



Draft 2025 Regional Policy Plan

PUBLIC HEARING

JULY 30, 2025



CAPE COD
COMMISSION

PROJECT TIMELINE

Initial Subregional Hearings

Official kick-off of the update process

OCTOBER 2024

Focus Groups

Seven focus groups held to gain feedback on specific issue areas and topics

WINTER

Resident Survey

Survey conducted to gain insights into perspectives of planning issues

WINTER

Stakeholder Meetings

Update on the process and feedback on potential changes

SPRING

Draft Completed

Draft of proposed update completed

JUNE

Public Comment Period

60-day public comment period on the draft with public hearings

SUMMER

FALL 2024

WINTER 2024 - 2025

SPRING 2025

SUMMER 2025

An aerial photograph of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, showing the coastline, marshes, and the town of Cape Cod. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color. A dark blue rectangular box is positioned in the lower-left quadrant, containing the text "1. The Cape Cod Region" in white.

1. The Cape Cod Region

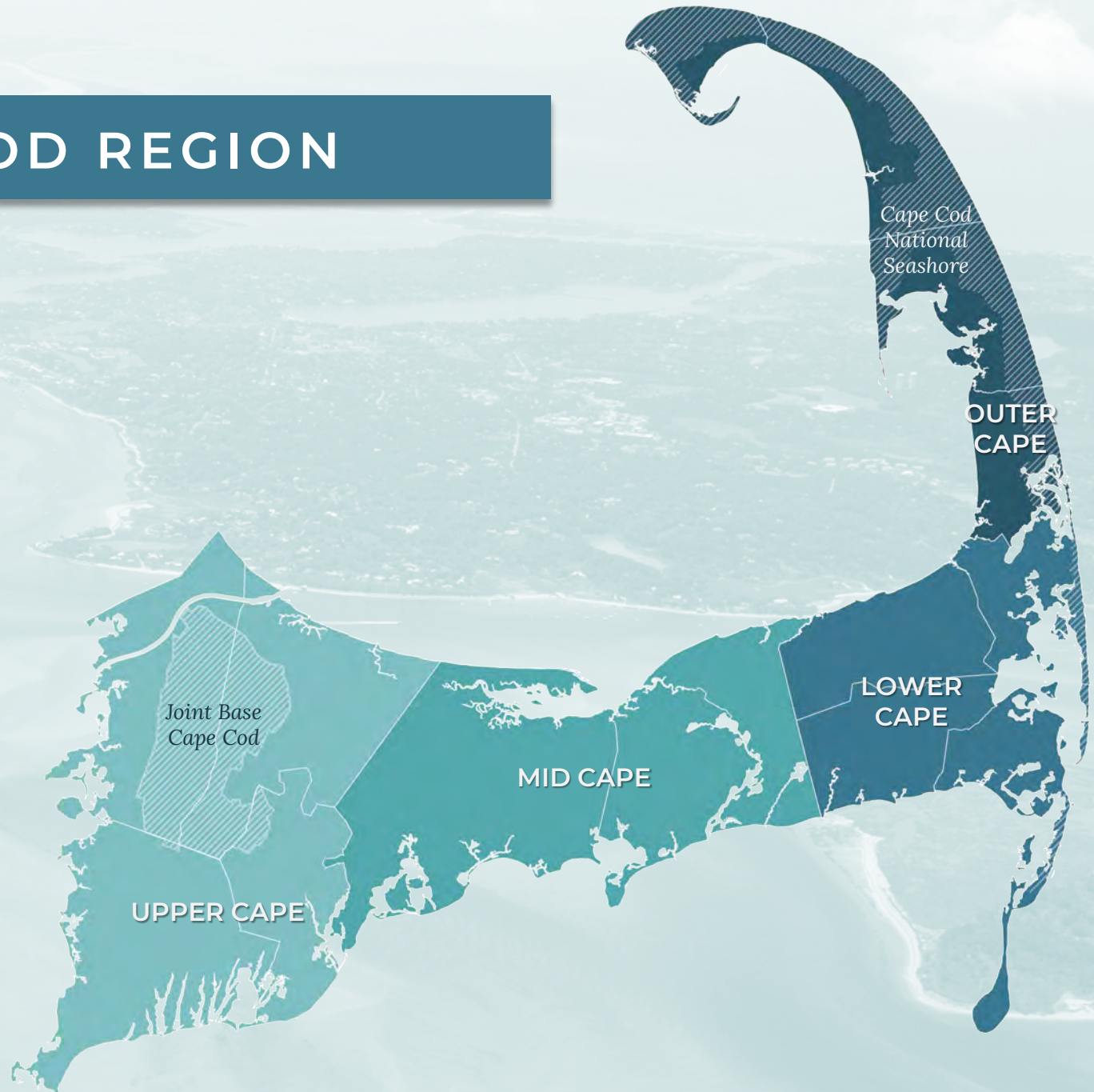
THE CAPE COD REGION



DESCRIPTION OF THE REGION AND SUBREGIONS

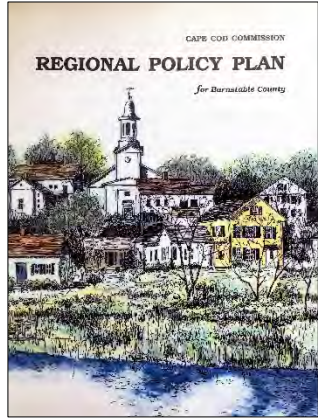


CAPE COD COMMISSION RESPONSIBILITIES



A coastal landscape featuring a row of houses built on a grassy dune. The houses are of varying styles, including a prominent two-story house with a gabled roof and a balcony on the right. The foreground is filled with tall, dry grass. In the background, the ocean is visible under a dramatic sky with large, white clouds and a bright sun low on the horizon, creating a silhouette effect on the houses and people walking on the beach in the distance.

2. Evolution of the Regional Policy Plan



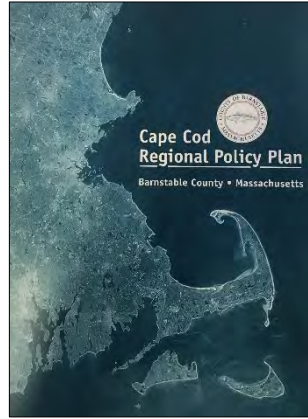
1991

Vision of “protecting the best of Cape Cod and repairing the mistakes of the past”



1996

Updated Regional Policy Plan with a focus on growth management



2002

Updated Regional Policy Plan with a focus on Districts of Critical Planning Concern



2009 & 2012
UPDATE

Updated Regional Policy Plan that divided the planning and regulatory sections



2018 & 2021
UPDATE

Updated Regional Policy Plan with a focus on context-sensitive planning and design and goals and objectives

FOCUS GROUPS



TRANSPORTATION



ECONOMY



HOUSING



OPEN SPACE



CLIMATE CHANGE

RESIDENTS SURVEY

1,241 resident respondents

Over **60%** of residents indicated their town needs more affordable ownership and rental housing

91% cited **environmental quality** as either **important or very important** in deciding to live or maintain a home on Cape Cod

84%

support or strongly support **THE CANAL BRIDGES REPLACEMENT**



WATER QUALITY
Percent of residents who noticed a decline in water quality in the last 10 years

63%

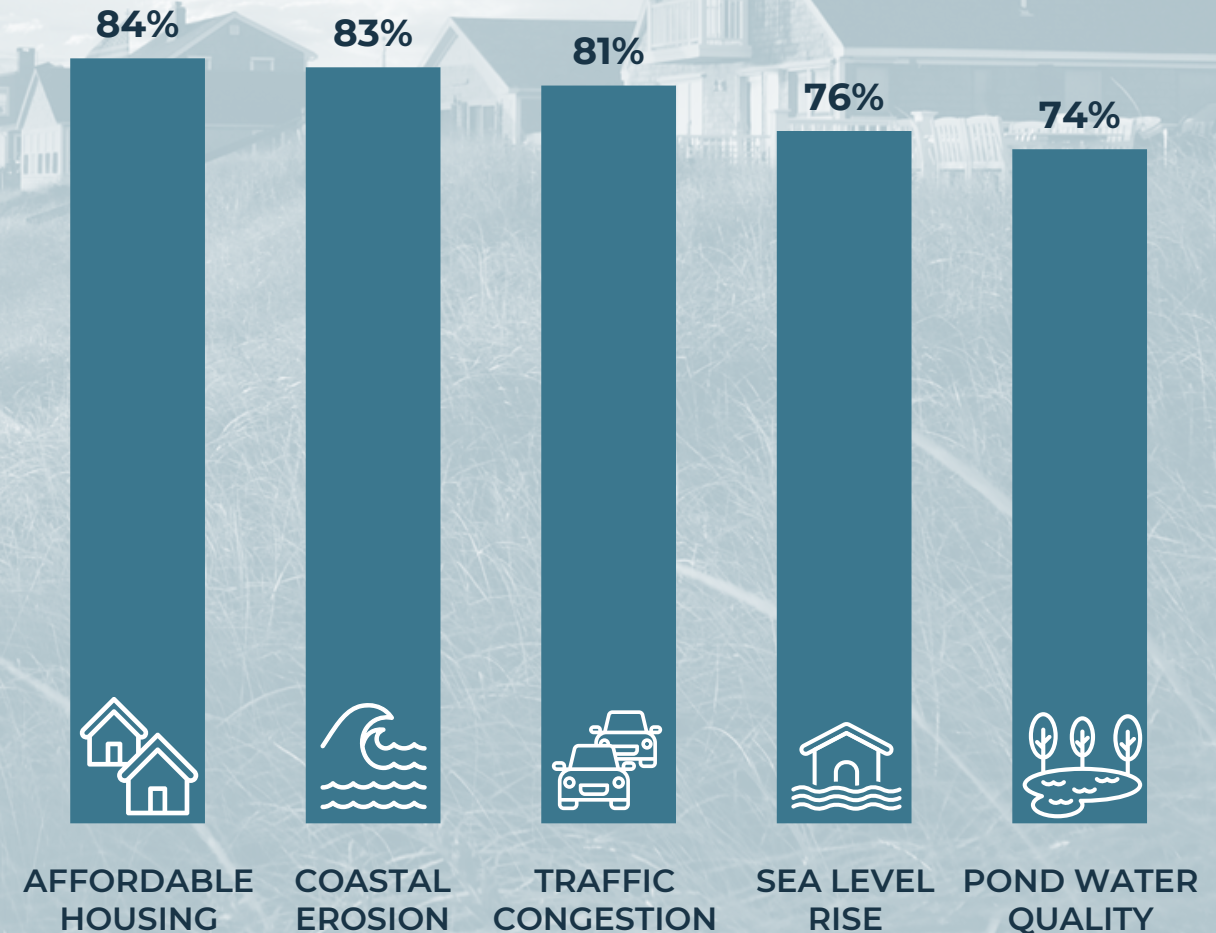
NOTICED A DECLINE IN POND WATER QUALITY

42%

NOTICED A DECLINE IN COASTAL WATER QUALITY

TOP CONCERNS

Percent of residents identifying as a moderate or serious problem now or in 5 years



PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

MARCH PUBLIC MEETINGS

Update on the process, feedback from survey and focus groups, and potential changes



MAY SUBREGIONAL STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Feedback on draft goals, objectives, and recommended actions



An aerial photograph of a coastal area, likely Cape Cod, featuring a large body of water, numerous small boats, and a dense residential area with many houses and trees. A dark blue rectangular overlay is positioned in the center of the image, containing white text.

3. A Regional Vision for Cape Cod

An aerial photograph of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, showing a mix of residential buildings, green spaces, and water. A dark blue banner is positioned at the top of the image, containing the title in white text.

A REGIONAL VISION FOR CAPE COD

REGIONAL POLICY PLAN

The vision for the future of Cape Cod is a region of vibrant, sustainable, and healthy communities, and protected natural and cultural resources.

Growth Policy for Barnstable County

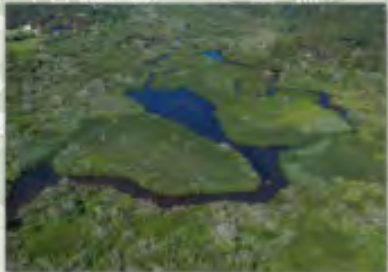
Growth should be focused in centers of activity and areas supported by adequate infrastructure and guided away from areas that must be protected for ecological, historical or other reasons. Development should be responsive to context allowing for the restoration, preservation and protection of the Cape's unique **and finite** resources while promoting economic, **environmental**, and community resilience.

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely Cape Cod, showing a dense cluster of houses with gabled roofs and porches. The houses are situated along a narrow strip of land that runs parallel to a sandy beach and the ocean. The ocean is a deep blue-green color, and the beach is a light tan color. The sky is a pale blue. The overall scene is a typical coastal town landscape.

4. Cape Cod Systems

CAPE COD SYSTEMS

NATURAL SYSTEMS



BUILT SYSTEMS



COMMUNITY SYSTEMS





5. Key Regional Priorities

KEY REGIONAL PRIORITIES



PROTECTING OPEN
SPACE AND NATURAL
RESOURCES



RESTORING AND
PROTECTING COASTAL
AND FRESH WATER
QUALITY



MITIGATING
CLIMATE CHANGE
AND ADAPTING
TO ITS IMPACTS



PRESERVING
HISTORIC AND
CULTURAL
RESOURCES



INCREASING
HOUSING
ATTAINABILITY



PLANNING AND
PROVIDING FOR
NECESSARY
INFRASTRUCTURE



STRENGTHENING
THE ECONOMY



6. Goals and Objectives

Natural Systems

WATER RESOURCES
OCEAN RESOURCES
WETLANDS RESOURCES

WILDLIFE & PLANT HABITAT
OPEN SPACE

Built Systems

COMMUNITY DESIGN
COASTAL RESILIENCY
CAPITAL FACILITIES &
INFRASTRUCTURE

TRANSPORTATION
ENERGY
WASTE MANAGEMENT
CLIMATE CHANGE

Community Systems

CULTURAL HERITAGE
ECONOMY
HOUSING

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

NATURAL SYSTEMS

Water Resources

Goal: To maintain a sustainable supply of high quality drinking water and protect, preserve, or restore the ecological integrity of Cape Cod's fresh and marine surface water resources.

Objectives:

- Protect and preserve groundwater quality
- Protect, preserve or restore fresh water resources
- Protect, preserve or restore marine water resources
- Manage and treat stormwater to protect and preserve water quality
- Manage groundwater withdrawals and discharges to maintain hydrologic balance and protect surface and groundwater resources

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

NATURAL SYSTEMS

Ocean Resources

Goal: To protect, preserve, or restore the quality and natural values and functions of ocean resources.

Objectives:

- Locate development away from sensitive resource areas and habitats
- Preserve and protect ocean habitat and the species it supports
- Protect significant human use areas and vistas

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

NATURAL SYSTEMS

Wetlands Resources

Goal: To protect, preserve, or restore the quality and natural values and functions of inland and coastal wetlands and their buffers.

Objectives:

- Protect wetlands and their buffers from vegetation and grade changes
- Protect wetlands from changes in hydrology, including those associated with stormwater discharges
- Promote the restoration of degraded wetland resource areas

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

NATURAL SYSTEMS

Wildlife and Plant Habitat

Goal: To protect, preserve, or restore wildlife and plant habitat to maintain the region's natural diversity.

Objectives:

- Maintain existing plant and wildlife populations and species diversity
- Restore degraded habitats through use of native plant communities
- Protect and preserve rare species habitat, vernal pools, 350-foot buffers to vernal pools
- Manage invasive species
- Promote best management practices to protect wildlife and plant habitat from the adverse impacts of development

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

NATURAL SYSTEMS

Open Space

Goal: To conserve, preserve, or enhance a network of open space that contributes to the region's natural and community resources and systems.

Objectives:

- Protect and preserve natural, cultural, agricultural, and passive recreational resources
- Maintain or increase the connectivity of open space
- Provide protected open space appropriate to context

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

BUILT SYSTEMS

Community Design

Goal: To protect and enhance the unique character of the region's built and natural environment based on the local context.

Objectives:

- Promote context-sensitive building and site design
- Minimize the amount of newly disturbed land and impervious surfaces
- Avoid adverse visual impacts from infrastructure to scenic resources

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

BUILT SYSTEMS

Coastal Resiliency

Goal: To prevent or minimize human suffering and loss of life and property or environmental damage resulting from storms, flooding, erosion, and relative sea level rise, including but not limited to that associated with climate change.

Objectives:

- Minimize development and risk within areas vulnerable to flooding
- Plan for erosion and accretion
- Restore coastal resource areas to promote their natural beneficial functions

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

BUILT SYSTEMS

Capital Facilities and Infrastructure

Goal: To guide the development of capital facilities and infrastructure necessary to meet the region's current and demonstrated future needs.

Objectives:

- Ensure capital facilities and infrastructure promote efficiency, sustainability, and resiliency
- Enhance the coordinated provision of services and facilities that respond to the needs of the region

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

BUILT SYSTEMS

Transportation

Goal: To provide and promote a safe, reliable, and multi-modal transportation system.

Objectives:

- Improve safety and eliminate hazards for all users of Cape Cod's transportation system
- Provide and promote healthy transportation options and appropriate connections for all users
- Implement and promote vehicle trip reduction strategies
- Provide and promote an efficient and reliable transportation system by reducing congestion

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

BUILT SYSTEMS

Energy

Goal: To provide an adequate, reliable, and diverse supply of energy to serve the communities and economies of Cape Cod.

Objectives:

- Support renewable energy development that is context-sensitive
- Increase resiliency of energy generation and delivery
- Promote energy efficiency and conservation measures by minimizing energy consumption through planning and design

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

BUILT SYSTEMS

Waste Management

Goal: To promote a sustainable solid waste management system for the region that prioritizes reuse and diversion and protects public health, safety, and the environment.

Objectives:

- Reduce waste and waste disposal by promoting waste diversion, reuse, beneficial reuse, deconstruction, and other Zero Waste initiatives
- Support an integrated solid waste management system

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

BUILT SYSTEMS

Climate Change

Goal: To increase the region's resiliency to climate change impacts and mitigate climate change by supporting and contributing as a region to the Commonwealth's interim and long-term greenhouse gas reduction goals and initiatives, including a state-wide net zero carbon target by 2050.

Objectives:

- Promote low or no carbon transportation alternatives and technologies
- Promote electrification and low or no carbon technologies for building energy use, including appliances, lighting, and heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC) systems
- Promote carbon sequestration and other emissions removal practices as appropriate to context
- Promote low or no carbon energy generation as appropriate to context
- Promote strategies to address climate change induced impacts such as wildfire, extreme temperatures, and changes in precipitation

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

COMMUNITY SYSTEMS

Cultural Heritage

Goal: To protect and preserve the significant cultural, historic, and archaeological values and resources of Cape Cod.

Objectives:

- Protect and preserve forms, layouts, scale, massing, and key character defining features of historic resources, including traditional development patterns of villages and neighborhoods
- Protect and preserve archaeological resources and assets from alteration or relocation
- Preserve and enhance public access and rights to and along the shore
- Protect and preserve traditional agricultural and maritime development and uses

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

COMMUNITY SYSTEMS

Economy

Goal: To promote a resilient, inclusive, and diverse regional economy that protects and builds on Cape Cod's competitive advantages.

Objectives:

- Support traditional and emerging businesses and industries
- Support local workforce, economic activity, and entrepreneurship

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

COMMUNITY SYSTEMS

Housing

Goal: To promote the production of an adequate supply of ownership and rental housing that is safe, healthy, and attainable for people with different income levels and diverse needs.

Objectives:

- Promote an increase in housing diversity and choice
- Promote an increase in year-round housing supply
- Protect and improve existing housing stock
- Increase affordable and attainable housing

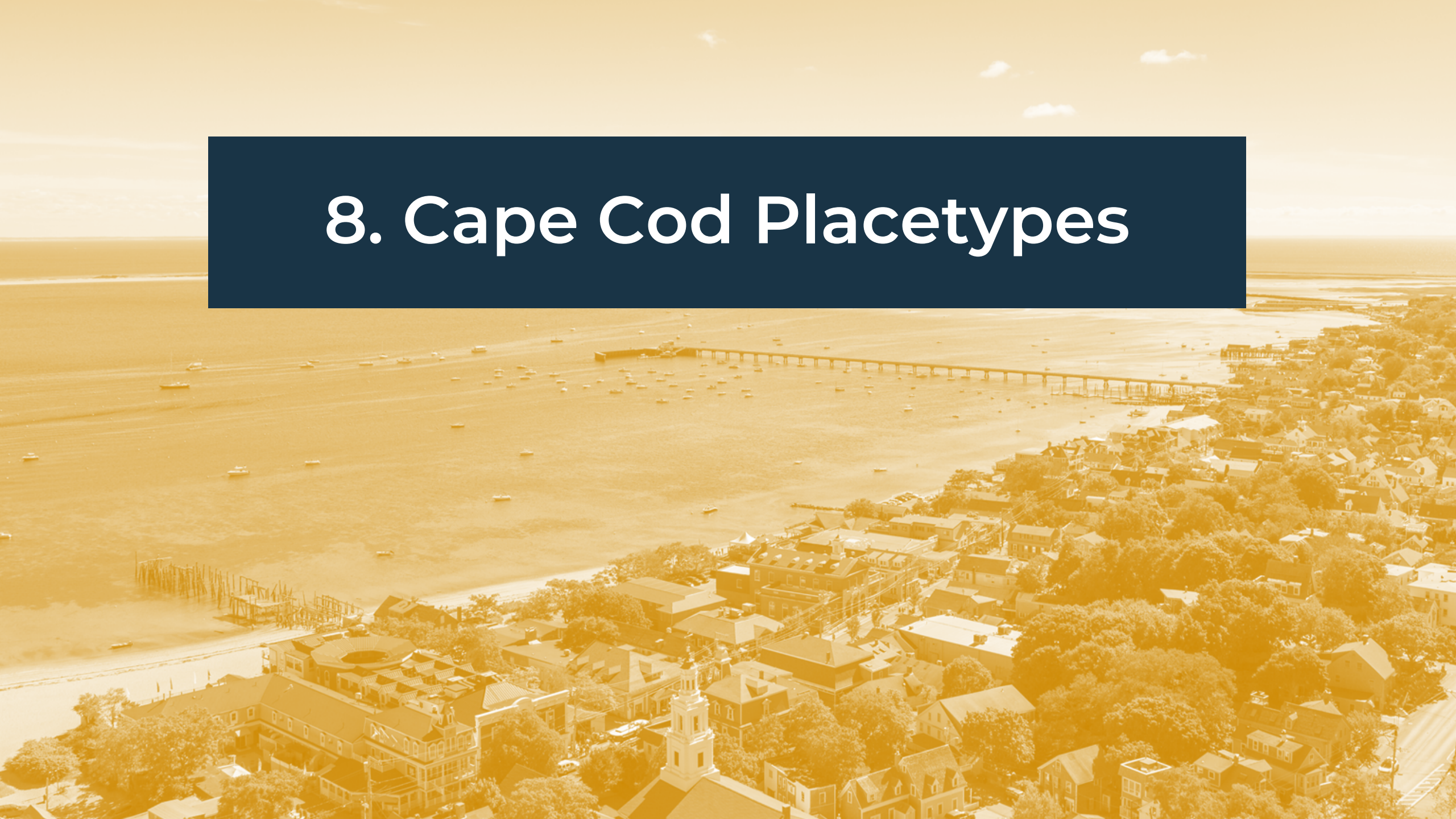
An aerial photograph of a coastal town and harbor, overlaid with a teal color filter. The town is situated on a hillside overlooking the water, with numerous houses and buildings visible. A golf course is located near the town. Several boats are anchored in the harbor, and a larger ship is visible in the foreground. The text "7. Coordinated Regional and Local Planning" is centered in a white box over the image.

7. Coordinated Regional and Local Planning

COORDINATED REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING



8. Cape Cod Placetypes



CAPE COD PLACETYPES



NATURAL
AREAS



RURAL
DEVELOPMENT
AREAS



SUBURBAN
DEVELOPMENT
AREAS



HISTORIC
AREAS



MARITIME
AREAS



COMMUNITY
ACTIVITY
CENTERS



INDUSTRIAL
ACTIVITY
CENTERS



MILITARY AND
TRANSPORTATION
AREAS

An aerial photograph of a coastal region, showing a sandy beach, the ocean, and several houses with swimming pools. A dark blue semi-transparent rectangle is overlaid on the image, containing the title text in white.

9. Regional Regulatory Review

REGIONAL REGULATORY REVIEW



**THE ROLE OF GOALS
AND OBJECTIVES
OF THE RPP**



**THE ROLE OF
TECHNICAL
GUIDANCE**



**THE ROLE OF
SENSITIVE
RESOURCE AREAS**



**WAIVER
AND
FLEXIBILITY**



**THE ROLE OF CAPE
COD PLACETYPES IN
REGULATORY REVIEW**



**RPP CONSISTENCY AND
PROBABLE BENEFIT/
DETRIMENT
DETERMINATION**



**PLANNING TOOLS
AVAILABLE
THROUGH THE ACT**

10. Recommended Actions



RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

NATURAL SYSTEMS



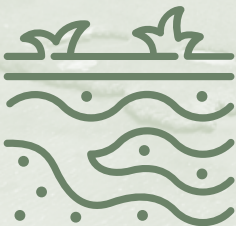
**DEVELOP A REGIONAL OPEN
SPACE PLAN**



**DEVELOP AN ADVANCED
DYNAMIC GROUNDWATER
MODEL**



**SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE MASSACHUSETTS
FARMLAND ACTION PLAN**



**ADVANCE AQUIFER
PROTECTION PLANNING**



**DEVELOP MODEL WETLAND
BYLAWS FOR POND AND
BUFFER PROTECTION**



**UPDATE THE OCEAN
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

BUILT SYSTEMS



**ADVANCE ACTIONS
THAT REDUCE RISK
IN THE COASTAL
FLOOD ZONE**



**DEVELOP A
REGIONAL
CAPITAL PLAN**



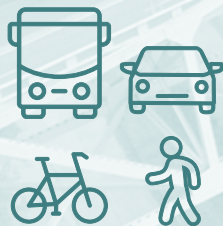
**SUPPORT LOCAL
CLIMATE ACTION
PLANNING AND
IMPLEMENTATION**



**SUPPORT EFFORTS FOR
COLLABORATION ON
WASTE DIVERSION AND
DISPOSAL OPTIONS**



**CONTINUE TO SUPPORT
REPLACEMENT OF THE
BOURNE AND SAGAMORE
BRIDGES**



**SUPPORT
IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE CAPE COD VISION
ZERO ACTION PLAN**



**SUPPORT POST-
DISASTER PLANNING
INITIATIVES**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

COMMUNITY SYSTEMS



**CONTINUE TO EXPAND
UNDERSTANDING OF
UNDERREPRESENTED
HISTORIES**



**SUPPORT NEW AND
UPDATED HISTORIC
INVENTORIES**



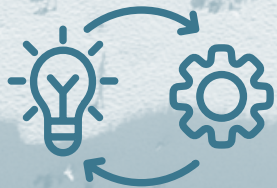
**MAINTAIN
A CEDS**



**ENCOURAGE LOCAL
REGULATIONS THAT
PROTECT HISTORIC AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**



**SUPPORT ZONING
CHANGES FOR
GREATER HOUSING
OPPORTUNITIES**



**SUPPORT
IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE AFFORDABLE
HOMES ACT**



**CONVENE A FUNDING
AND FINANCING
WORKING GROUP FOR
HOUSING INITIATIVES**

OTHER AREAS OF CHANGE



**REVIEW
THRESHOLDS**



**TECHNICAL
GUIDANCE**



MAPPING

PROVIDING FEEDBACK

>> PROVIDE COMMENTS TODAY VERBALLY

>> FILL OUT A COMMENT CARD

>> SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS:

By mail to:
The Cape Cod Commission
P.O. Box 226, 3225 Main St.
Barnstable, MA 02630

Online using the form located at:
www.capecodcommission.org/comment

>> MATERIALS AND MORE INFORMATION:
www.capecodcommission.org/rpp-update

Public comment will be accepted through August 25

An aerial photograph of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, showing a coastal town with numerous houses, a sandy beach, and a large body of water. In the foreground, there is a vast, green, marshy area with a network of small, winding waterways. A dark, semi-transparent rectangular box is overlaid in the center of the image, containing the text "Thank you!" in white. The overall scene is bright and sunny, with clear blue skies and vibrant green vegetation.

Thank you!



CAPE COD
COMMISSION