



CAPE CHARLES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

DRAFT LAND USE, COMMUNITY DESIGN AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CHAPTER

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CAPE CHARLES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

LAND USE, COMMUNITY DESIGN AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CHAPTER

I. LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DESIGN POLICY FRAMEWORK

During the fall and winter of 2006, the Town of Cape Charles held a series of workshops and meetings to begin updating the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Throughout the meetings and discussions, a number of common threads or themes emerged. These themes form the cornerstone of the planning process and the source of the fundamental policy direction promoted in the Plan. Many of these themes are directly concerned with basic land use and Town design issues, such as preserving historic character, maintaining the integrity of views and entrance corridors and ensuring compatible economic development in the future. Others are less tangible but equally important and relevant to planning, such as the preservation of open space and maintenance of an effective transportation network.

The following policy recommendations are intended to establish a positive vision for the future development, preservation and sense of community in Cape Charles. They are intended to help implement the townspeople's desires, as expressed in the public meetings and work sessions, to protect the Town's unique and historic small town character through land use and design policies that keep the best of the old and incorporate innovative new development that will keep the town vibrant long into the future.

A. LAND USE AND DESIGN POLICIES

1. **Preserve and enhance the integrity of the Historic District.**

The general layout of the Town, in terms of scale, grid network, the central park, and streetscape amenities (such as sidewalks, alleys, planted medians and street edges, and large canopy trees) greatly contribute to the character of the Historic District. The integrity of this district should be preserved and enhanced through streetscape improvements along Mason Avenue, median restoration and landscaping, and sidewalk improvements. In addition, the Town's central park should be developed as an urban/civic amenity that provides a multipurpose space for town events and individual recreation.

2. **Promote compatible infill development and renovation within established neighborhoods.**

Infill development or renovation within established neighborhoods should be compatible with adjacent structures and the neighborhood as a whole. Accessory dwelling units should be promoted as a way to add diversity of housing types, while maintaining the character and providing affordable options.

New development in undeveloped areas should match the prevailing style and character of traditional buildings in Cape Charles. The scale, massing, colors and materials of new buildings should be traditional and compatible with the Town's historic architectural fabric.

3. Create new centers of activity to address the commercial, civic and recreational needs of residents and visitors.

New centers of activity should be created to serve the commercial, recreational and civic needs of both residents and visitors. Potential new activity centers include new commercial nodes in Bay Creek, the Harbor area and the area around the Cape Charles Elementary School (also referred to as the Cape Charles Rosenwald School), the STIP, and a new pedestrian plaza on Strawberry Street. These areas have the potential to become vibrant pedestrian, mixed-use centers that provide a range of recreational, commercial and civic uses to the Town. It is also important to ensure future vehicular and pedestrian connections between these centers. The form and design character of these activity centers should be based on the scale and character of existing centers (i.e. Mason Avenue District).

4. Promote mixed-use as the preferred form of development.

The principle of incorporating a fine grain of mixed land uses, similar to the current land use pattern in the Town shall be encouraged, such as allowing residential and retail/commercial uses within the same building, and promoting residences within close proximity to commercial and retail centers. In addition, combined live-work structures should be encouraged in new development and in the Mason Avenue districts to better integrate housing with the shops and businesses of the new and existing "Centers".

5. Target improvements of Town facilities and Town-owned parcels to serve as economic development catalysts for the surrounding area.

The development of Town-owned land and facilities should serve as both a catalyst and amenity for surrounding neighboring development. For example, a proposed new community center, the land around the Cape Charles Elementary School, the Town beach, and various Town-owned infill parcels.

B. OPEN SPACE POLICIES

Open spaces and scenic views, both in and around the Town enhance the quality of life for all townspeople and visitors in Cape Charles. The Town should take steps to preserve its valued natural assets and environmental resources, such as woodlands, shorelines, tributary creeks, marsh grasses. In addition, protection and enhancement of both scenic and recreational open space should be of primary importance in planning for the future of the Town. Specific natural resource policies are addressed in other portions of the Comprehensive Plan. The policies below are intended to address those aspects of the natural and open space features that are part of the overall land use and Town design framework.

1. Preserve the integrity and accessibility of the water's edge.

Public waterfront access should be an important amenity and identifying feature for the Town. Waterfront areas include the Harbor, Cape Charles beach, the municipal pier and the Coastal Dune Natural Area Preserve. King's Creek Marina and future areas in Bay Creek will also provide waterfront access. Preserving the integrity and accessibility of the water's edge is critical to maintaining the quality of life within the Town and should include measures to integrate the Harbor walkway with the historic core and control shoreline erosion, as well as enhance the beach as an amenity for residents and visitors by providing improved links to Town.

2. Protect the viewsheds along Town entrance corridors.

Views along entrance roadways have a significant impact on how the community is perceived. Attractive entryways help entice tourists into the community and leave a positive impression to encourage future visits. Route 184 and Route 642, which serve as the entry roads into Cape Charles, have a rural identity characterized by open farm fields and relatively narrow road widths. The proposed corridor overlay district for these roads is an important step toward protecting these viewsheds.

The Town should continue to protect the scenic viewsheds along the Route 184 and Route 642 corridors through land use regulations, setback requirements, design standards and landscaping requirements. Because a significant portion of the corridors is governed by County regulations, the Town should work cooperatively with the County to plan for the future character of the corridors. The Town should encourage the County adoption of the overlay district, and pursue the ability to jointly review proposals for properties within the County that influence the Town's entry corridors.

3. Strengthen and enhance the Town's green infrastructure.

The Town contains a number of passive and active recreational facilities that serve as an attraction for residents and visitors alike, as well as important environmental functions. The town should strengthen the existing “Green” focal points, such as the Town Park, Coastal Dune Natural Area, and various landscaped open spaces in Bay Creek. The Town should create new focal points within the STIP site, as well as encouraging creation of a regional recreational center, such as a YMCA. The town should also promote greenway connections between these focal points that incorporate environmental features such as wetlands and drainage ways, and urban streetscapes with landscaping and street trees. Connections can either be built in as part of specific revitalization programs or as part of the approval of new development proposals in critical areas.

4. Protect the Town’s scenic, recreational and open space resources.

The Town’s location along the Chesapeake Bay and its abundant natural resources are a critical part of the Town’s identity and way of life. The Town should protect its scenic, recreational and open space resources by using environmentally sensitive design techniques in new development, preserving existing features during the site plan review process, incorporating low impact development techniques, and restoring and re-vegetating natural areas. In addition, the Town should continue to support efforts to restore and enhance critical habitat and promote the use of native plants in the Town.

5. Encourage support for landscape enhancements in and around Town.

The Town should enhance its current infrastructure of landscaping and green amenities, by promoting a Town-wide street tree program, buffer standards, and specific landscape enhancements for sites such as the Lift Station and Central Park.

C. TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

Transportation networks shape how people can move about in the community and are an important factor affecting growth and development and overall quality of life within Cape Charles. The Town’s predominant street system is anchored by a primary East-West access into and out of Town (Route 184), a secondary and rural road (Old Cape Charles Road, or Route 642), as well as the historic street grid in the downtown area. The Town’s transportation plans and policies can build on this framework and, to a large extent, guide the quality and direction of development in the future.

1. Improve North-South connections.

The downtown area is separated from the harbor by the railroad yard, and pedestrian access between the harbor area and downtown Mason Avenue is currently limited. The lack of

North-South connections is further reinforced by separated land uses and the pattern of ownership in the area. The Town should enhance the North-South network by planning for additional future connections in order to provide better access to all parts of the Town for current and future populations. In addition to possibly creating new roadways, the Town should consider creating an at-grade crossing of the railroad tracks between Fig Street and Old Cape Charles Road to improve the flow of traffic along this North-South axis.

2. Promote easy access between the Town and Route 13.

Route 184 currently serves as the primary corridor into and out of Cape Charles. With the potential for increased development in and around the STIP and Bay Creek, additional capacity and alternate corridors may be needed to travel to and from Route 13. Old Cape Charles Road functions as an additional access road, but is rural and indirect, and subject to elimination under the Annexation Agreement. The Town should consider alternate connections to Route 13, including reinforcing the Old Cape Charles Road corridor to serve as a parallel corridor to Route 184.

3. Create an integrated system of pedestrian, bicycle and multi-use networks.

With the expected increase in visitors from the redevelopment of the Harbor and residential populations from the Bay Creek and STIP development, it is important to consider alternative means of transportation, including walking, golf carts and bicycling. A Town-wide, integrated system of bike routes, sidewalks, and multi-use paths is needed to connect existing and emerging commercial and residential centers. The Town should also consider creation of a bike path extending along Route 184 to Route 13.

One alternative for improving multimodal transportation connections between the Historic District and the southern area of Town would be conversion of the railroad overpass to a multimodal overpass which could also be used for vehicles during emergency situations. Normal vehicular traffic could then be routed to an at-grade crossing of the railroad tracks between Fig Street and Old Cape Charles Road.

4. Incorporate traffic calming and access management techniques at Town “Gateways”

Traffic calming and management improvements that are designed to be compatible with the Town’s traditional streetscape should be incorporated into each of the Town’s vehicular entrances or “Gateways” into town. An example is the intersection of Fig Street and Randolph Avenue, where a traffic management technique such as a roundabout could be utilized.

In addition, the Town should work with the County to establish an appropriate ‘Gateway’ at the Route 13/184 intersection through access management, landscape and frontage improvements and overall quality of site and building design in the area.

The Town should also work with VDOT and the County to ensure that the Old Cape Charles Road/Parson’s Lane connection to Route 13 is redesigned to provide more capacity, safer widths and turning radii, and managed access along its frontage.

5. Extend the concept of the historic grid network to new development.

The historic grid network of the street system is a valuable asset for the Town and provides ample connections between residential and commercial uses for both the automobile and the pedestrian. This concept not only works well in the historic core of the Town, but should also be extended into new development.

Designing roads that serve new development in a system of interconnected blocks as a ‘grid’ will improve overall network connectivity, promote greater accessibility for both traffic and emergency access, and foster compatibility of streetscape design for the whole Town.

6. Continue to maintain on-street parking downtown and add off-street parking areas to meet parking demand.

The existing historic street network provides a significant number of on-street parking spaces to support the commercial uses on Mason Avenue and the number of residential buildings without on-site parking. This pattern should be continued and improved through enhanced parking space delineations, especially on streets such as Mason and Bay Avenue, Peach Street and Strawberry Street. Potential opportunities for new public off-street parking lots should be identified as well, and should take into account the parking study conducted by the Planning Commission in the spring of 2005.

In addition, streetscape enhancements should be incorporated where feasible to protect pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle safety. In commercial areas, this can be done by providing wide sidewalks and marked crosswalks at key intersections. In residential areas, this can be accomplished by providing planting strips that act as buffers between vehicular travel ways and pedestrian sidewalks.

D. PUBLIC FACILITY AND UTILITY POLICIES

The Town is facing a number of significant capital expenses to provide services for existing and planned growth, and will need to plan carefully to ensure that current and future residents and businesses obtain adequate public services with reasonable tax rates and

obligations. The following policies are intended to provide guidance for how these improvements will be financed and implemented.

1. Establish a policy for paying for capital facility expansion needs over time.

The Town should reexamine its facility and connection fees for new construction and potentially revise them to insure that new development, not existing customers, pay the majority of the costs of the required expansions of the water and wastewater treatment plants.

2. Develop proffer policies so that future development helps pay for the additional impacts and public facility costs that it generates.

The Town should develop a proffer policy that requires rezoning applicants to proffer to pay the full cost required to create additional water and wastewater treatment capacity to serve any additional density created by any Town rezoning approval. The proffers should be a legally binding recorded agreement and should run with the land.

3. Ensure that development proceeds in an orderly pattern that is consistent with the Town's ability to provide services and facilities to support it.

The Town should conduct a capacity analysis of the proposed Future Land Use Plan to determine if it sufficiently accommodates the amount of expected growth during the next 10, 20 and 50 year periods. Following a comprehensive buildout and capacity analysis, the Plan should potentially be adjusted and new growth areas added or removed if needed.

The Town should also create phases within the growth areas if appropriate, in accord with growth forecasts for the 10, 20 and 50 year periods, and link each of the defined expansion areas to specific new land use and infrastructure policies in the Plan which in turn would later be linked to the County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and to the Zoning Ordinance. Critical infrastructure elements are roads, sewer lines, water lines, and stormwater lines.

II. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

This vision for the Future Land Use Plan was developed by the citizens and stakeholders of the Town during two public Town Meetings conducted in September and November 2006. The recommendations of the townspeople were incorporated in both the overall policies and in the Future Land Use Plan of the Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the first meeting focused on identifying a vision for the quality and character of development. Ideas about levels of growth and intensity of development were affirmed at the second public workshop where participants were asked to identify a preferred development concept. Workshop participants overwhelmingly preferred a “low growth” concept, featuring activity centers at Marina Village, Bayside Village, Mason Avenue, the Harbor, and STIP.

The Future Land Use Plan is intended to generally maintain and enhance the traditional settlement patterns of Cape Charles. Overall, the guiding principle is to mirror and extend the existing historic pattern of development in the Town as it grows and adapts to new land uses and building types over time. The Future Land Use Plan continues to allow for new and infill development in the existing developed and undeveloped portions of Town. At the same time, the Plan strongly reinforces the current form of the Town, and recommends that new development should be an extension of the traditional patterns of growth and settlement in Cape Charles.

The accompanying map (Future Land Use Map) represents potential land uses, development character and development densities as part of the Comprehensive Plan. This Future Land Use map depicts land use designations and districts that are designed to support the overall policies and traditional neighborhood design principles desired by the Town. It is important to note that this map only addresses broad density and land use objectives, not detailed standards. The map is not a standalone document and is to be used in conjunction with the future land use policy language. In most cases, proposed densities and intensities are expressed in terms of ranges that are appropriate for the types of uses proposed. These ranges are intended to provide flexibility in the application of these policies to individual properties on a case by case basis, as the unique characteristics of a parcel are evaluated during the review of a specific development proposal. The following Future Land Use Plan policies propose land use designations and districts that are designed to support the overall policies and traditional neighborhood design principles desired by the Town.

A. FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The following map (Future Land Use Map) and Future Land Use Plan Designations, below, represent the preferred plan for land uses, development character and development densities as part of the Comprehensive Plan. It is important to note that this map only addresses broad density and land use objectives, not detailed standards. In most cases, densities and intensities are expressed in terms of ranges and generally applied to the whole district. This is intended to give flexibility to the interpretation of these policies on any

individual property. In general, this Future Land Use Plan proposes land use designations and districts that support the overall policies and traditional neighborhood design principles desired by the Town, as summarized above under the Future Land Use and Community Design Policy Framework.

B. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN DESIGNATIONS

The policies for each district shown on the Future land Use Map are summarized below:

1. MAIN STREET MIXED USE

a. Function

1. To provide a strong sense of a downtown “main street” character and to promote the continuing concentration of retail businesses and services in predominantly commercial areas.
2. To promote a diverse mix of compatible commercial, entertainment, governmental and residential uses.
3. To continue the traditional character of a commercial and mixed use main street, as exemplified by Mason Avenue in the Town

b. Preferred Uses

1. Land uses in this district should be small-scale mixed uses including shopfronts, workshops, small offices, housing and specialty shops catering to local and regional customers, as well as tourists and visitors.
2. In general, residential uses should be located above the first floor, reserving first floor storefront space for activity-generating uses such as retail shops, restaurants or grocery stores.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Development should generally have a small town main street character, such as that found along Mason Avenue, with a fine-grained land use pattern at a human scale. Blocks should generally not be more than 600 foot long.
2. Development should combine uses vertically, as well as horizontally (i.e. mixing uses among buildings and within individual buildings), to achieve convenience, variety and walkability in the district.
3. Design elements should be integrated with wide sidewalks, street trees, benches, and entrances to buildings at the edges of street rights-of-way. Bicycle facilities, on-street parking, and usable public spaces should be provided.
4. Vehicular and pedestrian links should extend into the surrounding development.
5. Land use or intensity/density transitions should be provided between non-residential uses and existing residential areas.

6. Consideration should be given to the design requirements in the proposed Historic Town Entrance Corridor Overlay District, as applied to this district
7. It is important to maintain and improve the aesthetics of the downtown area for continued economic revival, and to protect historic buildings from demolition or renovation which would damage their historical integrity.
8. In general, buildings should be two to three stories.
9. Most of the site may be developed as building, parking or paved plaza and access areas. However, there should generally be 10-20% of the site in amenity open space, such as public plazas, landscaping or decoratively-paved wide sidewalks or sitting areas.
10. Consideration should be given to lowering the parking requirements in this district to allow the development of a dense downtown pattern of buildings, rather than wide expanses of surface parking.
11. Alleys, thoroughfares, and service ways should be utilized to ensure trash pickup and deliveries for commercial establishments do not take place along public right of ways.

d. Building Design

1. Buildings should generally be located at the edge of the street right-of-way with minimal front setbacks.
2. All facades of buildings should be designed with architectural detail consistent with that of the front elevation of the building.
3. Architectural treatment, materials, and colors should be compatible with adjacent commercial and residential architecture.
4. The scale, massing, colors and materials of new buildings should be traditional and compatible with the Town's historic architectural fabric.

2. HARBOR MIXED USE

Note: Refer to the Harbor Area Conceptual Master Plan And Design Guidelines for more detailed policies and standards for development in this district.

a. Function

1. To provide a vibrant working waterfront that is both a strong economic benefit to the Town and encourages compatible new industry and employment uses.
2. To provide places with strong public and recreational value, with public gathering places and access to the water.
3. To provide 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 historic traditions.

b. Preferred Uses

1. Land uses in this district should be mixed, including resort and tourism-related retail, waterfront industrial and employment, associated residences, and accessory uses and should support the existing harbor and railroad uses.
2. In general, residential uses should be located above the first floor, reserving first floor storefront space for activity-generating uses such as retail shops, restaurants or recreational amenities.
3. Berthing and marina uses should correspond to the available water depth that exists in the Harbor.
4. Open space and recreational uses, such as walkways, greenways, and public plazas and promenades, that provide access to the water should be provided.

c. Design Character and Scale (Also see Harbor Area Master Plan and Design Guidelines)

1. Harbor Mixed-Use projects should be architecturally and visually compatible with the Town's historic built fabric and design character, with a fine-grained land use pattern at a human scale, while still reflecting the best contemporary design and development practices. Blocks should generally not be more than 600 foot long.
2. Development should combine uses vertically, as well as horizontally (i.e. mixing uses among buildings and within individual buildings), to achieve convenience, variety and walkability in the district.
3. Building edges should be set similar to the existing section of Mason Avenue to create a more orderly pattern of buildings and develop an urban "main street" character.
4. Public access and views to the waterfront should be integrated in a way that is compatible with the function of the maritime activity.
5. Vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation should tie the district together internally and with surrounding areas and should recognize the unique historic and waterfront environment of the site.
6. Alleys, thoroughfares, and service ways should be utilized to ensure trash pickup and deliveries for commercial establishments do not take place along public right of ways.
7. Design elements should be integrated with wide sidewalks, street trees, benches, and entrances to buildings at the edges of street rights-of-way. Bicycle facilities, on-street parking, and usable public spaces should be provided.
8. Landscaping should be provided according to the approved Town landscape plan (if available) or the Harbor Area Design Guidelines.
9. Most of the site may be developed as building, parking or paved plaza and access areas. However, there should generally be 20-30% of the site in amenity open space, as public plazas, landscaping or decoratively-paved wider sidewalks or sitting areas.
10. Development on the north side of the harbor should be of a scale similar to that of the Main Street Mixed Use Category, while taller heights may be allowed on the

south side of the harbor with a gradual height transition between the north and south sides.

d. Building Design (Also see Harbor Area Master Plan and Design Guidelines)

1. Architecture should be compatible with and reflective of character, materials, and form of the existing traditional residential, commercial and industrial buildings in the Town of Cape Charles.
2. 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.
3. The traditional gridded layout of streets in the Harbor Area should be reinforced through the placement and design of buildings, travelways, and landscape elements. New streets should extend the existing historic street grid of the Town.
4. 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.

3. TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL MIXED-USE

Note: Refer to the Historic District Guidelines for more detailed guidelines for development in this district.

a. Function

1. To meet the housing needs for the citizens of Cape Charles, while maintaining the single family residential character of the Historic District.
2. To allow for the diverse mix of compatible commercial, entertainment, governmental and residential uses that currently exist in the Historic District.

b. Preferred Uses

1. Land uses in this designation should consist primarily of single-family dwellings with some multi-family houses, including row houses containing two to four dwelling units per structure, and single-family houses which have been converted into two-family or multi-family dwelling units.
2. A number of publicly owned lands and buildings, such as the Town Hall, the library, Central Park, and the school, currently exist in this district. Uses that support the civic and recreational needs of Town residents should be compatible with the existing residential character of the area

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Traditional Residential Mixed-Use projects should be compatible with the existing residential character, such as that found along the Town's historic residential streets, with a fine-grained land use pattern at a human scale.
2. All development should be sympathetic with the existing character of the area.
3. Infill development should be compatible with existing residential structures, and promote historic preservation and improve dilapidated properties.
4. Future consideration for multi-family dwellings should be based upon architectural compatibility with the Historic District guidelines.
5. Vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation should tie the district together internally and with surrounding areas
6. Landscaping should be compatible with the large canopy and flowering trees located along streets, in private yards and in public rights-of-way, and should contribute to the visual character of the area.
7. Design elements that contribute to the character of the residential area should be considered, such as sidewalks and fencing.

d. Building Design

1. Architecture should be compatible with and reflective of character, materials, and form of the existing traditional residential and commercial buildings in the Historic District.
2. Existing historic structures should be preserved and adapted for reuse over time.
3. New dwellings should complement the historic structures.

4. LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

a. Function

1. To provide low density housing in a rural setting.
2. To encourage creative and flexible site design that allows clustering of development to protect viewsheds and preserve open space and natural features.

b. Preferred Uses

1. Land uses in this designation should consist primarily of single-family dwellings.
2. Low-density residential areas are intended to have a gross density of between 1-5 acres per unit, and to be clustered to protect significant areas of open space.
3. Development proposals that seek higher density ranges than those identified in section b, in order to utilize desired clustering methods and preserve open space, should also be considered.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Low Density Residential projects should be compatible with the traditional character of Eastern Shore rural settlements, with small compact clusters of homes surrounded by open rural land and farm fields
2. Houses in this district should generally be no more than 2 ½ stories tall.

3. Residential uses should be clustered to protect the viewsheds from surrounding areas and the Town's entrance corridor. Cluster development should permanently preserve 50-65 percent of the open space within the site.
4. Consideration should be given to the design requirements in the proposed Historic Town Entrance Corridor Overlay District, as applied to this district
5. Pedestrian circulation should be designed as an integral part of the development project.
6. Vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian links should extend into the surrounding development.
7. Landscaping should be provided according to the approved Town landscape plan (if applicable) and should be part of the streetscape, parks, and open spaces.

d. Building Design

1. Architecture should be compatible with and reflective of character, materials, and form of the traditional settlement pattern and character of the Eastern Shore.
2. Buildings and landscaping should be sited to protect the rural viewsheds at the Town's edges and entrance corridors.

5. EMPLOYMENT

a. Function

1. To provide a broad spectrum of local and regional employment that offers living wage jobs and supports a balanced tax base.
1. To provide a high degree of regional and local transportation accessibility, including automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle modes of transportation.
2. To provide access to some of the daily retail and service needs within walking distance of the primary office/industrial uses.
2. To encourage cost effective approaches to resource conservation, wise use of renewable resources, and ecologically based industrial development.
3. To serve as a model for advancing the traditional settlement patterns of the Eastern Shore's towns and employment centers.

b. Preferred Uses

1. Land uses in the designation should consist of office and flexible industrial uses, including corporate headquarters, emerging technologies facilities, and light manufacturing, that support local and regional employment opportunities consistent with the Town's small town historic character.
2. Residential mixed use areas should be encouraged to complement existing and future employment opportunities.
3. Open space and recreational uses, such as walkways, greenways, and public plazas and promenades, should be maintained as an important amenity to the Town.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Projects should be designed architecturally and functionally as a well-integrated unit. Vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation should tie the district together internally and with surrounding areas
2. Office buildings should be located close to the roadways with parking behind, or underneath and/or located in the interior of the development, so that building fronts and entrances face on the street.
3. In general, buildings should be two to three stories. However, land use or intensity/density transitions should be provided between surrounding areas.
4. 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.
5. Design elements should be integrated with wide sidewalks, street trees, benches, and entrances to buildings at the edges of street rights-of-way. Bicycle facilities and usable public spaces should be provided.
6. Most of the site may be developed as building, parking or paved plaza and access areas. However, there should generally be 30-40% of the site in amenity open space, as public plazas, landscaping, greenways or recreational facilities.
7. Alleys, thoroughfares, and service ways should be utilized to ensure trash pickup and deliveries for commercial establishments do not take place along public right of ways.

d. Building Design

1. Architecture should be compatible with and reflective of character, materials, and features of Cape Charles, while still reflecting the best contemporary design and development practices.
2. 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.
3. Along major street frontages, buildings should be 2 to 3 stories and may decrease in height as they become less visible from the street.
4. Building facades should have compatible architectural detail when visible from public areas.

6. INDUSTRIAL

a. Function

1. To encourage the revitalization of the local industrial economy and historic port, and to provide job opportunities for local residents.
2. To allow for major employment uses that are compatible with the Town's historic character as a maritime and railroad center for the Eastern Shore.

b. Preferred Uses

1. Land uses in this designation should contribute to the existing maritime and industrial nature of Cape Charles and may consist of buildings used for manufacturing and warehousing, including such accessory uses as rail loading yards, parking and storage.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Industrial projects should be compatible with the overall character and visual improvements in the Harbor Area.
2. Building placement, design details, and landscaping and screening should be used to minimize visual impacts on adjacent residential and other mixed uses. Heavy Industrial uses should be screened from major roads, public waterfront amenities, and surrounding uses.
3. Industrial uses should locate in areas where public utilities and facilities are adequate to support such uses. Upgrading and extension of roads, water, sewer, electrical, telephone, and natural gas systems should be considered in review of an industrial rezoning request.

d. Building Design

1. Marine and rail-dependent structures should be allowed to reflect their intended uses through the use of practical materials and straightforward design. Outbuildings, sheds and temporary structures should be designed to minimize negative visual impacts.

7. OPEN SPACE/RECREATION

a. Function

1. To provide open space and conservation areas to meet the physical and environmental needs of the Town.
2. To enhance the Town's aesthetic appeal along transportation corridors.

b. Preferred Uses

1. Land Use in the Open Space designation should consist of critical natural resources, such as shorelines and wetlands, as well as agricultural/forestral resources.
2. Open Space areas should also include parks, private golf courses, and other recreational amenities, such as multi-use paths, promenades and plazas.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Open space areas should retain existing vegetation, particularly trees, where feasible and reforestation and revegetation of open areas of the site with native plant materials.

2. Where feasible, currently damaged or degraded landscapes and wildlife habitats should be restored and enhanced creating new natural areas and wetlands on the site.
3. Site elements should be arranged to protect and enhance special land characteristics, natural features, rare or endangered species areas, archeological sites, and other unusual natural or man-made site characteristics.

8. PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

a. Function

1. To encourage creative master planning for large scale developments, which incorporates mixed residential densities, open space, commercial and recreational facilities in overall design
2. To maintain the rural character of the Town's periphery while providing for sensitive development of residential uses and other uses compatible with a rural environment.

b. Preferred Uses

1. Land uses within the Planned Unit Development designation should be compatible with others in the town and immediate surroundings.
2. Commercial uses should be concentrated in the areas shown on the Future Land Use Map as Commercial PUD.
3. Uses should be mixed to encourage walkable communities.

c. Design Character and Scale

1. Development should be oriented away from sensitive natural resources, such as shorelines and marsh grasses to minimize the effect of new development.
2. Development should be clustered to provide the maximum amount of open space and a variety of dwelling types. Increased amounts of open space will help to maintain the character of the area as new development occurs.
3. Commercial uses within the areas designated as Commercial PUD should be integrated with residential uses to form compact, walkable, mixed use neighborhood centers
4. Multi-modal circulation should be designed as an integral part of the development project.
5. Vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian links should extend into the surrounding development.
6. Landscaping should be provided according to the approved Town landscape plan (if applicable) and should be part of the streetscape, parks, and open spaces.

d. Building Design

1. The design of buildings should be compatible with nearby development.

9. RAILROAD

This district is intended to acknowledge the railroad owned properties as important historic and economic resources within the Town. As such, the area designated railroad should maintain its commercial function. Future pedestrian and vehicle connections should be coordinated with the railroad owners and should protect primary railroad access, as well as the safety of pedestrians and vehicles using the crossings. Previously discussed changes to the area's transportation network include conversion of the railroad overpass to a multimodal overpass which could also be used for vehicles during emergency situations. Normal vehicular traffic could then be routed to an at-grade crossing of the railroad tracks between Fig Street and Old Cape Charles Road. The Town should work closely with the railroad owners when considering such options.

(see additional pdf for Future Land Use Map)

III. AREA-SPECIFIC POLICIES

The following policies are designed to give more specific guidance for key planning areas within and adjacent to the Town. They are consistent with the Land Use Plan and the General Land Use and Community Design Policy Framework as described above. Building on this overall framework, they also incorporate the area-specific recommendations that came out of the public input process and the Planning Commission and Town Council work sessions that were part of the Comprehensive Plan update.

A. HISTORIC TOWN CENTER AREA

- The integrity of this district should be preserved and enhanced through streetscape improvements along Mason Avenue, median restoration and landscaping, and sidewalk improvements.
- The Town’s central park should be developed as an urban/civic amenity that provides a multipurpose space for town events and individual recreation, and connects to other activity centers via greenway connections.
- Infill development or renovation within established neighborhoods should be compatible with adjacent structures and the neighborhood as a whole.
- Accessory dwelling units should be promoted as a way to add diversity of housing types, while maintaining the character and providing affordable options.
- New centers of activity, such as a new pedestrian plaza on Strawberry Street, should be created to serve the commercial, recreational and civic needs of both residents and visitors.
- Combined live-work structures should be encouraged in new development and in the Mason Avenue districts to better integrate housing with the shops and businesses of the new and existing “Centers”.
- Vehicular and pedestrian connections between activity centers should be promoted.
- The development of Town-owned land and facilities, such as a community center and Town beach, should serve as both a catalyst and amenity for surrounding neighboring development.
- Preserving the integrity and accessibility of the water’s edge is critical to maintaining the quality of life within the town and should include measures to

enhance the beach as an amenity to Town, control shoreline erosion, and integrate the Harbor walkway with the historic core.

- The Town should protect its scenic, recreational and open space resources by using environmentally sensitive design techniques in new development, preserving existing features during the site plan review process, incorporating low impact development techniques, and restoring and re-vegetating natural areas.
- The existing pattern of on-street parking should be continued and improved through enhanced parking space delineations, especially on streets such as Mason and Bay Avenue, Peach Street and Strawberry Street.
- The Cape Charles High School should be preserved to ensure it is available for future uses.

B. SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGIES INDUSTRIAL PARK (STIP) AREA

- The Town should create new focal points within the STIP site that further the goals of providing employment, education and conservation areas. These could include additional employment centers, a local community college, and a regional recreational center. The town should also expand existing conservation areas and promote greenway connections between educational and employment focal points by incorporating environmental features such as wetlands and drainage ways, and urban streetscapes with landscaping and street trees.
- The STIP area should provide opportunities for large-scale employment uses that serve the Town with high quality jobs for its residents. However, the STIP may also serve as a fully integrated mixed-use neighborhood, with associated residential, civic and convenience retail uses, located within convenient walking distance to the employment uses. Greenways and other linkages should be promoted to connect employment opportunities to surrounding educational and conservation areas.
- The STIP should expand conservation areas, such as the Coastal Dune Natural Area, and strengthen connections to existing “Green” focal points, such as the Town Park and various landscaped open spaces in Bay Creek.
- New development within the STIP should match the prevailing style and character of traditional buildings in Cape Charles, while reflecting the best contemporary design and development practices (using environmentally sensitive design techniques in new development, preserving existing features during the site plan review process, incorporating low impact development techniques, and restoring and re-vegetating natural areas.). The scale, massing, colors and materials of new

buildings should be traditional and compatible with the Town’s historic architectural fabric.

- The Town should work cooperatively with the County to plan for the future character and use of the STIP and should pursue the ability to jointly review proposals for properties within the STIP.

C. HARBOR AREA

Note: Refer to the Harbor Area Conceptual Master Plan And Design Guidelines for more detailed policies and standards for development in this district.

- New development in the Harbor Area should match the prevailing style and character of traditional buildings in Cape Charles, while reflecting the best contemporary design and development practices. The scale, massing, colors and materials of new buildings should be traditional and compatible with the Town’s historic architectural fabric.
- The Harbor Area and the area around the Cape Charles Elementary School should develop as new centers of activity that serve the commercial, recreational and civic needs of both residents and visitors.
- The development of Town-owned land around the Cape Charles Elementary School should serve as both a catalyst and amenity for surrounding neighboring development.
- Combined live-work structures should be encouraged in new development to better integrate housing with the shops and businesses of the new “Centers”.
- Development within the Harbor Area should preserve the integrity and accessibility of the water’s edge and should include measures to integrate the Harbor walkway with the historic core.
- The Harbor Area should connect to important activity centers, such as the Town Park, STIP and Coastal Dune Natural Area, through greenway connections that incorporate environmental features such as wetlands and drainage ways, and urban streetscapes with landscaping and street trees.

D. ENTRY CORRIDORS

- The Town should continue to protect the scenic viewsheds and rural identity along the Route 184 and Route 642 corridors through visual enhancements, land use regulations, setback requirements, design standards and landscaping requirements.
- The railroad land along the south side of Route 184 should continue to serve as a visual buffer of open space and act as an open viewshed along the main entry corridor.
- The Town should pursue a roundabout at the intersection of Fig Street and Randolph Street to improve traffic flow onto Mason Avenue and create a gateway into the Historic Town Center.
- The Town should work cooperatively with the County to plan for the future character of the corridor. The Town should encourage the County adoption of the overlay district, and pursue the ability to jointly review proposals for properties within the County that influence the Town's entry corridor.
- The Town should protect its scenic, recreational and open space resources along the corridor by encouraging environmentally sensitive design techniques in new development, preserving existing features during the site plan review process, incorporating low impact development techniques, and restoring and re-vegetating natural areas.

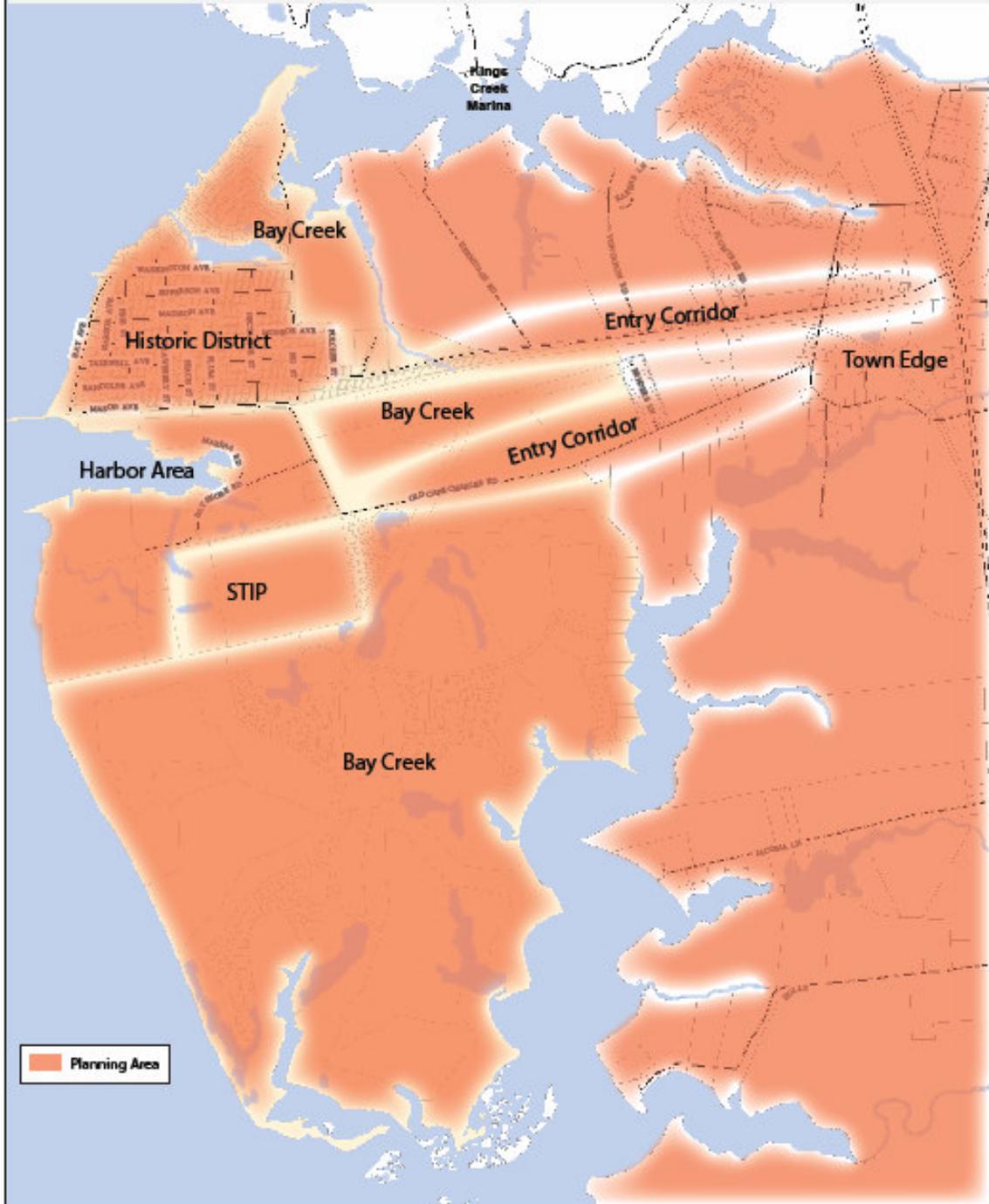
E. BAY CREEK

- Centers of activity that serve the commercial, recreational and civic needs of residents and visitors within convenient walking distance should be encouraged in Bay Creek.
- The Town should continue to work with developers to ensure future vehicular and pedestrian connections between new and existing centers of activity within the Town.
- Preserving the integrity and accessibility of the water's edge is critical to maintaining the quality of life within the town. The Town should continue to encourage measures that promote multi-modal accessibility from Bay Creek to amenities along the water, such as the beach, Harbor Walkway, Marina Village and new activity centers.
- Landscaped and natural open spaces within Bay Creek are valued amenities to the Town and should be encouraged in all new development projects.

F. TOWN EDGES

- The Town should work cooperatively with the County to plan for the future character of the areas surrounding the Town boundary, by working to establish Town Edge plans as called for in the Northampton County Comprehensive Plan.
- The Town should be an active participant in land use decisions that affect land adjacent to Cape Charles and should pursue the ability to jointly review proposals for properties within the County that influence the Town's entry corridor.
- The Town should work with the County to establish an appropriate 'Gateway' at the Route 13/184 intersection through access management, landscape and frontage improvements and overall quality of site and building design in the area.
- New land development along the entry corridors should be carefully reviewed to insure that changes enhance, and do not detract from, the positive image and character that exists in this area.

DRAFT: Planning Area Map



Map created January 18, 2007

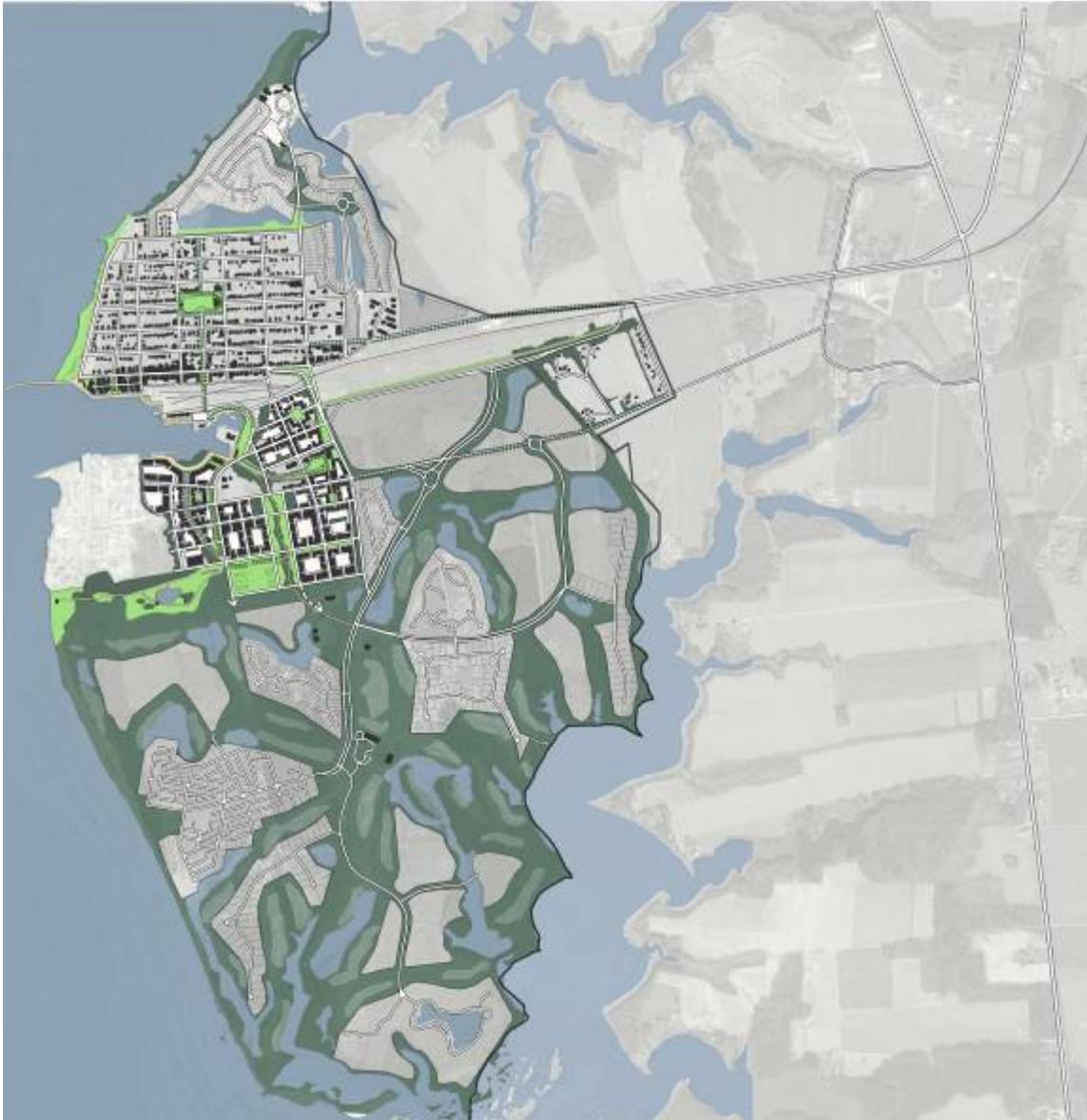


IV. ILLUSTRATIVE CONCEPT PLANS

The following plans and drawings represent only one of many potential development scenarios for specific sites within the Town. They are intended to illustrate possible implementation of the preferred use and design character and scale called for in the policies and Future Land Use Plan.

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 Future Land Use Plan and the design criteria contained within.

A. ILLUSTRATIVE CONCEPT PLAN



The Illustrative Concept Plan for the Town shows one potential way of illustrating the design principles embodied in the Future Land Use Plan, including:

1. Enhanced centers of activity along Mason Avenue, the Harbor and the STIP, as potentially built out in the distant future
2. An open space and trail network that connects activity centers within the Town.
3. An urban form 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
4. Enhanced transportation networks to facilitate more connections among different neighborhoods in the Town.

B. BAY AVENUE AREA

The Illustrative Concept Plan for the Bay Avenue Area shows one possible way of depicting a number of the design principles conveyed in the Future Land Use Plan and Policies, including:

1. A continuous walkway connecting the beach to residential areas and Harbor
2. Enhanced on-street parking and safe crosswalks
3. Streetscape improvements that define street edges without compromising views of the beach



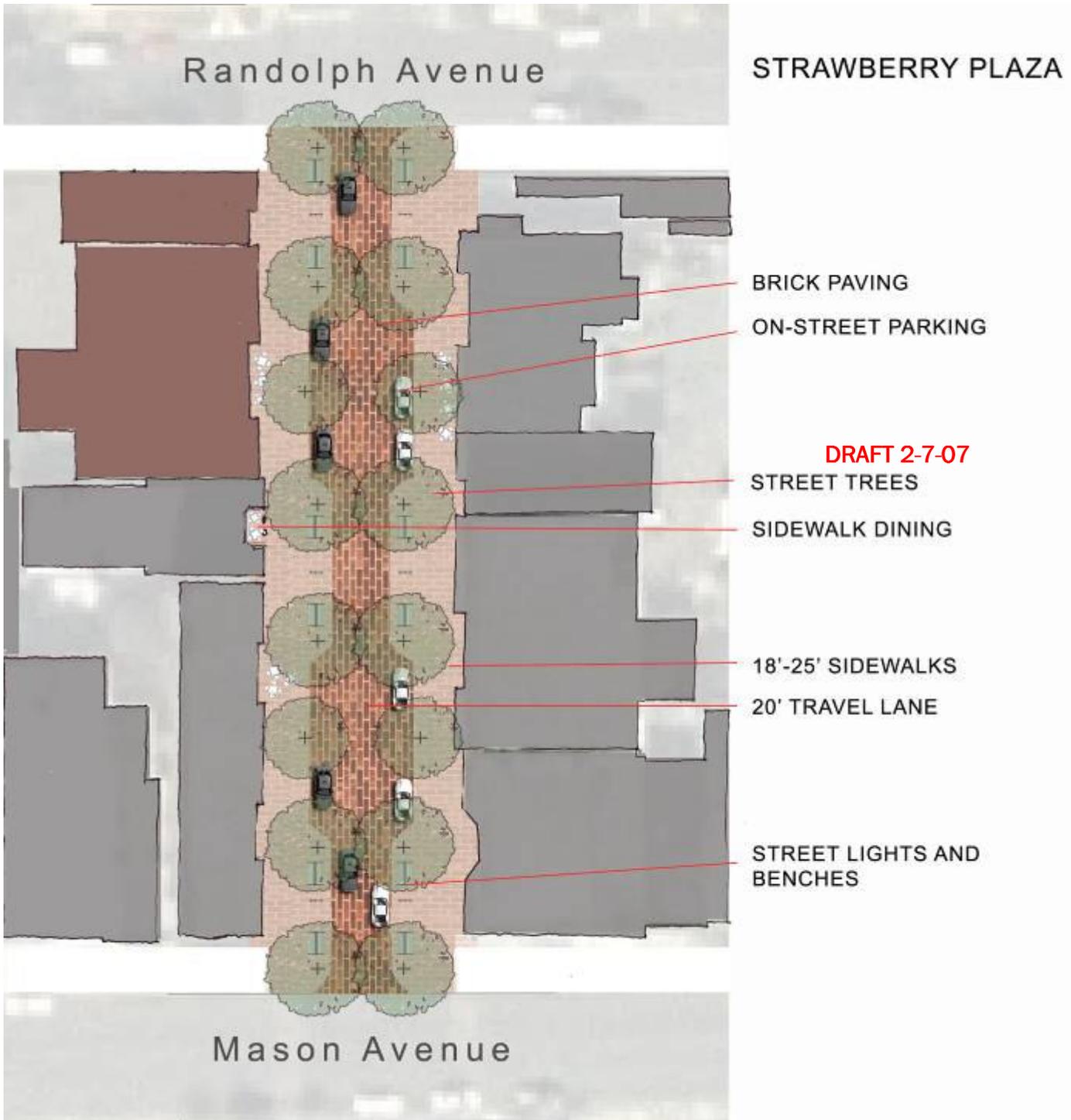


C. STRAWBERRY PLAZA

The Illustrative Concept Plan for the Strawberry Street area shows a potential for a new center for arts, culture and related commercial uses at the south end of Strawberry Street. It incorporates the existing buildings into a new pedestrian oriented arts and entertainment destination that could include small artist studios and shops, live/work units, restaurants, and other commercial uses.

The site plan includes key design features such as:

1. A large public promenade that serves as a public gathering area and focus for amenities such as arts festivals and other events and celebrations.
2. Streetscape improvements, such as street furniture, street trees, and brick paving, that contribute to the quality of the pedestrian experience
3. Enhanced on-street parking and smaller travel lanes





(see separate pdf file for implementation section)