

Route 28 Visioning Project

Frequently Asked Questions

Project Background

- Why is the Town doing this project?

The project is being conducted under the direction of the Board of Selectmen with involvement from the Planning Board. The project is being done in response to local concerns about both the form and layout of potential future development along the corridor. The study includes identifying potential opportunities to enhance or change land use and development patterns along the corridor consistent with the town's Comprehensive Plan. This includes developing visualizations of these potential changes for consideration by the town and the public. The project will result in recommendations to the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board about potential changes to the town's regulations to shape the future land use pattern along the corridor. The project will not result in draft zoning, or make decisions on town matters. Rather, it will serve as a starting point for taking such action.
- What is the study area for this project?

The study area includes 352 parcels stretching the length of Route 28 from the Harwich Town Line to the intersection of Route 28 and Crowell Road. It includes all parcels that either have frontage on Route 28, are zoned SB or GB3 in this area. The study area also includes the GB3 properties located on the southerly part of Crowell Road. A map of the study area parcels may be found on the project website, www.chatham-ma.gov/Rte28corridorproject.
- How is this project different than the West Chatham Roadway Design project?

The Route 28 Visioning Project is one of two significant planning and design efforts involving Route 28 in Chatham. The Visioning project focuses on studying the land use pattern in the study area and does not involve any potential changes in the road right-of-way. The West Chatham Roadway Design Project is a separate but coordinated project being undertaken by Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates, Inc and the Town. The Roadway Design project is taking the design concept approved by the Town's Board of Selectmen for the section of Route 28 in West Chatham between George Ryder Road and Barnhill Road and bringing the design to a point where it is ready for construction. If you are interested in more information about the Roadway Design Project, please visit the project website at www.wcroadwaydesign.info.
- When will this project be completed?

This planning project is scheduled to be completed by early fall 2013.
- Who is working on this project?

The Board of Selectmen hired the Cape Cod Commission to lead the project. The day to day activities of the Cape Cod Commission are overseen by the Town Manager and Community Development Department.

- What is a buildout analysis and how is this type of analysis being used in this project?
A build out analysis is a method of estimating future development potential based on existing regulations and other factors that affect development. The buildout analysis for this project is being used to estimate the amount and distribution of development potential in the study area; to aid understanding of how regulations affect development; and to allow comparison and testing of alternate scenarios. The building out analysis excludes property that can not be developed such as conservation land and cemeteries. For the Route 28 corridor, 318 parcels are included in the analysis. The results of the buildout are estimates of future potential only. While many of the assumptions that provide the basis for the analysis may be subject to debate, no assumption is going to provide an exact prediction of future conditions. The true value of the buildout estimate is that it helps us understand a possible future outcome and provides a baseline against which alternate land use scenarios can be measured.
- Will this project take into consideration the impact sewers will have on growth along the corridor?
This project will include review of the sewer regulations and how they may affect development potential along the corridor.
- What is a visualization and how is it being used in this project?
A visualization is a method of presenting information using graphics. Visualizations produced for this project will include photos, maps, graphs, and drawings to help illustrate land use concepts and development patterns.
- How can I participate in this project?
Three public workshops/ meetings will be conducted for this project. The first public workshop is scheduled for May 2, 2013. The second is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, June 15, 2013. The project webpage is also a good source of information www.chatham-ma.gov/Rte28corridorproject. The webpage will be updated routinely to provide public access to all materials. Through the webpage, the public will also be given opportunities to provide comments/opinions in a variety of formats throughout the planning process.

Workshop 1

- *You've demonstrated that sewer regulations are generally not the controlling factor in growth. What happens when sewer regulations are, in effect, lifted?*
 - The zoning regulations remain in place, and therefore they will continue to set the parameters for growth in that district.

- *Don't sewer regulations control business growth within a business allowed by zoning i.e. seat calculations for eating establishments that have physical room for growth without increasing the size of the building?*
 - Sewer regulations may affect the intensity, i.e. number of seats in the case of the restaurant, in certain situations without any physical increase in the size of the building. Based on the four case studies conducted, the sewer regulations generally allow for sufficient flow for most uses used to reach the estimated buildout potential allowed under zoning, i.e. the zoning is the “limiting” factor.
- *Aren't you saying that the sewer regulations do not control density? It will be up to changes in the zoning regulations and especially permitted uses and dimensional regulations to control density and growth.*
 - Density (defined as number of dwelling units per acre) is controlled by zoning, which also sets the dimensional standards and uses allowed in a district. The sewer regulations control the number of bedrooms per lot and have no impact on number of dwelling units or density.
- *What population is expected at buildout?*
 - The buildout is an estimate of the total amount of development possible, however, the timeframe for when or if buildout occurs is unknown. No projection of population is made through this analysis as the population is determined by how many people occupy each dwelling, and whether the structure is occupied permanently, or not. A future population can be estimated using a factor of people per household but this has not been done as part of this project.
- *How many commercial new establishments added along Route 28 being studied over the past 10 years, 20 years and 30 years?*
 - An analysis of past development trends/timeline along the corridor has not been conducted. A review of development records will be conducted to determine if this analysis would be beneficial to this project.
- *What percentage of the corridor is currently open space/conservation land?*
 - *There are 15 properties in the study area that are open space/conservation land (approximately 15 acres in total). This is approximately 4% of the total parcels in the study area.*
- *Did you subtract wetlands from potential buildout areas?*
 - Yes, as the town's zoning requires all density calculations to be made based on upland area.
- *Did you assume types of uses at buildout under existing regulations were based on existing percentages already developed?*
 - The buildout analysis accounts for existing development by subtracting either the existing dwellings or existing non-residential square footage from the development potential calculated. However, when projecting development into the future it is not possible to make a fine grained analysis that mirrors the

complexity of the mix of uses on the ground today or allowable under zoning. This is particularly true for commercial districts. The buildout uses an assumed blend of commercial uses to estimate parking demand in each of the commercial districts, including retail, restaurant and offices. This is an oversimplification of the potential outcomes under zoning, but is appropriate given the purpose of buildout in estimating potential.

- *Define “sprawl.”*
 - In the land-use planning realm we consider sprawl to be low-density, land consumptive, automobile-dependent development that occurs beyond the edge of service ,employment or development areas. This word appears in the long range comprehensive plan and is frequently used when describing development patterns.
- *Density was defined as a negative – dislike...shown in [your word cloud from the listening sessions]. Was there any discussion on what is understood by density and/or what context density was considered e.g. by lot/by combined lots/along the corridor?*
 - Participants in the listening sessions spoke from their own personal perspectives and used the term density as they believed appropriate and generally without clarification on the meaning of the term or its context. We plan to explore the concept of density and its applicability to Route 28 land use planning at Workshop 2 as a common understanding of this term is central to this land use study.
- *Are current uses (zoning/businesses) “grandfathered?” should zoning regulations change?*
 - Massachusetts zoning statute contains certain “protections” to lawfully established uses and structures that do not conform to current zoning requirements. If this effort results in recommendations to changes in zoning, and Town Meeting eventually approves changes to zoning that render existing uses or structures non-conforming in some way, these uses will be entitled to certain protections under state statute.
- *You state that “Local Store (stand alone commercial)” is not allowed in the SB District. Antique shops, art galleries and gift shop are permitted uses.*
 - The Town of Chatham Zoning Bylaw does allow antique shops, art galleries and gift shops in the SB District with special conditions, which include that the business must be located within a residence and operated by a resident occupant. A “stand alone” antique shop, art gallery or gift shop, as well as retail sales and services are not allowed in the SB District. One of the purposes of the question is to stimulate discussion and thought about whether or not the uses allowed in the Small Business District are consistent with the community’s vision of a small business district. For example, should these businesses only be allowed if they are connected to a residence? And, how does a gift shop differ from retail sales and service? Should retail be

restricted to home based businesses while formula businesses can go anywhere in the SB District with a special permit.

- *In the 1980's voters approved the Historic Business District, which embraced the notion that the Route 28 corridor...was to be preserved as significantly business in character. Why was that effort and intent wrong, or what has changed to moot that point?*
 - The purpose of the Historic Business District has not changed, nor has anything done in this project inferred this purpose is “wrong” or “moot”. This study is guided by a number of bylaws, regulations and legislation, including the enabling legislation and rules and regulations of the HBDC and the Town’s Comprehensive Plan, adopted by Town Meeting May 13, 2003.
- *To what extent do transportation improvements/changes affect land use (or vice versa) in the area?*
 - The Cape Cod Commission’s scope does not include any analysis of the roadway, or changes to the configuration that may affect abutting land. The roadway design is the subject of a separate contract with the town, details of which can be found at <http://www.wcroadwaydesign.info/index.html>. However, the use of property will have an effect on the number of vehicles travelling the corridor and the configuration of the site (i.e. number of curb cuts, parking lot size, etc). Conversely, the roadway design will influence the speed and flow of traffic on Route 28 that in turn may influence the uses adjacent to it.
- *Did you talk to West Chatham businesses yet? What businesses did you talk to along Route 28?*
 - The Cape Cod Commission and Director of Community Development held six listening sessions and met with the following groups: Chatham Alliance for Preservation and Conservation, West Chatham Village & Business Association, West Chatham Association, Chatham Chamber of Commerce members/affiliates, and local builders. These meetings were attended by business owners in several areas of the corridor, including West Chatham. Notices for all the workshops are also mailed to owners and businesses in the study area. All stakeholders, including business owners, are encouraged and welcomed to provide feedback and comment through the three workshops and can provide input at any time via the project website.
- *Why are staff (yours and ours) voting?*
 - The Cape Cod Commission staff did not answer any polling questions during the first public workshop. Some Town of Chatham staff participated, others did not. As town residents Town staff have a right to participate in such projects. (Please note, also, that no attempt was made at the workshop to limit participation to town residents; nor are project related polls and comment forms restricted to Chatham residents.)