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Route 28 Report



PREPARED FOR THE TOWN OF YARMOUTH
JUNE 2011



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Table of Contents

SECTION A

INTRODUCTION.....	1
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS.....	5

SECTION B

PRESENTATION TO PLANNING BOARD (11/2009).....	19
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SECTION C

PRESENTATION TO THE PLANNING BOARD (1/2010)	44
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SECTION D : INTERIM USES OF FORMER DRIVE-IN SITE

PART A: USE OPTIONS (5/2010)	77
PART B: CONCEPT AND COST ESTIMATES (8/2010)	101

SECTION E: CORRIDOR STREETSCAPE

PART A: INITIAL CONCEPTS (7/2010)	111
PART B: RECOMMENDATIONS (9/2010).....	118



Introduction

Between November 2009 and September 2010, the Cape Cod Commission provided technical assistance to the Town of Yarmouth and worked collaboratively with both the Yarmouth Planning Board and the staff of the Community Development Department to develop options to further the town's desire to encourage re-development and re-investment on Route 28.

The Route 28 corridor is an automobile-oriented commercial area that is often congested with traffic and lacks amenities for pedestrians and cyclists. As a result of typical post-war suburban zoning, the linear commercial zone has a similar appearance for much of the corridor and lacks focal points, which means that there are few points of interest or reference points to orient people along the roadway.

The town has expressed a desire to improve the quality and form of development along this corridor and to focus redevelopment in more discreet areas. Target areas were most recently identified through the adoption of the Land Use Vision Map (LUVM) that was incorporated into the Commission's Regional Policy Plan (Figure A).

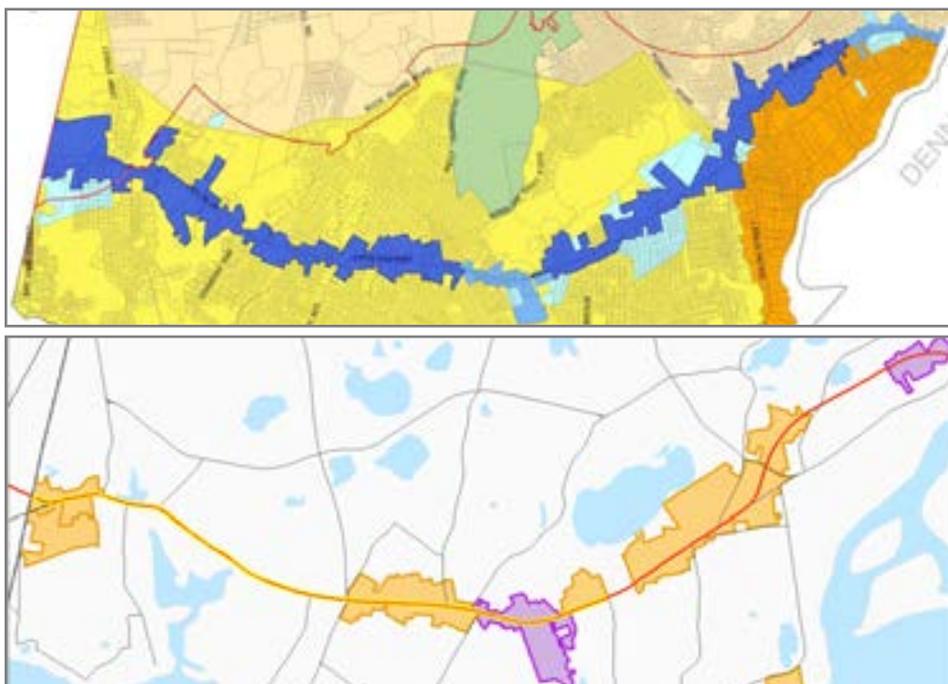


Figure A: Yarmouth zoning above (commercial zoning shown blue), and Yarmouth Land Use Vision Map below (orange represents economic centers, purple represents villages) along Route 28

The Commission efforts were focused on the Route 28 corridor between Winslow Gray Avenue and Lyman Lane (just west of Yarmouth Town Hall). The identification of this target area was based on prior work efforts to establish village or activity centers along Route 28 (including work by the Bluestone Planning Group (2005, Figure B) and the Cecil Group (2009, Figure C)).

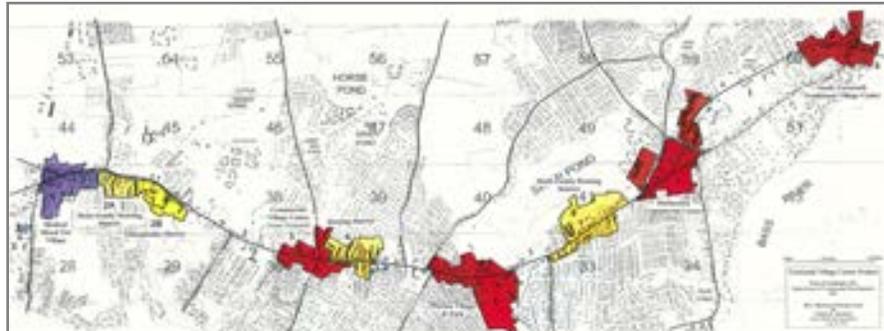


Figure B: Bluestone Planning Group illustration

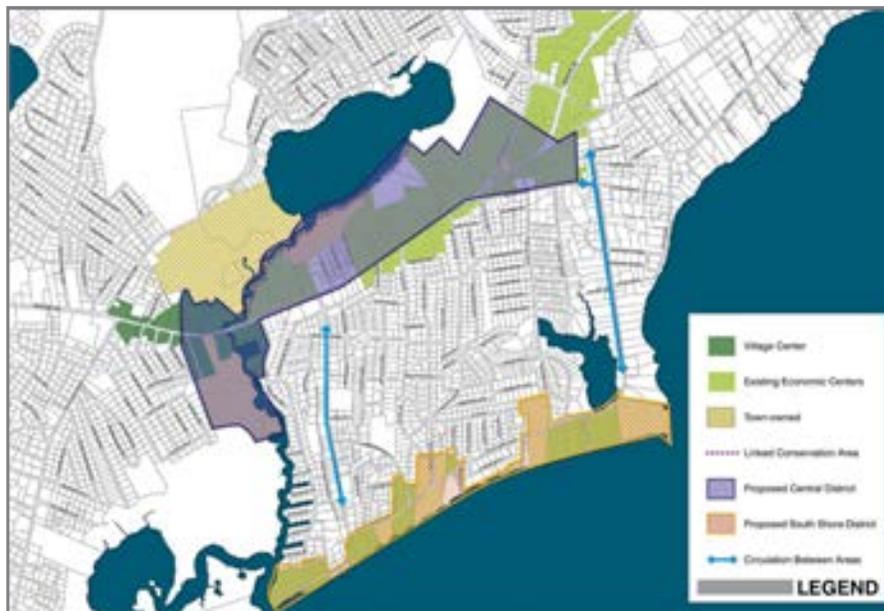


Figure C: Cecil Group “central district”



At the request of the Planning Board, the Commission was asked to provide technical assistance to help explore the feasibility of the ideas presented to the town by the Cecil Group and others, and to further the town's vision for the area. In November 2009, the Commission presented the Yarmouth Planning Board with a series of options for technical assistance that would respond to the town's request (See Section B). Following this presentation, the Planning Board requested assistance in:

- Developing the land use element of the LCP,
- Exploring the feasibility of the central district proposed by Cecil Group, and,
- Exploring alternative options for the area.

In consultation with the Yarmouth Community Development Department, the Commission focused its study on a portion of Route 28 that includes all commercially zoned property fronting on Route 28, between Winslow Gray Avenue and Lyman Lane. This study area includes parts of the corridor designated as Economic Centers or Village under the LUV, and the central district proposed by Cecil Group as part of their Market Study (see Figure D).



Figure D: Study area



The Commission established a multidisciplinary team with expertise in planning, water resources, transportation, economic development, historic preservation, natural resources, coastal resources, affordable housing, landscape architecture and design. This team met intensively over a short period of time, gathering together information concerning the resources present in the area and understanding the variety of issues affecting the study area.

Using a buildout model, the Commission explored a variety of options and alternatives to understand the effect of different development scenarios on transportation, water resources and jobs in the area. The Commission also studied the form and pattern of development in the study area and potential changes that could be made to improve the appearance of the area and differentiate between different sections of Route 28.

The Commission assisted the Community Development Department staff with reviewing the Yarmouth Local Comprehensive Plan providing an overview of updated information that would be needed to certify the LCP under the Commission's LCP regulations. In addition, the town adopted a vision statement for the LCP update at the 2010 spring town meeting.

Over the course of the spring and summer of 2010, the Commission worked closely with the Community Development Department staff and met with the Yarmouth Planning Board in a series of workshops focused on different tasks. During these workshops, the Commission made recommendations for ways in which the town's redevelopment goals for identified areas on Route 28 could be furthered. During these workshops, town staff, planning board members, property owners and other members of the public provided comment and input that guided the Commission's recommendations. These are summarized below, and are followed by a detailed description of each recommendation. All materials, presentations and handouts distributed and discussed with the Planning Board are contained in Section B through E.



Key Recommendations

1. Adopt a vision for the Route 28 corridor which supports the concept of discrete areas of activity (nodes) with lower activity areas in between and ensure that capital expenditures further this vision. Prioritize growth in these nodes through the Land Use section of the LCP.
2. In the near term, focus redevelopment efforts on the segment of Route 28 between Winslow Gray Road to Lyman Lane with the aim of creating three pedestrian-oriented districts, separated by areas of less development.
3. Create a focal point around the Parker's River area; support redevelopment efforts by making improvements to areas under municipal control in the district, including investing in the former drive-in site and improving town amenities in the vicinity.
4. Implement plan for interim uses for the former drive in site that is compatible with the town's long term plans for a marina and which draws people to the area.
5. Revisit local regulations and tailor them to encourage the mix of uses and pattern of development desired.
6. Provide streetscape improvements to help create a stronger identity for the districts created, including amenities for pedestrians and cyclists, landscaping and beautification.
7. Explore realigning intersection of South Sea and Winslow Gray Avenues and making intersection a gateway to the Parker's River District.
8. Pursue financing options to support revitalization, including District Improvement Financing, Business Improvement Districts, grants.

Each of these recommendations is discussed more fully below.



1. ADOPT A VISION FOR THE ROUTE 28 CORRIDOR WHICH SUPPORTS THE CONCEPT OF DISCRETE AREAS OF ACTIVITY (NODES) WITH LOWER ACTIVITY AREAS IN BETWEEN AND ENSURE THAT CAPITAL EXPENDITURES FURTHER THIS VISION. PRIORITIZE GROWTH IN THESE NODES THROUGH THE LAND USE SECTION OF THE LCP.

The completion of the LCP has been identified as one of the Yarmouth Selectmen's goals. As the LCP update process continues, the Commission recommends that the town formally adopt the land use goal of establishing pedestrian oriented districts in discrete areas of the Route 28 corridor in order to focus redevelopment. This concept, explored by the Bluestone Planning Group and well supported by the town and the public provides a feasible alternative to the highway oriented commercial development currently experienced.

By formally adopting this vision within the land use section of the Yarmouth Local Comprehensive Plan, the town could prioritize their economic development goals, coordinate future capital planning decisions and regulatory review, and allow the town's resources to be targeted and used more effectively. Including a clear land use policy in the LCP ensures that infrastructure or capital expenditures along the corridor are coordinated to further this vision. For example, roadway and wastewater planning along Route 28 could be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the town's overall land use goals. If a more targeted growth strategy is successful, revitalization efforts could be replicated elsewhere in town in the longer term.

2. IN THE NEAR TERM, FOCUS REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS ON THE SEGMENT OF ROUTE 28 BETWEEN WINSLOW GRAY ROAD AND LYMAN LANE WITH THE AIM OF CREATING THREE PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED DISTRICTS, SEPARATED BY AREAS OF LESS DEVELOPMENT.

The Commission examined the existing pattern of development, explored a variety of alternative development options and studied the resulting buildout potential and resource impacts from each option. Although not readily discernible, the Commission believes that there are existing pattern along this stretch of Route 28 that can be built upon to set the districts apart from each other both functionally and visually. More specifically, the Cape Cod Commission recommends the study area be considered as three districts (see Figure E) , rather than a single larger district as envisioned by the Cecil Group plan.



The three districts include a:

- commercial district in the vicinity of the Parker's River (approximately Winslow Gray Road to Seaview Avenue);
- commercial district in the Forest Road area (approximately between Pine Grove Road and Lyman Road);
- residentially oriented area (hotel and residences) between these two commercial districts.

The three districts can be broadly characterized as follows (names added for ease of reference):

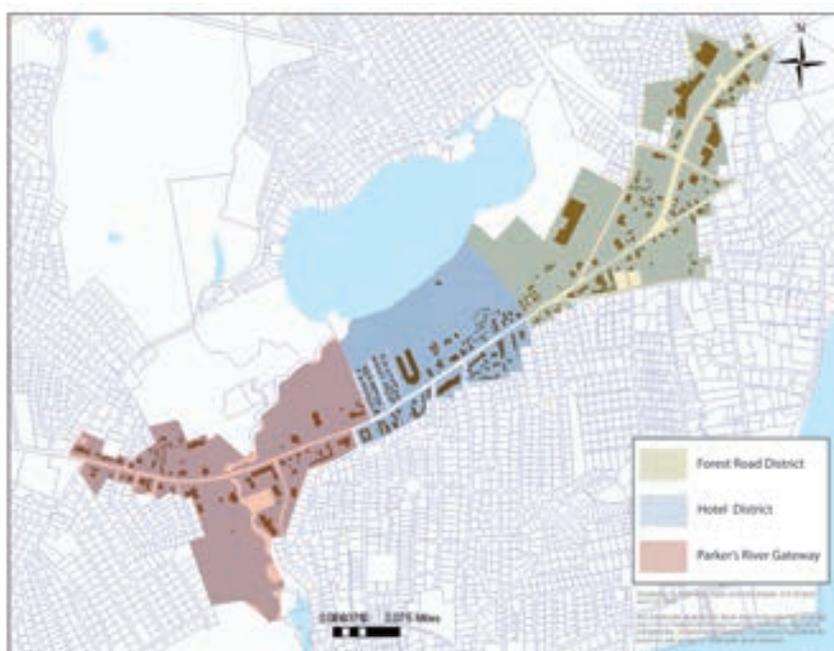


Figure E: Three Districts

Parker's River District

This district, extending roughly from Winslow Gray Road to Seaview Avenue, centers around the Parker's River and while the concept is to make the district more visitor oriented, public investment would also benefit year round. The intersection at Winslow Gray Road would serve as an important gateway to the district, with a transition to a more open and natural character around the river and bridge crossing. Existing uses in the area that cater to visitors would benefit from additional year round activity, with the publicly owned property in the area being key to



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the success of adjacent businesses. Mixed use should be encouraged, and the town should ensure that there is activity at the street level and that pedestrian and bicycle access is emphasized over vehicle access.



Figure F: In the Parker's River District, the existing roadway and development pattern (above) hides the natural resources and views present in the district (below).

Hotel/residential district

Located between the two commercial districts, the character of this area is defined by more residential uses and modest scale development. Currently, hotels, residential or smaller scale commercial development exists. The Commission recommends that these existing patterns be reinforced and emphasized so that the district offers a wide variety of housing types for local workers and places for visitors to stay that are convenient to the beaches and amenities that Yarmouth has to offer. As the district is in easy walking distance of the amenities and attractions in the Parker's River and Forest Road districts, it makes it an ideal location to provide re-development opportunities while potentially reducing the number of vehicle trips on Route 28. By providing housing, a base of



customers is provided that will be able to support businesses in the two adjacent districts year-round.



Figure G: In the hotel/residential district, the roadway is narrower and adjacent development is predominantly smaller scale, closer to the street and more residentially oriented.

Forest Road District

This district would encompass the commercially developed properties between Lyman Lane and Pine Grove Road. The uses in this district would be more focused on neighborhood and visitor services. These uses



Figure H: In the Forest Road District, the existing roadway is much wider and development is generally larger in scale, with some missing sidewalks and limited bicycle amenities. Family entertainment currently exists but shouldn't dominate this more neighborhood serving district.



are currently found in the district and provide important jobs and services for nearby residents. The Commission recommends that more office and residential uses be incorporated into this area to support the existing businesses year round. Visitor oriented uses in the area should remain, however, these types of uses should not predominate.

The existing pattern of development and land use supports the notion of breaking this segment of Route 28 into three districts, as illustrated by the existing land use and building footprint information (see Figure I). The close proximity of these districts means that residents or visitors located in the hotel/residential district are within easy walking distance of the commercial districts and amenities on either side. Figure J illustrates quarter mile walking distances from the center of each district and from district boundaries.

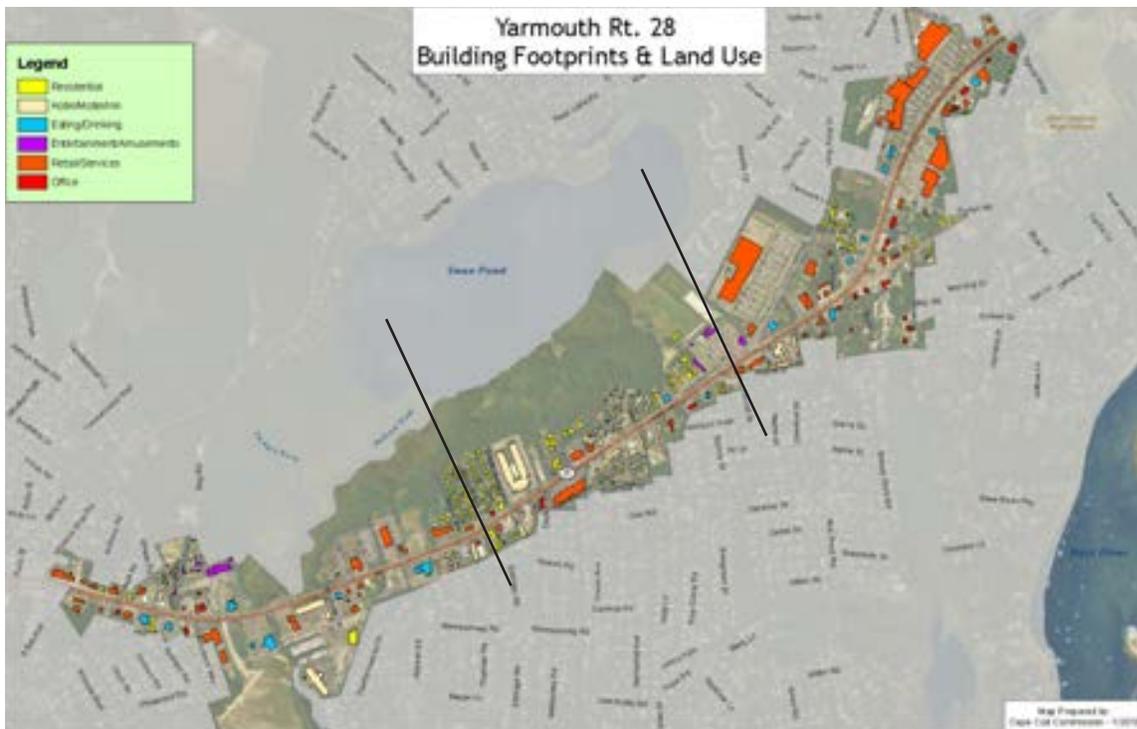


Figure I: Existing land use and building placement and size show fragments of three potential districts



Figure J: Three districts showing quarter-mile walking radius

The Commission also studied the resource limitations to the larger central district proposed by the Cecil Group. As noted by the Cecil Group, there are large undeveloped properties to the north of Route 28 adjacent to Swan Pond that will likely be key to re-development in the area. However, there are also several wetland areas that the Commission believe would likely preclude the street interconnections and development envisioned by the Cecil Group. As an alternative, it is possible that redevelopment of these key sites could further a three-district concept as the properties are located at the edges of the two commercial districts. If the design of these sites focuses on creating a transition from one area to the next, they can be successfully integrated into the overall vision for the area. Furthermore, Commission staff believe that it is feasible for a pedestrian or bicycle connection to be made in the area north of Route 28 and south of Swan Pond that could provide an amenity for visitors and residents and a safer alternative to travel on Route 28.

Redevelopment of these areas in the short term will likely be influenced heavily by the availability of wastewater infrastructure along the corridor. The current Phase 1 sewer plan extends from the western end of Route 28 as far as the Parker's River bridge, with the remainder of the area currently part of Phase 3.



3. CREATE A FOCAL POINT AROUND THE PARKER’S RIVER AREA; SUPPORT REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS BY MAKING IMPROVEMENTS TO AREAS UNDER MUNICIPAL CONTROL IN THE DISTRICT, INCLUDING INVESTING IN THE FORMER DRIVE-IN SITE AND IMPROVING TOWN AMENITIES IN THE VICINITY.

The portion of Route 28 in the immediate vicinity of the Parker’s River is one of the few places on Route 28 in Yarmouth where there are views past the development along the roadway to more natural areas beyond. This river crossing offers a focal point that orients visitors and people travelling the roadway. The Commission recommends that the town focus its attention on improving the public amenities in the area (fishing deck and pocket park) and by making improvements in the street right-of-way that encourage pedestrian and bicycle activity and calm traffic.

While structurally sound, the existing bridge is in a poor state of repair and limits flushing of Swan Pond to the north of Route 28. The town is currently studying alternatives to replace this culvert which provides the town with an opportunity to explore designing a river crossing that is in itself an attraction or amenity (similar to the Bass River Bridge). The Commission recommends that in the short term, the town consider making more cosmetic improvements to the bridge to create a focal point, as illustrated in Figure K. The Commission developed cost estimates for cosmetic and short term improvements that could be made to the bridge crossing to improve the appearance (see Section D).



Figure K Existing Parker’s River bridge crossing (left) and illustration of potential short-term improvements possible (right, see page 97/98 for larger version)



In the long term, the town could explore alternative bridge designs that would move away from the standard crossing design adopted by MassDOT, to a more distinctive and recognizable structure. This would likely require securing additional funding for bridge design.

The Parker's River area has many existing amenities, but movement around the district is somewhat difficult without driving, particularly crossing the street at key locations. The Commission recommends that a crossing in close proximity to the bridge is needed to provide safe access across the street, particularly for pedestrians wishing to use the sidewalk on the north side of the road to cross the bridge.

Other improvements to the streetscape can also be made, including installing landscaping at the road edge, planted road medians, street trees and improving the appearance of the former drive-in site (discussed below). Town initiated improvements in the district will improve the character of the area and demonstrate the town's prioritization of redevelopment efforts in the area. The character of the area can be further improved by installing street furniture and signage unique to the district (as discussed further below).

4. IMPLEMENT A PLAN FOR INTERIM USES FOR THE FORMER DRIVE IN SITE THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE TOWN'S LONG TERM PLANS FOR A MARINA AND WHICH DRAWS PEOPLE TO THE AREA.

The Parker's River district includes the site identified by the town as a future marina. While the development of the marina awaits the necessary approvals, the site remains vacant and under-utilized. The Commission staff recommend that the town explore initiating interim uses of this site to draw visitors to the district while the permitting process for the marina proceeds. The Commission explored many alternative uses that would be compatible with the current marina design and with the town's wastewater planning goals. This included seasonal uses/events, recreation uses and walking trails that could be configured in a manner that would support or be compatible with any future marina development. Public parking on the site could also support the district by improving visitor access to the amenities nearby. Based on feedback from the Planning Board, the Commission established concept plans and visualizations that illustrated how non-permanent structures and uses could be arranged on the site with their associated parking (see Figure L, M and Section D).

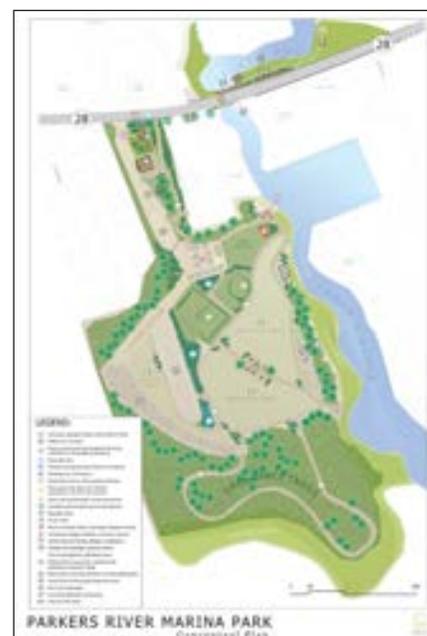


Figure L: Concept Plan for former drive-in site (see page 109/110)



Figure M: Entry to the former drive-in site today (above) and a visualization of the same location with improved landscaping, parking and amenities (below, see page 110 for more)

5. REVISIT LOCAL REGULATIONS AND TAILOR THEM TO ENCOURAGE THE MIX OF USES AND PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT DESIRED.

The length of the Route 28 corridor in Yarmouth is mostly zoned commercial, resulting in the homogenous pattern of development seen today. The Commission recommends that the town explore varying the dimensional and use provisions of the zoning to encourage greater variety in the development pattern for the three districts. For example, making modifications to the setback and height provisions of the zoning in certain locations could bring structures closer to the road edge and increase the sense of enclosure of the roadway in those areas. Greater enclosure of the roadway tends to reduce traffic speeds and makes a more comfortable pedestrian environment. Visualizations of these concepts were provided to the Planning Board (see Figure N and Section E). In addition, modifying the allowed uses in each of the districts so that the



types of uses most desired are clearly articulated and varied from one district to the other would also reinforce the changing character of the districts. The town should also consider reexamining the current parking requirements to ensure that they are not inadvertently restricting the amount of development permitted in the district.

The Commission also recommends that the town consider providing incentives through zoning for redevelopment and reinvestment in the area, including possible density bonuses. Incentive based zoning could also be explored to encourage consolidation or removal of curb cuts, or improved landscaping/streetscape improvements by private development.

In addition, the town should explore alternative options for implementing the design guidelines currently in place in the ROAD district and find ways to modify and vary these guidelines specifically to this part of Yarmouth to produce the character desired in each of the districts.

Section E includes a more detailed analysis of these possible zoning and regulatory changes.



Figure N: Route 28 at Winslow Gray Road today (above) and an illustration of the effect of changes in zoning dimensional standards and other streetscape improvements (below, see page 129-138 for more).



6. PROVIDE STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS TO HELP CREATE A STRONGER IDENTITY FOR THE DISTRICTS CREATED, INCLUDING AMENITIES FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS, LANDSCAPING AND BEAUTIFICATION.

Large sections of Route 28 in the study area lack appropriate landscaping at the road edge, with many properties designating parking directly adjacent to the roadway. The area is used heavily by pedestrians and bicyclists, but in many locations is not a comfortable pedestrian or bicycle environment. Sidewalks are provided in many locations and more limited bicycle amenities are present. However, the high number of curb cuts, narrow shoulders, missing sidewalk segments, infrequent crosswalks and speed/volume of traffic contribute to an uncomfortable pedestrian/bicycle experience.

The Cape Cod Commission provided detailed recommendations for ways in which pedestrian access, bicycle amenities and landscaping could be improved by changes within the road cross-section and right-of-way (Figure P below and Section E). These suggested cross section improvements would take place within the existing roadway and would not require any additional right-of-way. Bicycle accommodations on the street, linked to nearby bike paths, would improve alternative modes of transport and help reduce traffic congestion. Simple changes in the street pattern, additional street furniture and landscape requirements could also help create a more human-scale and comfortable walking environment.

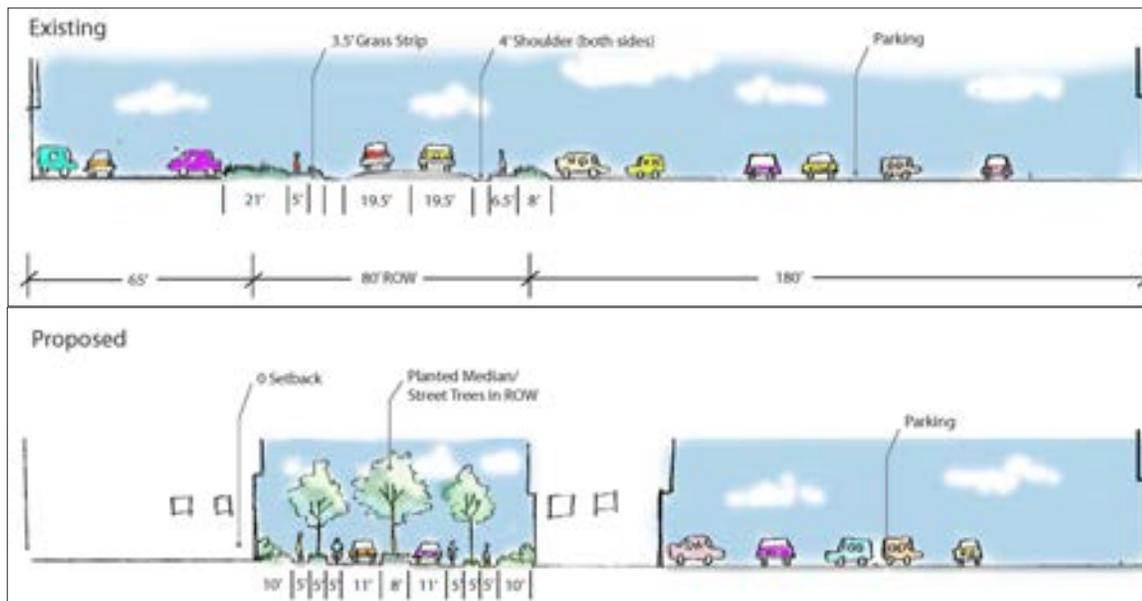


Figure P: Illustration of existing road cross section in Forest Road District (above) and cross section with altered zoning standards, bicycle amenities and landscaping (below, see page 129-138 for more).



7. EXPLORE REALIGNING INTERSECTION OF SOUTH SEA AND WINSLOW GRAY AVENUES AND MAKING INTERSECTION A GATEWAY TO THE PARKER'S RIVER DISTRICT.

During discussions of the character of the Parker's River district, the configuration of the intersections of Route 28 and Winslow Gray Road, and Route 28 and South Sea Street, was identified as a potential location for improvement. The intersections are located in close proximity to each other and present a confusing intersection for drivers and many conflict points for pedestrians/bicyclists. The Commission staff observed many unsafe turning movements to adjacent uses in this vicinity. The realignment of these intersections has been studied at a concept level by the town and the Commission recommends that the town further pursue options for re-aligning these intersections and seek funding via the Transportation Improvement Program. In addition to providing a safer environment and smoother travel, realignment could also provide an opportunity to incorporate street improvements that establish the intersection as a gateway, or point of arrival to the Parker's River District. Redevelopment that takes place should also be guided by zoning to bring the buildings close to the street and to provide a strong identity for this entry.



Figure Q: Illustration of potential Route 28/Winslow Gray/South Sea Avenue re-alignment



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8. PURSUE FINANCING OPTIONS TO SUPPORT REVITALIZATION, INCLUDING DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT FINANCING, BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS, GRANTS.

With limited budgets and resources, many of the steps needed to implement plans for redeveloping the area will require securing alternate sources of funding. Several options are available for consideration, including District Improvement Financing, Business Improvement Districts, MassWorks Infrastructure Program and other State and Federal grant programs. Re-investment in the area will re-invigorate the town's tax-base but cannot be encouraged by utilizing existing municipal budgets alone. Grant opportunities to support infrastructure improvements such as wastewater and transit should be pursued to support the kind of redevelopment efforts consistent with the town's Land Use Vision Map. The Commission is available to assist the town in securing grants and/or further developing information provided to date once the town has committed to a desired approach.