

**First Draft
2014 Town Center Plan
3-10-2014**

Town Center Plan Committee

Stephanie Carver, Chair
Peter Curry, Planning Board representative
Diane Hessler, public representative
Skip Murray, Town business owner representative
Stephen Parkhurst, public representative
Lee Ruddy, public representative
David Sherman, Town Council
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Staff

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Executive Summary

To be written at final draft stage

The Cape Elizabeth Town Council created the Town Center Plan Committee with the following charge in January, 2013.

**Charge
Town Center Plan Committee 2013**

Introduction

Cape Elizabeth adopted a Town Center Planning in 1993 and subsequent zoning amendments in 1995. It is time to revisit the plan and take a fresh look at the Town Center with the goal to support a vibrant, business and pedestrian friendly town center. The committee should complete its recommendations by the end of 2013.

Committee Structure

The 2013 Town Center Committee shall consist of 9 members. The Town Council, following a recommendation from the Appointments Committee, shall appoint 5 residents, of which at least one shall be a town center business owner and one a resident of the town center or an adjacent neighborhood. The Town Council shall appoint 2 of its members to serve on the committee and shall ask the Planning Board and the School Board to also appoint one of its members to the committee. The committee shall appoint its own chair and shall keep minutes of the meetings. The Town Manager shall designate staff for the committee.

Committee Charge

1. The Town Center Plan Committee shall review existing conditions in the town center, including but not limited to land uses, lot and building vacancies, infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, stormwater, sanitary sewer, etc), but not including municipal buildings.
2. The committee shall meet with the library planning committee to consider opportunities for enhancing the town center.
3. The committee should articulate a vision for the town center. The committee should focus on the purpose statement of the Town Center zone and confirm that the purpose statement remains valid or, if not, what changes are recommended to articulate a vision for the town center.
4. The committee shall prepare and implement a public information plan, with a focus on town center business owners, and shall hold a public forum.

5. The committee shall provide a status report to the Town Council within 6 months of its first meeting.
6. The committee shall provide a final report with recommendations to the Town Council by December 31, 2013.

Evolution of the Town Center from 1993 to 2014

The Cape Elizabeth Town Council adopted a Town Center Plan in 1993. The plan was prepared by a committee representing the Town Council, Planning Board, School Board and the Main Street 90 committee, as well as a town center business owner, a resident adjacent to the town center and members of the public.

When the Town Center Plan was adopted, the area of the town center was zoned predominantly Business A (BA) with the school campus, the Methodist Church and other “edges” located in the Residence A (RA) and the Residence C (RC) zoning districts. A major recommendation in the Town Center Plan was to create a new zone recognizing this area as the commercial/municipal/cultural hub. In 1995, the Town Council adopted the Town Center (TC) Zoning District and revised the Official Zoning Map to create the Town Center Zone.

The TC zone included several innovations, such as building and site design standards, sidewalk construction obligations on private property owners, maximum setbacks that require construction near the street and a prohibition of parking within the front yard setback. Taken as a whole, the Town Center Plan and the TC zone established an identity for the area now commonly referred to as the “Town Center.”

Cape Elizabeth is a suburban community that prizes its very modest growth, open spaces and rural character. Nevertheless, the town center has experienced changes since the first plan was adopted in 1993. Below are highlights of how the town center has evolved to the present.

Town Center Highlights 1993-present

- 1993 adoption of Town Center Master Plan
- 1994 Cumberland Farms adds canopy
- 1994 Pond Cove/Middle School project

- 1995 adoption of Town Center District Zoning
- 1996 On Our Planet Day School moves into Shopping Center
- 1997 Reconstructed sidewalks/lights from Farm Hill Rd to Jordan Way
- 1999 Community Pool renovation
- 1999 Scout House project
- 1999 Public Works Department moves out of Town Center
- 1999 Town Center Height Amendment rejected
- 2000 New Police Station/Town Center Fire Station renovation
- 2001 New Community Center
- 2002 Romeo's Pizza shopping center
- 2002 Ocean House Child Development Center - Methodist Church
- 2003 Sold Town land at 316 Ocean House Rd
- 2004 Cape Elizabeth Family Medicine addition -Shore Rd
- 2004 Johnson Scout House site plan
- 2004 Pond Cove Addition/High School renovation
- 2006 High School driveway traffic light installed
- 2006 High School Hannaford Field
- 2006 CELT new building
- 2007 Jonesey's garage bays removed
- 2009 Town Center Amendments to increase multifamily density
- 2009 Hannaford Field Concession stand
- 2009 Intersection improvements rejected/ped improvements installed

- 2010 Portland Dry Cleaners - Shopping Center
- 2011 Cape Family Medicine storage building
- 2012 Shopping Center facade renovation
- 2012 Town Hall landscaping
- 2012 Shore Road Path connection to Town Center
- 2012 C's gourmet market approved

Public Participation

Public Participation Plan Town Center Plan Committee

1. Transparency. All meetings, schedules, minutes, and other documents shall be available to the public for review.
2. Multi-level participation. Multiple approaches to engaging the public have been employed to maximize public involvement.
 - The committee will post all agendas and minutes of meetings, the meeting schedule of the committee, and other documents and plans produced by the committee on the website.
 - Time will be set aside at each meeting for Public Comment.
 - The committee will use first class mailed notices for targeted groups.
 - Press releases will be issued to local newspapers.
 - A public forum will be held.
 - The committee will provide a status report to the Town Council every six months.
 - There should be heightened attention and effort to provide information to Town Center Business owners and residents.
 - In addition, the committee distributed a public opinion survey. See Appendix x for a compilation of the results.

VISION

To create an identifiable, vibrant ~~town center~~downtown that includes mixed retail uses for residents and visitors, a safe and inviting pedestrian and bicycle environment, a common meeting place, visual vitality, and linkages to the town's open space and nearby residential neighborhoods.

GOALS

These are the 1993 goals. The Town Center Plan Committee should discuss the goals of the 2014 plan.

- 1. Establish a physical and psychological focal point in the center.*
- 2. Create a Town Center Zone which includes a coordinated design theme with development standards.*
- 3. Establish pedestrian linkages to adjacent neighborhoods, open space areas and between public buildings and strive to make the Town Center accessible and inviting to pedestrians.*
- 4. Enhance visual "gateways," entrances, and edges to the Town Center, such as the Tarbox Triangle.*
- 5. Assure that adequate infrastructure and public facilities are available for increased density and economic development.*
- 6. Coordinate Town Center-related planning and activities and encourage public input.*
- 7. Encourage economic development of a healthy retail center and mixed use base to serve residents.*

Draft 2014 Goals

1. Primary Commercial Area. Continue to promote the Town Center as the primary location for new commercial development in Cape Elizabeth.
2. New development. Encourage a modest amount of small-scale, mixed use development.
3. Pedestrian Safety. Complete the sidewalk network throughout the Town Center and connecting to adjacent neighborhoods.
4. **Gathering places.** Create community gathering places including but not limited to a town green, coffee shops and restaurants.
5. Appearance. Encourage property owners to maintain and update and new development to build consistent with the Town Center Design Standards. The gateways to the Town Center located on Route 77 at the Tarbox Triangle and the Route 77/Fowler Rd/Old Ocean House Rd should receive special attention.
6. Financing. Implement alternative financing tools that provide for measured investment in the Town Center consistent with a mid-level priority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Part One, from 1993 Town Center Plan: The recommendations are shown with the numbers as they appeared in the 1993 plan. In the final 2014 report, the recommendations will be sequentially numbered. Recommendations carried forward from the 1993 can be identified. Recommendations can be listed in priority or grouped by subject area, as was done in the 1993 plan.

2. Encourage preservation of locally historic buildings as defined by the 1993 Town Center Plan.

The following list appears in the 1993 Plan in recommendation #1 and could be added to recommendation #2 above.

1235 Shore Rd, Stick Style, C. 1875-1890
312 Ocean House Rd, Italianate, c. 1855-1875 (Murray House)
320 Ocean House Rd, Colonial Revival, built 1901, rebuilt 1948
343 Ocean House Rd, Greek Revival, c. 1840-1870
351 Ocean House Rd, Greek Revival, c. 1840-1870
359 Ocean House Rd, Italianate, c. 1860-1885
11 Hill Way, Colonial Revival/Gothic, late 19th C
Hill Way, Barn, late 19th -early 20th C
Scott Dyer Rd, Thomas Memorial Library-Pond Cove School Section,
Colonial Revival, 1912
Scott Dyer Rd, Thomas Memorial Library-Spurwink section, Italianate, c.
1875-1885
Scott Dyer Rd, Middle School, Colonial Revival, 1933

3. Require exterior alterations, including additions, to these buildings to be done in such a way as to preserve and restore their architectural features and historic character. *Suggest this be added to the Design Guidelines recommendation.*

4. *Design Guidelines. On hold.*

4. Develop design guidelines which require new development to be compatible with the architectural character of these buildings.

7. Establish design guidelines for new construction in the town center. The guidelines shall suggest design alternatives, which are pedestrian oriented, are compatible with locally historic buildings and farmhouse style architecture in general.

15. Prohibit parking within the front yard of new development. Parking should be located at the side and rear of new development and be appropriately screened and landscaped. Shared use of parking facilities should be encouraged to produce efficient parking lot designs and limit the area required for parking.

29. Preserve and enhance views of local cultural landmarks and gateways. Techniques such as but not limited to setbacks, adjacent development of compatible architecture, selective plantings and purchase of development rights should be pursued.

Staff recommendation for Design Standards: Maintain the current design standards that promote a pedestrian-friendly town center and quality design that contributes to a sense of place.

- Drive throughs should continue to be restricted.
- Keep parking out of the front yard setback and keep the requirement for landscaped islands in parking lots
- Continue to require that sidewalks be constructed with esplanades, pedestrian lighting, and street trees until the sidewalk network is complete.
- Consider updating the exterior materials provisions to more explicitly allow high quality non-natural exterior materials, such as cement board clapboards.
- Continue to require a prominent front door.
- Keep the 5,000 sq. ft. maximum building footprint
- Keep the minimum commercial space requirement in new buildings

6. Establish a design theme for the Town Center. This theme shall govern the selection of distinctive sidewalks and lighting, street tree plantings, and signage. Consideration should be given to the appointment of a Committee to organize activities in the Town Center that promote a sense of community, as well as to coordinate anticipated improvements.

Staff Recommendation to replace above with the following: Formalize design standards for town center infrastructure, including but not limited to sidewalk width and surface materials, lighting fixtures, and seasonal promotional materials.

10. Conduct (or update) the stormwater management study and encourage construction of a stormwater management system in the TC District.

11. Continue discussions with the owners of the Pond Cove Shopping Center to renovate the building in keeping with a village-oriented design.
13. Redesign the Route 77/Shore Rd/Scott Dyer Rd intersection to make it safe and accessible for pedestrians. This should be coordinated with the Maine Department of Transportation.
14. Construct and reconstruct sidewalks throughout the town center. If sidewalk construction is to be phased, first priority should be construction of sidewalks along both sides of Shore Rd extending from the Community Center to Town Hall and from the Scout House to the Methodist Church. Phase 2 should include extending sidewalks to the Shopping Center and reconstruction of sidewalks on Scott Dyer Rd. Phase 3 should complete the extension of sidewalks on Route 77 to the Fowler Rd/Old Ocean House Rd intersection. Utility poles should be relocated out of sidewalks. The sidewalk surface treatment should be appropriate to the location. It may be appropriate to construct concrete sidewalks in front of Town Hall and retail areas, asphalt adjacent to neighborhoods, and some specialty treatments as appropriate. Sidewalk design should include handicapped accessible ramps and a grassed esplanade with street trees and pedestrian lighting.

Identify new crosswalks which are readily distinguished from the vehicle traveled way and are of a durable quality. Signage requiring vehicles to yield to pedestrians should be installed at existing and proposed crosswalks.

Needs to be updated because some sidewalks, not in the order of priority listed, have been constructed. Perhaps an updated description of where sidewalks are recommended, with or without priorities.

19. Reclassify the portion of Route 77 within the town center from arterial to a lesser street classification.
20. Petition the Maine Department of Transportation to reduce the speed limit along Route 77 within the Town Center zone.

19 and 20 to be combined.

21. Encourage, through development review and education, the use of shared driveways on Route 77, Shore Rd and Scott Dyer Rd to minimize curb cuts and pavement.

23. Evaluate the relocation of the northerly Pond Cove Shopping Center entrance from direct access to Route 77 to direct access from Jordan Way.
24. Continue to mark the Greenbelt links to the town center.
25. Explore the creation of a pedestrian pathway from the Library to Route 77 and expand the view of Thomas Memorial Library from Route 77 through land acquisition and/or realignment of the intersection.
26. Explore and support the designation of properly marked bike lanes in the Town Center.
28. Consider creating a town green or common open space within the town center.
30. Adopt and implement a street tree planting program. Street tree species should be selected for tolerance to the climate, salt, and appropriateness for creating a canopy.
31. Encourage the preservation of existing landscaping and mature trees existing in the town center.
32. Enhance the Route 77/Fowler Rd/Old Ocean House Rd intersection and the Tarbox Triangle/Hill woods parcel as a gateway to the town center.
33. If there is new development along Route 77, encourage such development to raise the elevation of new structures to street level.

Add this to the design section.

34. Evaluate the potential for the front of the Pond Cove Shopping Center to be converted to a grassed open space area, either in conjunction with the Town Green or as a separate open space.

Combine 28 and 34.

35. *Create a Town Center Implementation Committee charged with tasks including but not limited to:*

- *Advise regarding development review*
- *Standardize the design of Town Center/main street infrastructure*
- *Implement the recommendations of the 2014 Town Center Plan*
- *Prioritize infrastructure improvements from available funding*
- *Seek new funding sources*

•Maintain an open dialogue with town business owners to promote a healthy town center.

36. Develop a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District for the Town Center and use the funds for infrastructure improvements.

37. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow more extensive alteration of RP2 wetlands in the Town Center District when a substantial public benefit, such as creation of a publicly accessible village green, is included in the overall development.

Sample text:

Sec. 19-6-4. TOWN CENTER DISTRICT (TC)

D. Standards

1. Performance Standards

i. Notwithstanding the provisions of Sec. 19-6-9, Resource Protection District, and Sec. 19-8-3, Resource Protection Performance Standards, an RP2 District wetland located on a lot in the Town Center District may be completely altered when the overall development includes a substantial public benefit, such as creation of a publicly accessible village green. The same overall development will also not be required to meet the maximum front yard setback for buildings located in the development. The overall development is subject to Site Plan Review by the Planning Board.