



Community Design

1. BACKGROUND: The following provides a brief overview of data and trends related to our community design and character which is important to maintaining our aesthetic and overall appeal. Links to websites and programs for more in-depth information are embedded throughout the text.

Data/Trends:

- Development trends changed significantly with the advent of the automobile, opening up the Cape to second homeowners and summer vacationers. By the 1950's and 60's Yarmouth took on the character of a summer resort area, with more residential and commercial development to meet the needs of tourism and the second homeowner, which has shaped the layout and density of development throughout town.
- The population has more than doubled from 1960 (5,504) to 1970 (12,033) and doubled again in 2000 (24,807). The resident population has been relatively stable since then in the 23,400 to 23,800 range, although the population can double or triple in the summer with second homeowners and tourists.
- Yarmouth has the second highest [residential density](#) on Cape Cod at 691 units/square mile.
- The five miles of Route 28 is our main commercial corridor, along with the Exit 8/Station Ave area and smaller commercial businesses dotted along our historic Route 6A corridor. The Route 28 corridor has long been a challenge with many smaller lots with older structures and excess pavement that are ripe for redevelopment.
- Zoning and land use regulations have played a major role in the layout of the Town and the aesthetics. Much of our existing residential and commercial development was created when zoning regulations were less stringent. Even with more exacting regulations, grandfathered pre-existing non-conforming lots and non-conforming structures are legally protected and do not meet current zoning standards.
- The aesthetic appeal of our historic homes, places and villages significantly impacts the feel of our community and their long-term protection is important.
- Public Works projects play a significant role in what our Town looks like. Thoughtful, context sensitive design within the roadway layout can significantly enhance the streetscape and by extension the adjacent businesses and homes. Both Route 6A and Route 28 are under the jurisdiction of MassDOT, which regulates design and safety standards, and is responsible for maintenance.
- Public spaces that are accessible to all can create an inviting and inclusive community. Yarmouth has significant open space and recreation areas.

2. EXISTING PROGRAMS/PROJECTS/INITIATIVES: Yarmouth has many existing programs and regulations that address Community Design.

- [Yarmouth Zoning Bylaw](#): The Zoning Bylaw regulates land use development in town by identifying where specific types of uses are allowed throughout Town and regulates how development is laid out on a parcel. In addition to the general underlying zoning districts which define residential, business and industrial areas in Town, Yarmouth has a number of



unique [incentive-based overlay districts](#) that were established to promote redevelopment and reuse of business properties, but include heightened design standards. Additional information on business development can be found in the [Yarmouth Business Permitting Guide](#).

- **Design Review:** Design Review helps to maintain our community character by promoting good site and building design. Design Review is conducted by the Design Review Committee (DRC) and/or the Planning Board. Applicable commercial projects are reviewed based on their adherence to the [Yarmouth Architectural & Site Design Standards](#). The Design Review process for larger scale projects developing under the Village Centers Overlay District (VCOD) is slightly different and has a formal [VCOD Site Plan Review](#) process conducted by the Planning Board along with VCOD specific design criteria.
- **Old Kings Highway Regional Historic District (OKH):** Properties north of the Mid-Cape Highway (Route 6) are located in the OKH district and development projects in this area are protected and regulated by the Old King's Highway Historic District Committee who is charged with maintaining the character and colonial charm of the area.
- **South Yarmouth/Bass River Historic District:** This historic district is located in the Old Main Street area of South Yarmouth with many buildings on the National Register of Historic Places. Buildings within the Bass River Historic District, those that are 75 years or greater located outside the OKH district, and those buildings on the National Register are protected by review through the [Yarmouth Historical Commission](#).
- **Public Spaces:** Projects such as the extension of the Cape Cod Rail Trail and the 2017 Packet Landing Pavilion next to the Bass River are examples of public projects that enhance the overall design and appeal of our community.

3. WHAT'S IN THE WORKS:

- **Municipal Wastewater and Land Use Controls:** As documented in the [UMass Donahue Institute Report](#), municipal wastewater is a key ingredient to unleashing pent-up redevelopment demand which would generate new growth revenue for the Town and spur economic revitalization. The Town is moving forward with a municipal wastewater system with a cost saving regional approach. Anticipated for the 2020 Fall Town Meeting are multiple Articles related to various ways to fund the wastewater initiative. While the municipal wastewater system is being designed, the Town will be working on Land Use Controls that limit and regulate sewer allocations and growth to remain within our estimated build-out projections. These could include modifications to the Zoning Bylaw, new Board of Health Regulations and new Sewer Use Rules & Regulations.
- **Local Comprehensive Plan (LCP) Update:** A LCP certified by the Cape Cod Commission (CCC) would allow the Town to modify or create a new Growth Incentive Zone (GIZ) in areas with infrastructure. A GIZ modifies the CCC DRI review thresholds making it easier and less costly for developers to move forward with their projects. A key component of the LCP will be a capital infrastructure plan, with an emphasis on our wastewater planning. The Town is starting the update to our LCP with a Visioning Process in 2020/2021. Amendments to the Zoning Bylaw are an important part of this process to accomplish the goals outlined in the LCP.
- **Public Works Projects:** MassDOT is working on multiple significant projects along the Route 28 Corridor, the Bass River Bridge replacement project, the Four Corners signalized intersection (Old Main/Route 28/North Main), as well as a resurfacing/reconstruction project from the Barnstable Town Line to the Parkers River. Town Staff is working with MassDOT to incorporate aesthetic elements into the design of these projects. In addition, the Town is looking at incorporating some improvements to the Route 6A corridor as part of the water



main replacement project. Additional information on all these projects is provided in the Infrastructure data sheet.

- **Public Spaces – Riverwalk Park:** The Town is working on the creation of a [Riverwalk Park](#) along the Parkers River with walking trails, a looped Boardwalk along the marsh and an open Event Space. This development will create an attraction out of a long vacant 22 acre Town owned parcel.
- **Public Space – 275 Route 28:** The Town purchased the former Yankee Village to create a waterfront part that would connect the two existing parks, Mill Creek Park and Chase Brook Park, and offer water views of Mill Creek directly from Route 28.
- **Blighted Property Bylaw:** The Town is considering forming a committee to evaluate the creation of a blighted property bylaw that would address seriously deteriorated properties in Town included vacant or abandoned properties.

4. THINGS TO THINK ABOUT: Now that you have had an opportunity to learn a little bit about Community Design in Yarmouth, bring your thoughts and ideas to the Workshop or include them in your Survey responses. Some things to think about include:

- What strengths do we have regarding our Community Design?
- What design characteristics are we doing successfully?
- What challenges do you see related to Community Design?
- What suggestions to you have to solve these challenges?
- Are there issues and influences holding us back?
- Is the Town spending its time and resources on the right projects or initiatives?
- If not, where should we be spending our time and resources?
- How does Community Design impact your vision for Yarmouth’s future?

