project study area, with the exception that the south side of Mason Avenue is both in the study area and in the existing Historic District.

NATURAL FEATURES



The study area is outside of the “V” or “Velocity” flood zone, although the major portion of the site is within the 100-year flood zone “A” or “B” and measures will need to be taken to ensure that new development has habitable areas raised outside the flood zone. The study area is also partially wooded, primarily in the south and east end, as shown on the Natural Features map.

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROTECTION ZONES



A relatively small portion of the study area is in the most restrictive of the Chesapeake Bay Protection districts – the RPA or “Resource Protection Area”. This includes a portion of the shoreline in the south harbor area. Also around this RPA district is a larger area within the RMA or “Resource Management Area”. By contrast, significant portions of the site are in the IDA or “Intensely Developed Area” zone, which entails reduced or more flexible requirements for development and redevelopment of sites.

TRANSPORTATION



The existing transportation system in the study area is inadequate to serve a significant increase in development on the site. There is only one single vehicular connection between the historic town and the harbor area – the overpass known locally as the “hump.” There is also only one road that serves the majority of the south harbor area and is the primary access to the Bayshore Concrete site as well. There are excellent rail and water connections in the area, but vehicular and pedestrian/non-vehicular connections need to be considerably upgraded.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP



As shown on the Property Ownership map, the Town has significant landholdings in the study area. The Town-owned properties around the Harbor and in the southeast end of the study area will be particularly important in serving as a potential catalyst for adjacent development and setting the overall tone and character of improvements in the harbor area. The remainder of the study area is primarily owned or controlled by relatively few property owners, which will allow more opportunities for a coordinated and compatible development approach for the entire district.

SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS



The project study area, taken as a whole, has a number of clear opportunities and constraints that were highlighted especially by the participants in the work sessions. The following list and summary map reflect a few of the major opportunities and constraints that have been identified by Town officials, citizens and stakeholders in the process:

ASSETS:

- History/Heritage: marine, rail, crater, resort, E. Shore, Rosenwald, etc.
- Maritime: Industrial, commercial, pleasure, fishing, tourism, nature, etc.
- Community: Historic architecture, beach, dark skies, museum, etc.
- Commercial: Exist. Businesses, shopping, resort, tourism, harbor, marina

PROBLEMS

- Visual attractiveness
- Rail yard as barrier
- Parking, taxes
- Need for “economic engine”

VISION IDEAS:

- Transportation: cruise line, water taxi, rail trolley, pedestrian/bike/golf cart walkways, etc.
- Marine Enhancements: breakwaters, boat slips, boater services, harbormaster house, etc.
- Public Amenities: park/plaza, waterfront promenade, observation tower, museum, playground, recreational amenities, parking
- New Development: waterfront market, shops, waterfront residential, new employment uses

CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

The following plan elements are derived from the previous analysis of the issues and conditions in the project study area, as well as the overall input from town officials, property owners and citizens on the future vision for the Harbor area.



CIRCULATION PLAN



The design concept for circulation within the Harbor area incorporates three basic principles:

1. The continuation of the historic “grid” pattern of streets and blocks into the Harbor area as a basic organizing element for circulation.
2. Maximizing connectivity between the Harbor area, the historic portion of town and adjacent areas in the Town.
3. Integrating multiple modes of transportation in the area, including auto, rail, water, pedestrian and bicycle/recreational vehicles.

The following diagram shows the basic intent of creating an integrated grid of transportation that retains the basic structure and scale of the historic street grid on which the Town was originally founded.

OPEN SPACE NETWORK



A primary organizing element for the master plan for the Harbor area is the overall concept of a “network” of open and public spaces. The basic principles for public and open spaces in the Harbor area are:

1. Connecting the waterfront with a public walkway or “promenade” that allows pedestrians to circulate freely at, or immediately adjacent to, the water’s edge and enjoy the views, activity and vitality of the waterfront experience.
2. Connecting the Harbor’s open space network with the historic Town’s primary open spaces and open space networks, including the Town Park and Town Beach and Pier.
3. Using the existing drainage ways in the southern portion of the Harbor area as connectors to the existing Coastal Dune Preservation Area, and a new potential civic open space in the Town-owned land at the southeast corner of the study area. These drainage ways can be enhanced in a number of ways, ranging from a naturalistic restoration of the original habitat, to a more urban canal or water feature/amenity.

The following diagram shows the basic concept of an interconnected public open space network to link the primary open spaces in and around the Harbor area.

LAND USE PLAN



The Land Use Plan is overlaid on top of the basic circulation and open space networks developed above. The general locations and types of land uses reflect the vision for the area as a mixed-use district that incorporates residential, employment, Industrial and transportation uses, with a working waterfront and public amenities.

The diagram below shows the general disposition of land uses in the area. The location of land use elements also took into account the pattern of ownership in the area, as well as the discussions with property owners in the area for development intentions on their properties.

The primary uses anticipated in the Harbor area include:

- Main Street Mixed Use
- Rail Yard
- Employment Mixed Use
- Residential Mixed Use
- Employment
- Industrial
- Civic
- Working Waterfront
- Public Utilities
- Nature Area

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list or a definitive prescription of permitted uses in the area, as would be found in a zoning ordinance. Moreover, the uses are not described definitively in this document. The intent is to provide a general guide, with ultimate flexibility to respond to opportunities for new development in the area that are consistent with the overall design concept and vision, and compatible with the design guidelines described in this document.

COMBINED FRAMEWORK PLAN AND CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



The following “Framework Plan” is a combination of the circulation, open space and land use elements into an overall design concept or framework for the study area. This plan is a summary of the primary design and land use ideas for the Harbor area.

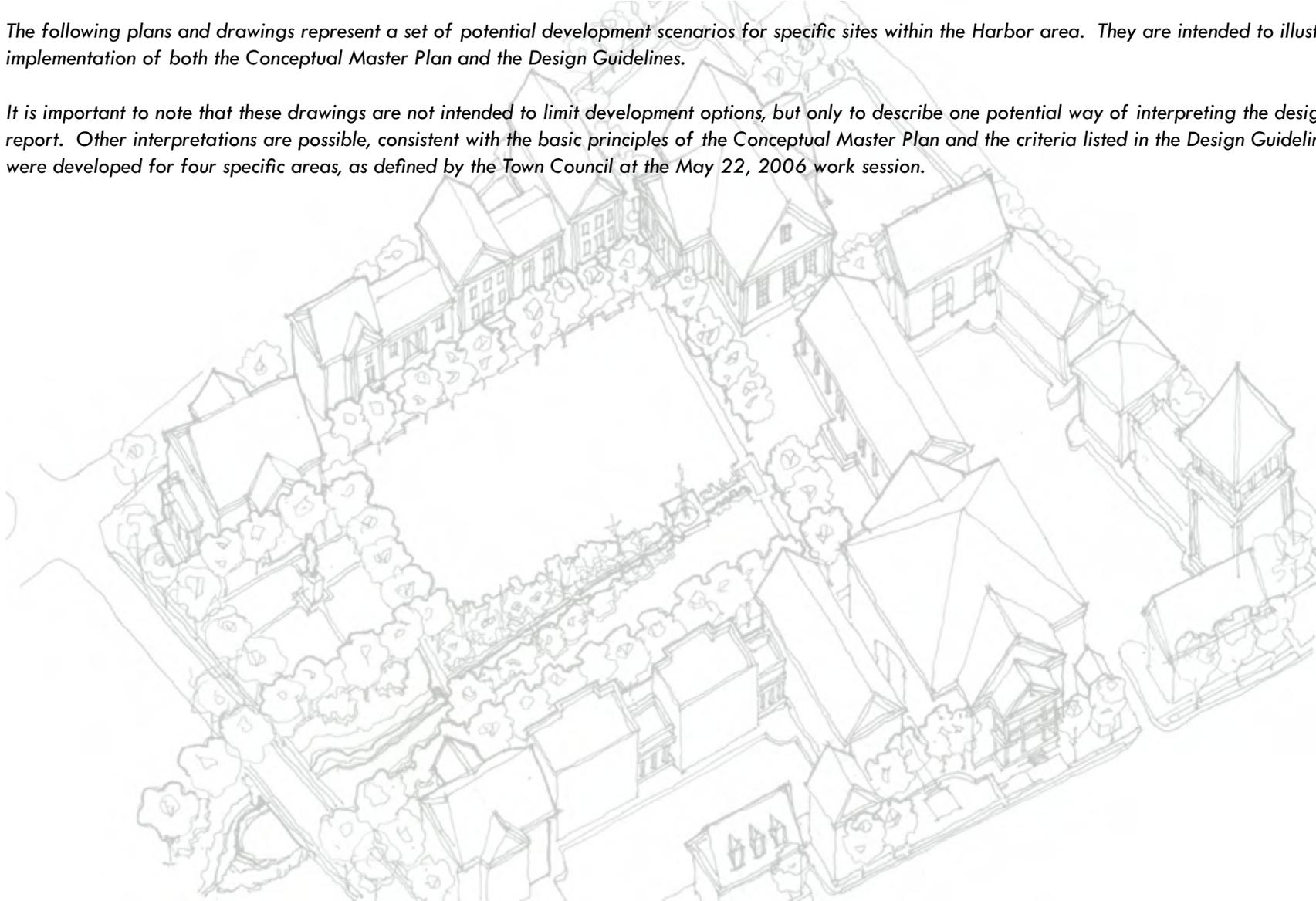
Also, it is the basis for the Conceptual Master Plan, also shown below. The Conceptual Master Plan is more specific and detailed in nature. It shows potential road alignments and improvements in various portions of the study area. However, it should be emphasized that this plan is still conceptual in nature and the ultimate disposition of improvements in any given site may vary somewhat from what is shown on the Master Plan. The reason for showing both the Framework Plan and Conceptual Master Plan is to underscore the basic design principles – for circulation, open space and land use – that are the foundation for the overall master plan described in this report. The plans should be taken together as a more general and more specific (but flexible) expression of the vision for the Harbor area.



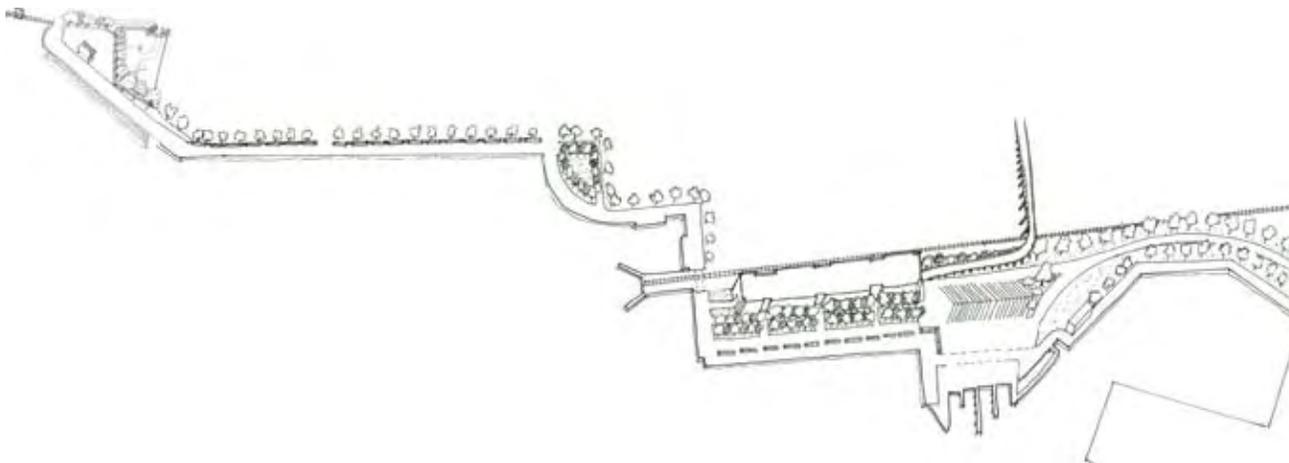
ILLUSTRATIVE SITE PLANS

The following plans and drawings represent a set of potential development scenarios for specific sites within the Harbor area. They are intended to illustrate possible implementation of both the Conceptual Master Plan and the Design Guidelines.

It is important to note that these drawings are not intended to limit development options, but only to describe one potential way of interpreting the design principles in this report. Other interpretations are possible, consistent with the basic principles of the Conceptual Master Plan and the criteria listed in the Design Guidelines. The site plans were developed for four specific areas, as defined by the Town Council at the May 22, 2006 work session.



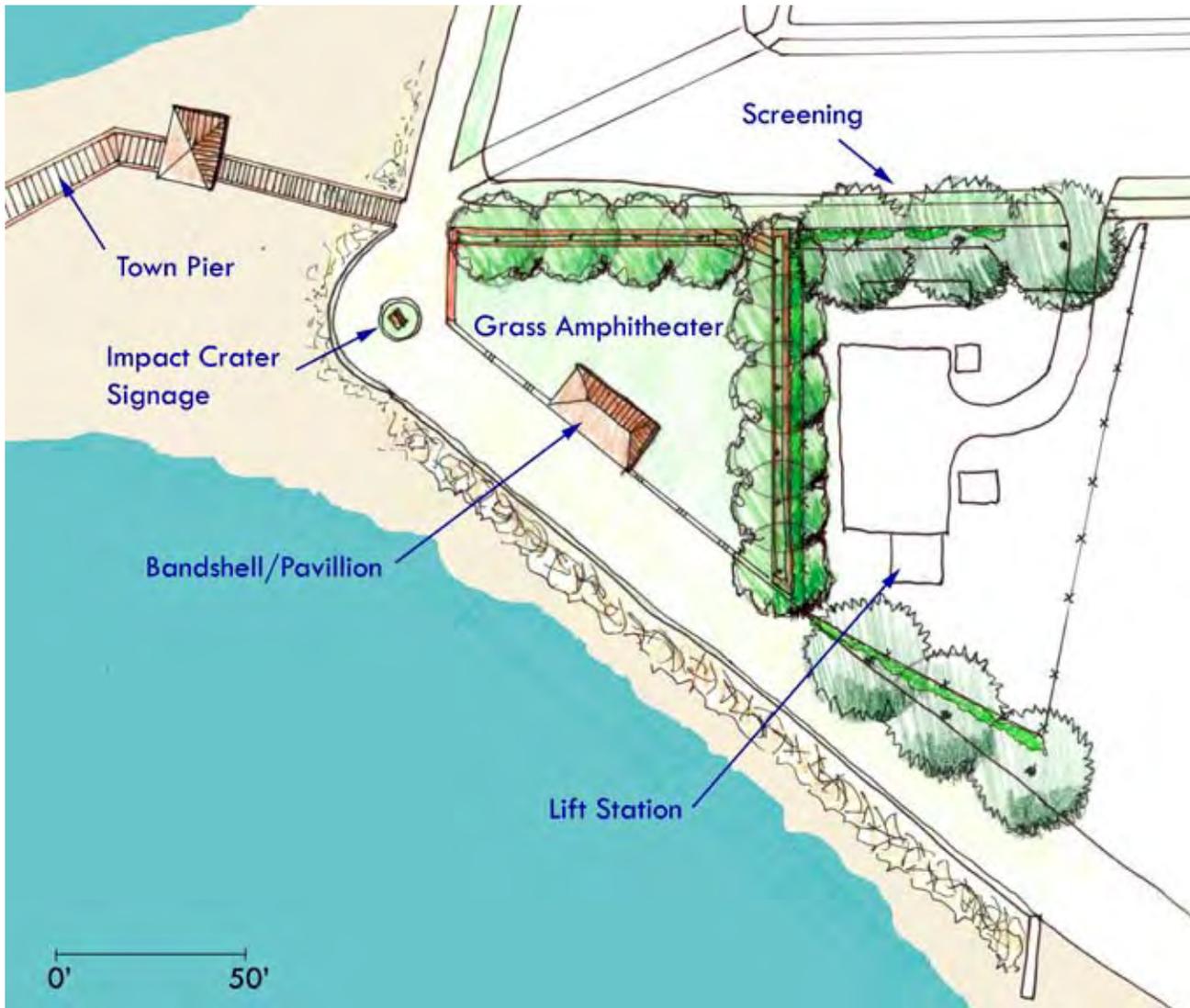
NORTH HARBOR AREA - Illustrative Site Plan



The illustrative site plan for the North Harbor Area shows a number of features that illustrate the design principles embodied in the Conceptual Master Plan, including:

1. A continuous walkway around the Harbor to the Town beach and pier
2. A large open public plaza at the north end of the waterfront, on Town-owned land, that serves as a public gathering area and focus for amenities such as water taxis, cruise boat docking and waterfront events and celebrations
3. A multi-purpose market building that could house stores, workshops, bait & tackle, bathrooms and boater amenity uses
4. A public park/playground
5. A small outdoor amphitheater at the west end of the walkway with a covered pavilion for musical and other events
6. Potential future connections across the rail yards – including a potential overpass walkway – in the event that the rail yards site changes its function over time

NORTH HARBOR AREA - Lift Station Conceptual Plan



Corner of Mason and Bay - Existing

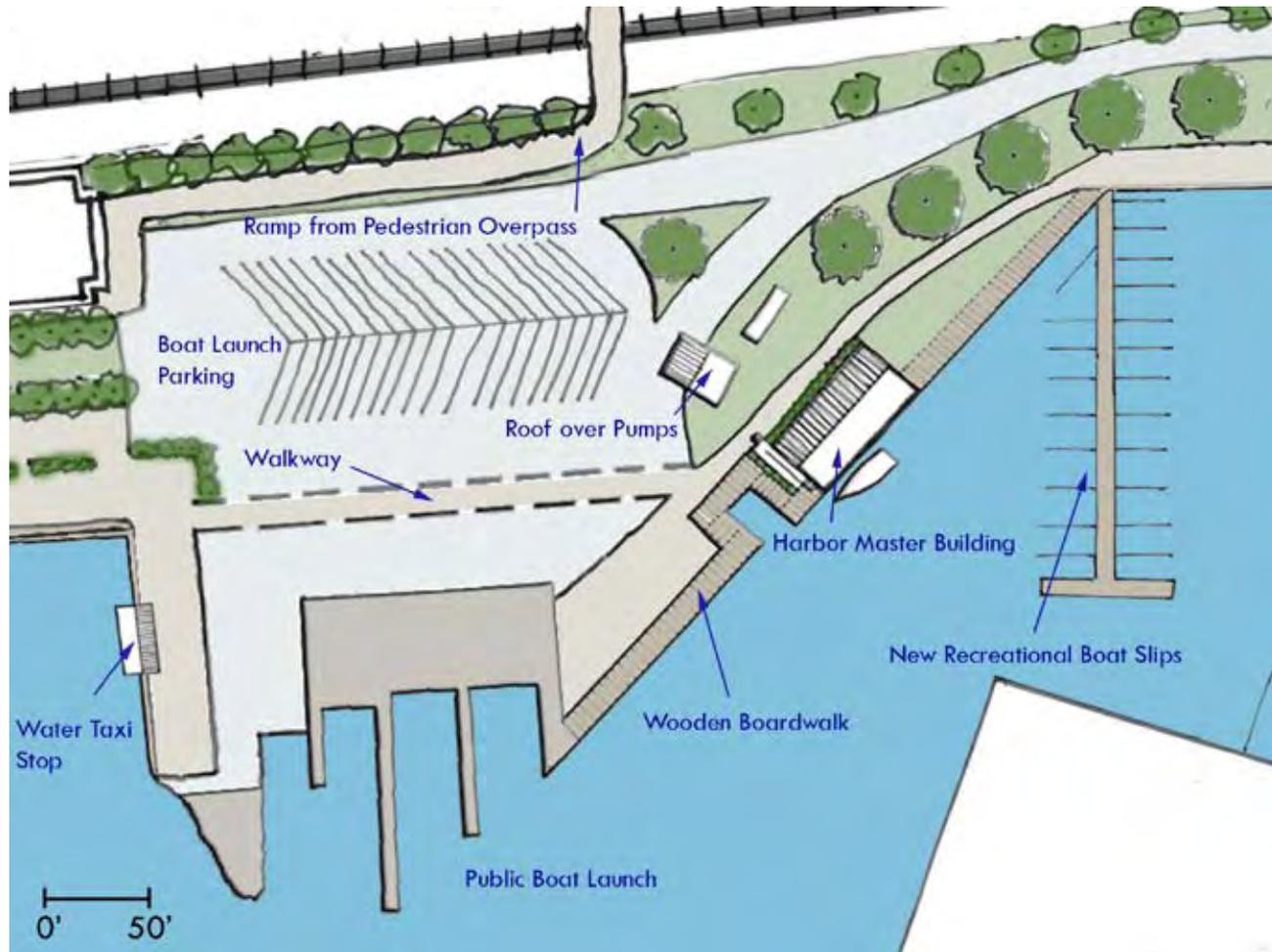


Lift Station axon



Corner of Mason and Bay - Enhanced

NORTH HARBOR AREA - Harbor Master Area Conceptual Plan



SOUTH HARBOR AREA - Illustrative Site Plan



The illustrative site plan for the South Harbor area includes a potential design concept for a portion of the working waterfront and commercial docks at the south end of the harbor. It also includes a portion of the adjacent private development site, and suggests one potential way of developing this site in accord with the design principles for the whole district.

The site plan for this area includes a number of specific design features that could potentially be incorporated into new development of the area:

1. A public working waterfront and plaza that combines a multitude of uses and amenities at the water's edge.
2. A multi-purpose building that could house uses such as fish market, boater amenities, bathrooms, supplies and fuel for commercial boatmen.
3. A site for a waterfront restaurant or other commercial use with adjacent parking.
4. Sites for water-related artifacts or public art to be displayed on the waterfront.
5. A public promenade along the entire water's edge.
6. A plaza and mixed residential development on the private development site that incorporates a naturalized waterfront with a hardscaped urban waterfront – also shown are conversion of the existing drainage way into an urban canal and water feature, and the continuation of the historic street grid from the historic Town to the north.

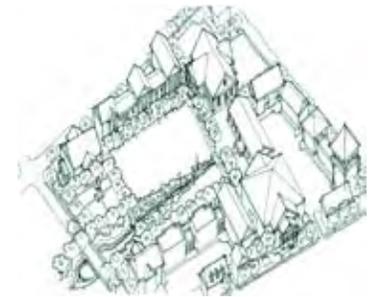
NEW CIVIC AREA - Illustrative Site Plan



The final illustrative site plan shows a potential new civic complex and related commercial development at the southeast end of the project area. This area is centered on the existing historic Rosenwald School – the former Cape Charles Elementary School. It incorporates the existing school building into a new civic complex that could include a core of public uses such as public library or offices. Outside this core, new private development is shown to create a campus-style setting of compatibly designed buildings that could provide a focus for major new office and related uses in the Town.

This site plan includes key design features such as,

1. Restoration of the Rosenwald school and adaptive reuse into a civic use such as community center, library, etc.
2. Development of other civic or related public buildings, such as town or County office uses
3. Preservation of a campus “green” as an organizing element on the site and an opportunity for public use and enjoyment of open space on the site.
4. Small scale employment-use buildings, such as attorney’s offices, office services and small retail uses to complement the civic functions on-site
5. Architectural design that combines all the buildings into generally compatible scales and forms, with a design expression that is also compatible with the historic portion of Cape Charles.



II. DESIGN GUIDELINES

The first section includes a general Vision for the Harbor Area and “Overall Design Principles.” These are some basic guiding standards that should be reflected in all new development activity in the Harbor area. Following this are specific guidelines for the various design elements of typical new development and redevelopment. The standards are illustrated with diagrams that show “typical” development” – variations from the typical situation are inevitable and should be interpreted within the overall spirit of these guidelines.



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

VISION

The vision of the Cape Charles Harbor Area is to provide a vibrant working waterfront that is both a strong economic benefit to the Town with compatible new industry and employment uses, and a strong public and recreational value, with public gathering places and access to the water, a place for people to conduct business and to live, meet, relax, encounter nature, and learn of Cape Charles' working maritime and rail heritage and its strong historic traditions. The vision for future development and revitalization in the Harbor Area is that it is architecturally and visually compatible with the Town's historic built fabric and design character, while still reflecting the best contemporary design and development practices.

OVERALL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Cape Charles Harbor Area should provide an opportunity for revitalization into a mixed-use environment that recognizes its maritime and rail economic importance, its unique situation adjacent to the historic core of Cape Charles and its adjacent residential, business, recreational and open space uses.

The purpose of this revitalization should be to:

- Support the existing harbor and railroad uses and weave them into a mixed working waterfront district with compatible new development and redevelopment that provides economic benefit to the Town.
- Encourage mixed-use development, including resort and tourism-related retail, waterfront industrial and employment, and associated residences; at a design character and scale that is compatible with existing surrounding uses and Cape Charles' architectural heritage.
- Establish strong visual and physical (vehicular and pedestrian) connections to the historic core of Cape



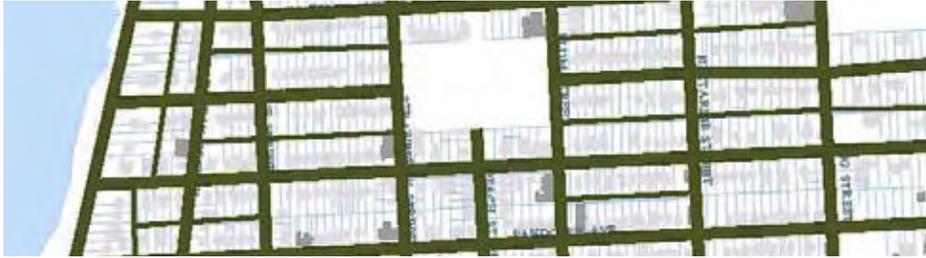
Diversity of architectural styles in the historic core

Charles and the surrounding areas such as the Mason Avenue commercial corridor.

- Provide vehicular and pedestrian circulation that ties the district together internally and with surrounding areas and recognizes the unique historic and waterfront environment of the site.
- Encourage public access and views to the waterfront for the citizens of Cape Charles.
- Provide opportunities that encourage visitors and tourists to experience the Harbor Area in particular - and Cape Charles as a whole - as a unique recreational, cultural and historic environment.
- Ensure orderly development in the Harbor Area that will enhance the revitalization of the town as a whole and augment the economic well being of the Town and its citizens.
- Conserve any remaining valuable natural elements in the area through a strategy of protection, conservation and appropriate land management.
- Create a positive image for the Harbor Area that will stimulate private and public investment within the area.
- Incorporate comprehensive approaches to resource conservation, wise use of renewable resources, and ecologically-based design in the development of the Harbor Area.

DESIGN + DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

CIRCULATION



1. Roadway networks shall be designed in a rectilinear or “grid” system of blocks that is compatible with the block and neighborhood pattern of the historic core of the Town.
2. Road design should incorporate features that calm traffic and maintain slow vehicle speeds as in the Town’s historic core
3. Travelway design should minimize the use of impervious paving surfaces, as well as minimize the width of streets, parking areas, and generally control speeds.



4. Pedestrian walkways or sidewalks of at least 4 feet in width are encouraged along all roadways in the district. All pedestrian walkways and sidewalks shall be separated from roadways by landscaped areas or curbs, where possible.

5. All roadway edges shall be planted with street trees, according to the approved Town landscape plan, if available at the time of development. If a landscape plan is not available, street trees shall be Red Maple, Sycamore, Willow

Oak, or similar hardy and salt-tolerant tree species, a minimum of 4 inch caliper and planted with spacing of at least fifty feet along roadway edges.

Note: The design and construction of public streets need to comply with the Town’s ordinances and VDOT Technical Standards.

INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION

1. The Harbor Area forms a crucial hub for a wide range of transportation modes, including passenger vessels, private boats, Coast Guard vessels, cars, excursion craft (rail, boat, and trolley), golf carts, bicycles, pedestrians, roller-bladers, trucks, etc. The function of this area as an intermodal transportation center must be considered in every building and infrastructure element, to facilitate integration and coordination of the various current and potential future modes of transportation.



2. Encourage walking and biking as a convenient, healthy, and efficient mode of transportation through the use of safe and attractive bikeways and walkways.



3. Minimize reliance on private auto transportation in getting to the site and in circulation within the site, and encourage light rail, shuttle bus, ferry or other communal transportation systems as an alternative to reliance on private cars.

Example of new uses that encourage intermodal transportation

PUBLIC ACCESS AND WATERFRONT WALKWAYS

1. The extent and nature of public access to the water's edge will depend upon the scale and character of the marine use on the water; but access should be provided in the most generous and integrated way that is compatible with the function of the maritime activity.
2. Interest in water access for active and passive purposes is widespread and should be accommodated to the maximum extent possible. Large facilities should present visitation and viewing opportunities for residents, visitors, and the traveling public as allowed by security requirements. Small facilities should be developed to give visitors, Town residents, and County residents access to the water's edge for boating opportunities, tie-up for private boats, boating education, and fishing opportunities to maintain the connection of Cape Charles with its maritime heritage.



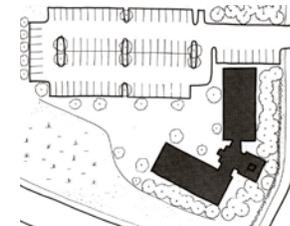
3. Incorporate a waterfront walkway within a 30-foot public access easement for the full length of the shoreline, wherever possible. Where existing uses may encroach upon this walkway, ensure provision of continuous pedestrian circulation as near to the waterfront as possible.



4. The walkway should be of durable materials, either wooden or recycled plastic boardwalk, or brick, decorative pavers or similar surface to provide a permanent, all-weather and permeable surface for pedestrians and non-auto vehicles alike.

PARKING

1. On-street parking shall be encouraged and planned for in the roadway design to increase the number of parking spaces in the district and also encourage lower vehicle speeds.
2. The total parking count for a site should be adequate for the uses served, and should follow Town ordinances. Shared parking arrangements are encouraged.
3. Off-street parking should be provided for each site, but may be provided off-site within a reasonable walking distance; and shall, in all cases, incorporate appropriate landscape features to break up the expanse of pavement.
4. All parking and service areas should be as unobtrusive as possible and in as park-like a setting as possible. Generous use of landscaping and screening should be used to lessen the visual impact of parking areas and increase pervious areas.
5. Pervious paving and materials should be used for parking areas, bikeways and walkways wherever feasible.
6. Individual buildings within a block should have shared parking and access to public roads, where possible, in order to minimize paving and access drives.
7. If Parking Structures are used, they should be compatible with adjacent uses and architecture in form, bulk, massing, articulation, and materials. The design of above-grade parking structures should create a visually attractive and active pedestrian environment by incorporating retail, commercial, and residential uses along all public streets.



Example of surface parking screened from view of roadways



Example of on-street parking with landscape buffers

UTILITIES

1. Overhead utilities should be avoided within the Harbor Area.

RAIL YARDS

1. The railroad and Rail Yard could add a dynamic intermodal element to Cape Charles' transportation system if integrated with the surrounding streets, sidewalks, trails and private development. Consideration of potential commuter rail or rail trolley connections should be incorporated into the design of adjacent public and private development.
2. At-grade crossings of the Rail Yards should be designed so that they are safe, well marked and accessible to both vehicular and non-vehicular traffic where feasible within the functional requirements of the railroad.



Note: Designers need to recognize State and Federal regulations regarding design of rail right of ways and lines.

Rail Trolley

BERTHING AND MARINA USES

1. Berthing opportunities for both large and small vessels exist along Cape Charles' Harbor Area. The available water depth creates a functional transition in the scale of vessels that can be berthed, which translates to a variation in the scale of upland support facilities, the nature of use and access, and the associated intensity of use impacts.
2. The commercial docks at the south end of the Harbor serve industrial users such as Bayshore Concrete, as well as working watermen in the community. This area is a valuable resource and should be kept open to commercial and deep water berthing opportunities. Development within this berthing area, and the upland adjacent to the water's edge, should promote and foster the utilization of the deep-water resource.

3. The north end of the Harbor is appropriate for smaller vessel berthing and recreational and tourist activities oriented to small and medium sized boats. Development in these areas should continue to serve pleasure boats and working watermen's vessels.



4. Streets serving proposed marina, boat dock or passenger terminal uses should be a seamless extension of existing streets in the Harbor Area and should be constructed in compliance with these guidelines.

5. Built infrastructure constructed solely for the use of boating and marine uses should be integrated with the public street and pedestrian network and designed to meet the overall design character and visual appearance of improvements in the Harbor Area.



Example of compatible waterfront uses and architectural character from St. Michael's, MD

6. There are locations, specifically in the marine support areas, where development may have difficulty adhering to the building guidelines section herein. Marine-dependent structures should be allowed to reflect their intended uses through the use of practical materials and straightforward design. Outbuildings, sheds and temporary marine-use structures should be sited and designed to minimize negative visual impacts. Through use of building placement, incorporation of design details, and use of landscaping and screening, designers should look for economical solutions to provide utilitarian marine structures with visual interest and character befitting their use.

URBAN DESIGN & BUILT FORM

1. Urban design guidelines for buildings in the Harbor Area encourage architecture that enhances the development of a mixed-use and marine center, and is compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods of the Town. New construction should respect the historic character of Cape Charles, while representing the best elements of contemporary design.
2. New buildings should be designed in response to their context and should be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. Broadly stated, compatibility refers to the recognition of existing development patterns and characteristics, and responsiveness in new building design that respects these established patterns. The placement, height, massing, proportion, articulation, and materials of new structures should encourage a vision that supports the idea that the Harbor Area develop into an extension of the adjacent historic Town while establishing its own identity as a new waterfront district.
3. Structures and improvements on the site should generally be clustered and compactly designed to allow for minimal disturbance and extensive open space and public areas, and to prevent a sprawl pattern that is incompatible with the historic character of the Town.
4. The traditional gridded layout of streets in the Harbor Area should be reinforced through the placement and design of buildings, travelways, and landscape elements.
5. Building edges should be set similar to the currently zoned C-1 section on Mason Avenue to create a more orderly pattern of buildings and develop an urban “main street” character.
6. Development along new or existing public streets should foster a walkable and enjoyable pedestrian environment. New development should avoid large expanses of blank walls, should provide frequent street level entries, and should provide sidewalk amenities such as street furniture and lighting that encourage year-round pedestrian use.



7. Buildings sited along Mason Avenue, in particular should utilize traditional storefront design principles along the ground floor, and provide engaging displays and clear glazing to enhance the pedestrian experience.
8. Open spaces near buildings should be designed to be pedestrian-friendly. Use of outdoor benches, trails, and other pedestrian and biking amenities is encouraged.

GENERAL ARCHITECTURE

1. No particular style of architecture is mandated. However, the architectural style of buildings in the project should use forms and materials that are reflective of the existing traditional residential, commercial and industrial buildings in the Town of Cape Charles.
2. Energy-conserving technology such as operable windows, roof vents, overhangs, and other energy-efficient and architecturally-compatible design solutions are encouraged, provided that they are designed to be compatible with the overall architectural character when possible.
3. Buildings, recreation/education areas and facilities should provide equal access to people of all abilities.



Examples of architecture that “respects historic character while representing the best elements of contemporary design”

BUILDING COMPOSITION

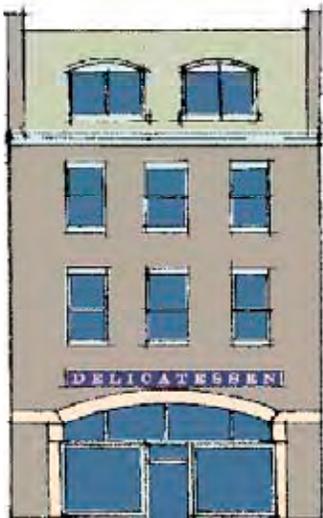
The combination of design elements will determine the character of new buildings and neighborhoods. While specific solutions for any given setting cannot be anticipated in a single set of guidelines, the following building characteristics can be used to guide visual compatibility of new development.

Placement

- In general, buildings should be placed close to the sidewalk edge with their primary entrances oriented to the street.

Height

- Building heights should be compatible with surrounding development and neighborhoods. These Guidelines recommend that any future rezoning process for the Harbor Area should be preceded by a building height analysis that takes into account compatibility with adjacent uses and the historic core of the Town.



Example of a new mixed commercial building with light industrial/workshop use combined with offices above

NOTE: Building Height, coverage and open space requirements are determined by the Town Zoning District and Zoning Map – consult these documents to reference the permitted standards for any property in the Harbor Area.



Example of a new mixed residential use with retail below and residential lofts above.

Massing

- The massing of new development should be compatible with the existing development found in the surrounding neighborhoods. Cape Charles is characterized by human scaled architecture that complements a pleasant pedestrian environment. New development in the Harbor Area should avoid large monolithic massing along all street frontages. Where new structures are larger than buildings characteristically found in Cape Charles, horizontal and vertical variation should be used to break large expanses of building into components that are in scale with the context to which they most closely relate

Proportion

- The façade proportions used in new development should be compatible with the existing development found in Cape Charles. While some buildings in the Town project a predominantly vertical or horizontal orientation, most use architectural details, storefront design, window openings, and roof shapes to balance the proportions of facades into pleasant and cohesive compositions. In smaller in-fill development, proportions of features such as windows, entryways, and storefronts should be designed to achieve compatibility with abutting structures and surrounding development.



Example of compatible multi-story mixed use building - note facade broken up into "shop fronts" to emulate typical Main Street character

Articulation

- Traditional arrangement of façade components into base, middle, and top composition can be used to achieve compatibility and continuity within the surrounding architectural context. Additionally, projecting bays, recessed balconies, and roof shape variation can be judiciously utilized to provide interest, individuality, and appropriate scale to new development.

Materials

- Materials used in new development should reflect the historic character of Cape Charles. A straightforward use of natural and traditional building materials is encouraged. Brick, stone, cast concrete, wood, and glass will achieve the greatest level of compatibility with the surrounding area and will best stand the test of time: in terms of both changing community tastes and withstanding the maritime climate of the waterfront.



“The façade proportions used in new development should be compatible with the existing development found in Cape Charles. While some buildings in the Town project a predominantly vertical or horizontal orientation, most use architectural details, storefront design, window openings, and roof shapes to balance the proportions of facades into pleasant and cohesive compositions”

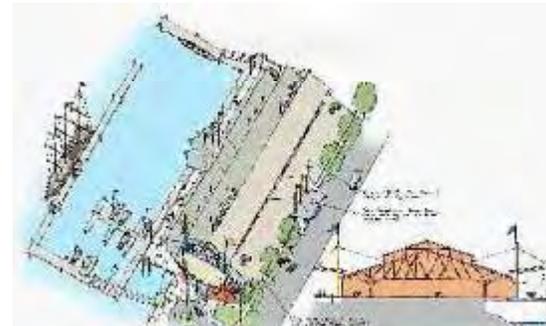


In smaller in-fill development, proportions of features such as windows, entryways, and storefronts should be designed to achieve compatibility with abutting structures and surrounding development

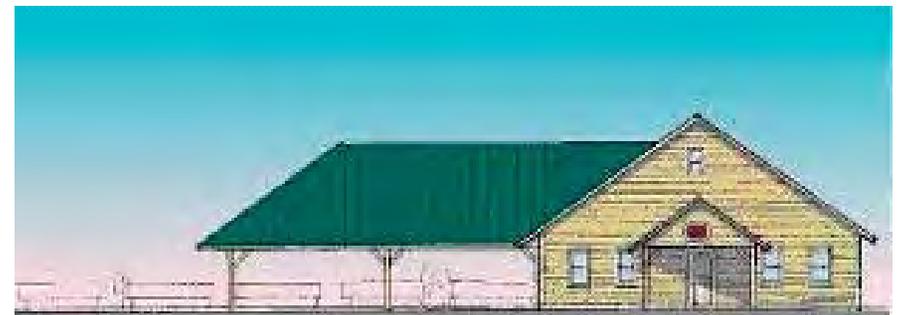
HISTORIC STRUCTURES

1. Historically and architecturally significant structures and sites should be inventoried and protected from demolition and carefully rehabilitated in a way that is consistent with their original architectural intent.
2. New additions to historically significant buildings should be designed for compatibility with the original structure in size, composition and material and should result in the minimum necessary loss of original architectural material.
3. Sites of historic interest should be appropriately commemorated and marked with signage and public art. Specific emphasis should be paid to the maritime and transportation heritage of the Harbor Area.

Note: The Mason Avenue area is located in the Town’s Historic District and is subject to the Town’s Historic District Overlay.



Example of large multi-purpose industrial buildings with a traditional working waterfront architectural style and relationship to the water



Example of new working waterfront industrial building that is compatible with the traditional architectural character of Cape Charles

VIEW CORRIDORS

1. Cape Charles' relationship to the water is an important part of its unique character and identity. Views of the harbor are a community resource to be protected.
2. Views to the water should be preserved from critical public vantage points. Private views to the water should be respected where possible. Massing and placement of buildings should be designed to minimize impacts on water views and retain value for upland development potential.
3. Street corridor placement and design should provide for views to and from the water, as well as for civic buildings and permanent installations of public art in key focal point locations.



Note: Please refer to the Conceptual Master Plan for more specific areas and options for view protection.

“Views to the water should be preserved from critical public vantage points. Private views to the water should be respected where possible”



Example of hotel architecture compatible with traditional working waterfront forms and massing

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

1. Where possible, water quality should be maintained and enhanced through natural means, by gradual infiltration and controlled runoff through vegetated areas.
2. Design systems and landscapes that promote water conservation. The use of gray water systems, rainwater collection, and water-conserving industrial processes is strongly encouraged.
3. Design environmentally sound systems for stormwater and greywater collection, pollution removal and storage.
4. Roof drainage should be captured in rainwater cisterns to be used for irrigation or distributed and allowed to infiltrate slowly into groundwater where feasible.
5. Runoff from parking areas and industrial yards should be pre-treated when feasible to remove pollutants before discharge to perimeter water management systems.
6. The utilization of local and regional resources in the acquisition of raw materials is strongly encouraged.
7. Use of building, landscaping, road construction, and other products made from recycled materials is strongly encouraged.

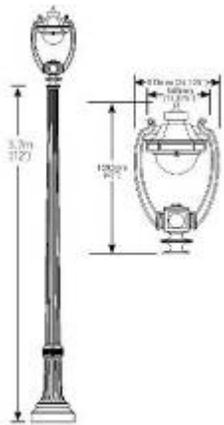


Traditional waterfront walkway improvements

Traditional working waterfront building compositions

LIGHTING

1. Lighting shall comply with “Dark Sky” principles, and be low voltage or other high-efficiency types wherever feasible, in order to reduce light pollution into adjacent areas, and disruption of wildlife habitats in the vicinity.
2. Site and building lighting should be adequate to provide for safety and functional needs. Additional lighting used as decorative elements is discouraged, except if it is restrained and fits with the overall small town character and “dark sky” principles in the Town



Examples of light fixtures that are compatible with the historical era of old Cape Charles

3. Lighting for all areas, including the boat marina and private security lighting, should be as unobtrusive as possible, and meet all Town Standards for intensity, glare, and spillover. Special attention should be paid to avoid navigational hazards created by excessive glare in the harbor.

4. Retain existing vegetation, particularly trees, where feasible and reforest or landscape open areas of the site.
5. New plantings and landscaped areas in the project should use native species and species that have minimal irrigation and maintenance requirements to the greatest extent possible. Lawns and other high-maintenance, water-dependent landscape elements should be minimized and used only as functional recreation areas.
6. Landscaping for solar and wind screening and energy efficiency is encouraged.



Civic spaces and monuments that reinforce maritime themes and local history



“New plantings and landscaped areas in the project should use native species and species that have minimal irrigation and maintenance requirements to the greatest extent possible”

OPEN SPACE & LANDSCAPE

1. Arrange site elements to protect and enhance special land characteristics, natural features, rare or endangered species areas, archaeological sites, and other unusual natural or man-made site characteristics.
2. Design for harmonious visual impact. Protect views and viewsheds within the site and beyond the site to the Town, water, and natural areas.
3. Where feasible, restore and enhance currently damaged or degraded landscapes and wildlife habitats creating new natural areas and wetlands on the site.

STREET FURNITURE AND AMENITIES

1. Design details for such features as lighting, paving, bollards, benches, pavilions, or other amenities should be carefully selected to reflect the maritime heritage and current maritime use of the area.
2. Such features should be coordinated as much as possible between public and private improvements. The quality and durability of these amenities should be of the highest standards, and of timeless aesthetic character to withstand many years of use.

SIGNAGE

1. Work with the Town of Cape Charles to provide interpretive signage at appropriate locations along the walkway or in public spaces.
2. Ensure that the overall signage motif is compatible with that established in the Town and throughout the Harbor Area.



Compatible street furniture and amenities



Example of compatible franchise signage (Freeport Maine)