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CAPE COD REGIONAL POLICY PLAN
(2009)



Heritage Preservation and Community Character

Cape Cod's character is defined by its villages, structures, and landscapes. The built environment on this peninsula is a reflection of the region's history, illustrating its agricultural beginnings, its maritime industrial successes, and its growing popularity as a resort.

This history is expressed in the region's traditional development pattern of densely developed village centers surrounded by more sparsely developed outlying areas. It is also expressed in the region's distinctive vernacular architecture of generally modest, pedestrian-scaled buildings that respect the natural environment and use locally available natural materials. The buildings, neighborhoods, working waterfronts, and cultural landscapes that tell the Cape's story are both historically significant and critical to maintaining the unique character that draws so many people to the region.

Protecting the Cape's historic resources from demolition and guiding the design of new development to follow existing regional patterns will preserve Cape Cod's history and character for generations to come. The challenge is to limit commercial development that is out of scale with the existing surroundings and to limit residential development that demolishes significant historic buildings and cultural landscapes. Development in previously open agricultural and woodland areas should be discouraged. The focus instead should be to retain and revitalize the region's traditional village centers. These efforts can work hand-in-hand with other growth management goals to guide development density in locations with

adequate infrastructure, to protect important open spaces in the region, and to support Cape Cod's tourism industry.

Failure to protect the Cape's historic resources and distinctive character will harm the region's economy and make the Cape a less desirable place to live. The region's rural character and historic villages are consistently ranked as important factors influencing people's decisions to move to, visit, or live on Cape Cod. The 2005 Cape Cod Residents Survey results report that, of respondents who did not grow up on the Cape, 68 percent said the region's historic character was an important or very important factor in their decision to live here. Eighty-three percent of all survey respondents either supported or strongly supported Cape Cod Commission regulations that require new buildings to conform to architectural styles in keeping with the character of Cape Cod.

The Commission is directed by the Cape Cod Commission Act to protect the Cape's historical, cultural, archaeological, and architectural resources. The Regional Policy Plan sets forth a vision for protecting these resources through attention to the region's historic buildings, cultural landscapes, and archaeological sites, as well as through design strategies for new development.



Diagram HPCC1: Cross-section illustrating Traditional Development Patterns

Heritage Preservation and Community Character

Goal HPCC1

Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources

To protect and preserve the important historic and cultural features of Cape Cod's landscape and built environment that are critical components of the region's heritage and economy.

Cape Cod has thousands of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, dozens of local historic districts, and numerous well-known archaeologically sensitive areas. These resources receive some protection under the Cape Cod Commission Act or through local historic district bylaws, but many have no protection at all because they have never been inventoried or designated as part of an historic district. Significant buildings continue to be demolished in every Cape town, especially in waterfront neighborhoods where development pressures are greatest. Historic agricultural lands and other working agricultural lands that comprise the region's cultural landscapes are continually lost to new development. The towns have had varied levels of success in protecting their historic and archaeological resources through historic districts and other means. This Regional Policy Plan goal directs the Cape Cod Commission to work with the towns and other agencies to expand and update the region's inventory of historic resources—whether buildings, structures, landscapes, or archaeological sites—and to pursue educational efforts and improve regional and local preservation regulations to protect the resources from destruction.

Cape Cod Commission Actions

HPCC1-C1

Protection of Cultural Landscapes: The Cape Cod Commission will continue to inventory the region's distinctive cultural landscapes, including historic agricultural lands, and will make recommendations to preserve these significant resources through land protection, preservation or conservation restrictions, educational efforts to increase public awareness, and other means.

HPCC1-C2

Training for Historic Boards: The Cape Cod Commission will provide regular training on preservation tools and effective review procedures for local historic district commissions and historical commissions through meetings, educational programs, and annual regional conferences to address current historic resource protection issues.

HPCC1-C3

Regional Preservation Tools: The Cape Cod Commission will work with towns, nonprofit organizations, and state agencies to strengthen existing preservation tools used on the Cape, and to develop new regional tools to protect the region's historic and cultural resources.

Recommended Town Actions

HPCC1-T1

Historic Resource Inventories: The towns should update and expand their inventories of historic resources to focus on areas that are not inventoried or are facing significant development pressures. Better inventories will increase public awareness and provide a firm basis for regulatory decisions by local boards.

HPCC1-T2

Local Preservation Regulations: The towns should enact additional methods to protect their historic and archaeological resources, such as local historic districts, nominations for listings on the National Register of Historic Places, demolition-delay bylaws, and subdivision regulations that address potential impacts to historic and archaeological resources.

HPCC1-T3





Zoning Compatible with Preservation Goals: The towns should adopt changes to their zoning bylaws and regulations that require new development in historic areas to be consistent with their existing scale and character. The towns should also remove regulatory incentives for demolition and inappropriate alteration of historic properties, and should establish protections for significant cultural resources and scenic landscapes.

Heritage Preservation and Community Character

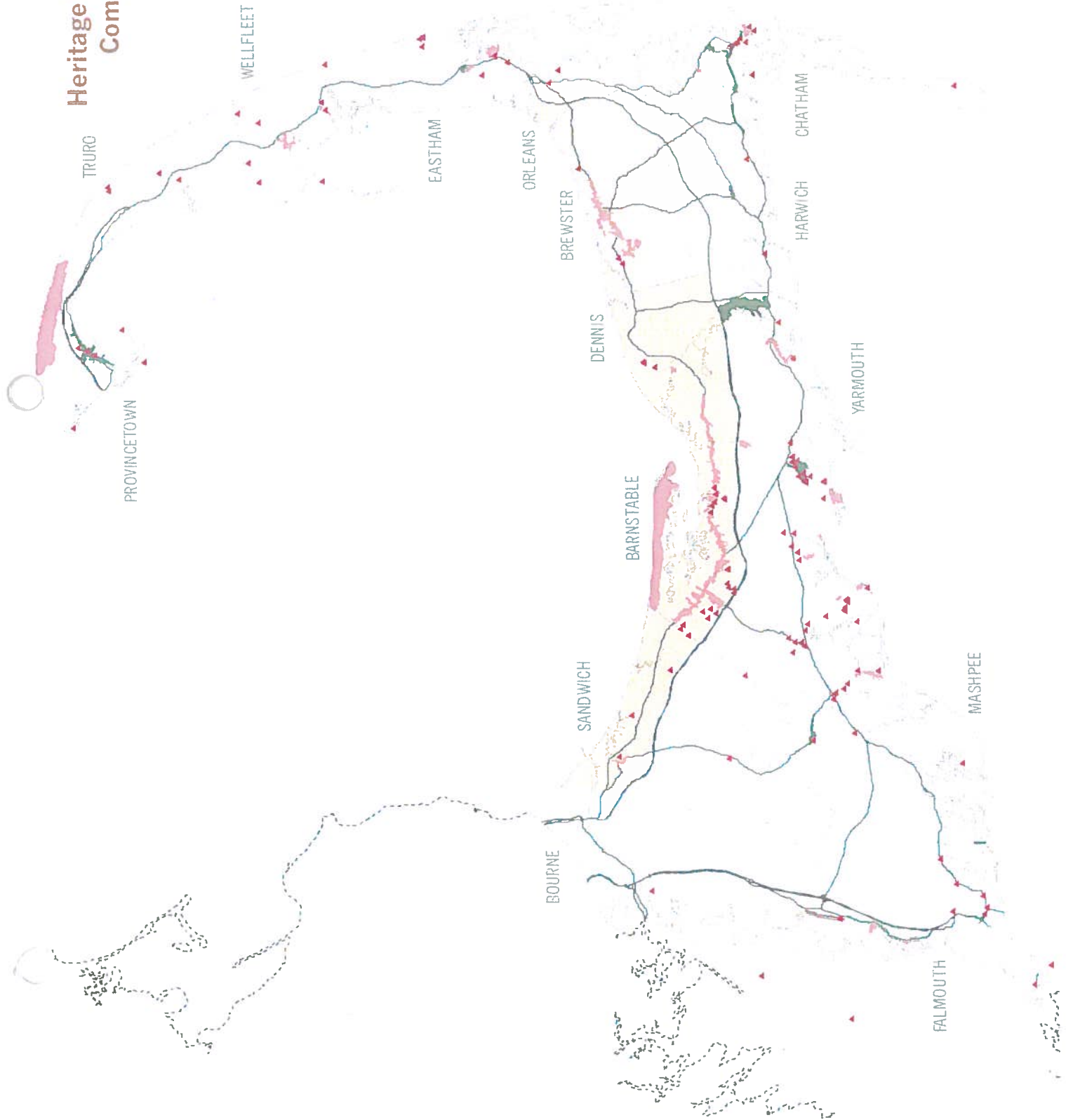
Map HPCC1

Historic Resources

Significant historic buildings in areas under high development pressures are in danger of being demolished. This map shows the Cape Cod properties that receive some protection through historic district review at the town or county level. Note: If a Local Historic District is also a National Register Historic District, the Local Historic District alone is visible on this map.

-  National Register Historic Properties
-  Local Historic District
-  National Register Historic Districts
-  Old King's Highway Regional Historic District

NOTE: All maps in the Regional Planning section of the Cape Cod Regional Policy Plan are for illustration and planning purposes only. They may be viewed in more detail online: www.capecodcommission.org/RPP/



Heritage Preservation and Community Character

Goal HPCC2

Community Character/Site and Building Design

To encourage redevelopment of existing structures as an alternative to new construction, and to ensure that development and redevelopment respect the traditions and distinctive character of historic village centers and outlying rural areas consistent with Designing the Future to Honor the Past, Design Guidelines for Cape Cod, Technical Bulletin 96-001, as amended.

The character of a place is determined by such factors as how buildings are sited, their scale and design, landscaping, the location of parking, as well as lighting and signage. In many Cape communities, building design is not considered during routine regulatory processes unless a project is within an historic district. Local boards may lack specific expertise in design-related disciplines, and communities may have difficulties trying to shape new development in a manner that is consistent with desired patterns. The Cape Cod Commission's regulatory and technical assistance programs help towns to protect community character and to guide development to respect the local and regional context.

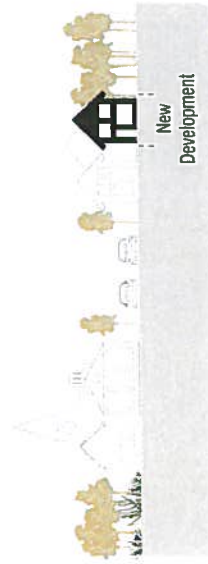


Diagram HPCC2: Cross-section illustrating New Development in Context with Village Centers

Cape Cod Commission Actions

HPCC2-C1

Assistance with Local Bylaw and Regulation Revisions: The Cape Cod Commission will assist town boards and committees to protect community character through new or revised zoning bylaws and regulations. Efforts will promote village-style development, limit strip development, foster redevelopment and infill construction, promote residential-scale bylaws to protect neighborhood character and public views, establish appropriate vegetated buffer standards, and encourage preservation and reuse of historic properties.

HPCC2-C2

Expanded Design Manual: The Cape Cod Commission will complete and implement an addendum to the existing design manual Designing the Future to Honor the Past (Technical Bulletin 96-001, as amended), to address the design of moderate- to large-scale commercial projects consistent with the region's traditional development patterns.

HPCC2-C3

Visioning Tools: The Cape Cod Commission will work with towns to develop presentation materials such as computer visualizations, photographs, and conceptual plans to help illustrate potential changes in local zoning that would be more consistent with community character and preservation goals.

Recommended Town Actions

HPCC2-T1

Local Development Bylaws: The towns should revise zoning and regulations governing dimensional standards and provide redevelopment incentives to encourage development consistent with traditional patterns and local resource-protection goals.

HPCC2-T2

Design Review/Design Guidelines: The towns should develop a design review process and local design guidelines for areas of distinctive development as discussed in the Cape Cod Commission's manual, Designing the Future to Honor the Past, as amended.

HPCC2-T3

Land Clearing and Alteration: The towns should adopt a bylaw that limits land clearing and alteration of natural topography before development review, as discussed in the Cape Cod Commission's Model Land Clearing, Grading, and Protection of Specimen Trees Bylaw. The towns should also adopt a local landscape ordinance that protects significant trees and requires landscaping and screening of new development from regional and scenic roads.

Heritage Preservation and Community Character

Goal HPCC1: Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources
 To protect and preserve the important historic and cultural features of Cape Cod's landscape and built environment that are critical components of the region's heritage and economy.

Minimum Performance Standards

HPCC1.1

Historic Structures: An historic structure's form, massing, and key character-defining features, including the relationship to its site and setting, shall be preserved. Additions and alterations to historic structures shall be consistent with the building's architectural style and shall not diminish its historic and architectural significance. Removal or alteration of distinguishing original stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship of historic or aesthetic significance shall be prohibited unless the Commission determines that such removal or alteration will not have a significant negative impact on the integrity of the historic property, surrounding historic district, or otherwise distinctive neighborhood. Demolition is considered only if a building or structure is found no longer eligible for listing on the National Register or no longer contributing to the historic significance of the district. There is a presumption in favor of retaining all National Register-eligible structures, and all contributing structures in an historic district due to the determination of significance by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and/or the National Park Service. If a demolition request is based upon structural instability or deterioration, a technical report prepared by a registered architect or engineer may be required, detailing the nature and extent of the problems and a reasonably adequate estimate of the cost to correct them. The Commission may hire its own structural engineer to evaluate the property and verify the content of the applicant's report, and the applicant may be required to pay a portion of that cost.

Reference

HPCC1.2

Cultural Landscapes: The distinguishing original features of an historic or cultural landscape shall be preserved. New development adjacent to or within historic or cultural landscapes shall be located to retain the distinctive qualities of such landscapes and shall be designed to maintain the general scale and character-defining features of such landscapes. In particular, historic agricultural lands and other working agricultural lands shall be retained to prevent further loss of these dwindling resources that speak to the Cape's agricultural past.

HPCC1.3

Archaeological Sites: Where development is proposed on or adjacent to known archaeological sites or sites with high archaeological sensitivity as identified by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) or the Local Historical Commission during the review process, it shall be configured to maintain and/or enhance such resources where possible. A predevelopment investigation of such sites shall be required early in the site planning process to serve as a guide for layout of the development. Archaeological sites determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places shall be preserved and protected from disturbance.

In reviewing projects affecting historic resources, the Commission will refer to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties and other current guidelines and bulletins prepared by the National Park Service Heritage Preservation Services Division. The MHC has agreed to review any projects

Heritage Preservation and Community Character

Goal HPCC1 (continued)

that require a state or federal license, permit or funding, as defined by the National Historic Preservation Act, for their conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties and for their effects on the historic significance of the property and any surrounding historic district. The MHC will also assist the Commission in reviewing other projects that will affect properties listed on the State or National Registers of Historic Places. A town's Local Historical Commission and, where appropriate, the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs will also assist the Commission in reviewing projects that will affect properties with historic and archaeological significance.

Best Development Practices

HPCC1.4

Local Preservation Efforts: Development projects that do not include an historic preservation or rehabilitation component are encouraged to contribute to public or nonprofit preservation efforts in the community.

HPCC1.5

Preservation Restrictions: Protection of significant historic structures, cultural landscapes, and archaeologically sensitive areas is encouraged through conservation restrictions or preservation restrictions that ensure their long-term preservation.

Heritage Preservation and Community Character

Goal HPCC2: Community Character/ Site and Building Design

To encourage redevelopment of existing structures as an alternative to new construction, and to ensure that all development and redevelopment respects the traditions and distinctive character of historic village centers and outlying rural areas consistent with Designing the Future to Honor the Past, Design Guidelines for Cape Cod, Technical Bulletin 96-001, as amended.

Minimum Performance Standards

Project Siting Standards

HPCC2.1

Strip Development: Creation or extension of strip development shall not be permitted. Reuse, redevelopment, or infill within existing strip developments in a way that does not extend the linear nature of the development or increase traffic conflicts may be permitted.

HPCC2.2

Protection of Existing Roadway Character: New development proposed on local and regional roadways shall be sized such that it can be accommodated without significant changes to the existing character of the roadway. Any necessary structural improvements shall be consistent with the existing character of the roadway, unless the Commission and the community deem alternatives appropriate.

HPCC2.3

Scenic Roadways and Vistas: New development shall be sited and designed to avoid adverse visual impacts to scenic areas. Visual impact assessments may be required as part of the project review. Development proposed adjacent to scenic roads or vistas shall preserve distinctive features of the scenic resource including tree canopy, wooded road edges, stone walls, winding road character, and scenic views. Development adjacent to or within scenic vistas shall be clustered and designed to limit the visibility of the new development.

HPCC2.4

Consistency with Regional Context or Surrounding Distinctive Area: All development and redevelopment shall be consistent with the region's traditional development patterns, reflecting features such as modest building mass, height, scale, roof pitch, building materials, and proportions between doors and windows. In areas with a distinctive character, such as historic districts, village centers, cultural landscapes, and historic properties, any design shall be consistent with the character of the area and reflect the surrounding context. Distinctive features of the area such as proximity to the street, views to historic structures, water and/or landscapes, and significant open spaces shall be preserved. A building design narrative is required as part of the DRI application to justify how the building relates to the surrounding context. Contemporary design and green design are encouraged and sometimes required in response to standards in the Energy chapter under Goal E.1, but must be supported by the design narrative.

Building Design Standards




Technical Bulletin
96-001



Technical Bulletin
96-001



Technical Bulletin
96-001



Technical Bulletin
96-001

Heritage Preservation and Community Character

Goal HPCC2 (continued)

HPCC2.5

Footprints over 15,000 Square Feet: For all new development, no individual structure shall exceed a footprint of 15,000 square feet unless it is designed as multiple distinct massings differentiated by significant variations in roofline and building footprint, or is fully screened. The method of screening shall be consistent with the character of the surrounding area, but shall typically consist of traditionally scaled frontage buildings within developed areas, and vegetated buffers of 200 feet in depth in outlying areas. Redevelopment projects may expand to a single massing of 50,000 square feet without full screening if the expansion occurs on previously developed impervious or landscaped areas.



HPCC2.6

Building Forms and Façades: For all development and redevelopment involving new construction, the massing, façades, and roof configuration of a building shall be varied. If a building façade is more than 50 feet in length, it shall include a minimum of 10 feet of variation in the building footprint (set-back or projection in the building wall) for every 50 feet of façade length, and related changes in the roofline in order to reduce the apparent mass of the building.



HPCC2.7

Non-traditional Materials and Designs: In industrial parks or areas not visible from scenic or regional roadways or other distinctive areas noted above in MPS HPCC2.4, use of nontraditional materials, forms, and site designs may be appropriate. In such areas, maintenance of adequate buffers on the subject property shall be required to ensure that the proposed development is screened from view.



HPCC2.8

Parking and Landscaping Standards

Parking to the Side or Rear of Buildings: The building and layout of all parking lots shall follow good design practices and reinforce regional development patterns. Parking for all development shall be located to the rear or the side of a building or commercial complex unless such location would have an adverse or detrimental impact on environmental or visual features on the site. In such cases, alternative means of minimizing environmental or visual impacts of the proposed parking shall be required.



HPCC2.9

Landscaping Improvements for Redevelopment: Redevelopment shall significantly improve buffers between parking areas and the street, as well as interior parking-lot landscaping, and shall provide façade improvements and frontage buildings, as necessary and if appropriate, to improve the visual character of the site.



Heritage Preservation and Community Character

Goal HPCC2 (continued)

HPCC2.10

Landscape Plan Requirements: All development shall provide landscaping that integrates buildings with their environment, enhances architectural features, fosters sustainable practices, clearly divides parking lots into smaller areas, includes tree planting, and provides amenities for pedestrians. All development shall implement a landscape plan that addresses the functional aspects of landscaping, such as drainage and innovative stormwater technologies, erosion prevention, screening and buffering, provision for shade, and energy conservation. When vegetative buffers are necessary to prevent adverse visual impacts from new development, existing vegetation shall be retained and unaltered in the buffer area. A maintenance agreement shall be provided by all development for a minimum of three growing seasons to insure vegetation is properly established.



Technical Bulletin 96-001

HPCC2.11

Lighting, Signage and Roadway Appurtenances

Exterior Lighting: Site lighting and exterior building lights in all development shall meet the following standards. This Minimum Performance Standard shall not apply to aviation warning or marking lights as may be required by the Federal Aviation Administration.

- Employ "shoe-box" type or decorative fixtures, consistent with the architectural theme of the development.
- Use a mounting configuration that creates a total cutoff of all light at less than ninety (90) degrees from vertical (flood, area, and up-lighting are prohibited).
- Provide total cutoff of all light at the property lines of the parcel to be developed.
- Meet a maximum initial horizontal foot-candle level of not more than 8.0 foot-candles, as measured directly below the luminaire(s) at grade.

Additional guidance can be found in the Exterior Lighting Design Standards, Technical Bulletin 95-001, as amended.



Technical Bulletin 96-001



Technical Bulletin 95-001

HPCC2.12

Signage: The installation of billboards, off-site advertising (except approved directional signs), and internally lit or flashing signs shall not be permitted. The size and color of all signs shall be in scale and compatible with the surrounding buildings and street. When more than one sign is used, the graphics shall be coordinated to present a unified image. Wooden signs, either painted or carved, are usually most appropriate.



Technical Bulletin 96-001

HPCC2.13

Underground Utilities: All utilities for development including cable shall be placed underground except where the presence of natural features such as wetlands or archaeological resources prevent such placement.



Technical Bulletin 96-001

Heritage Preservation and Community Character

Goal HPCC2 (continued)

HPCC2.14

Roadway Appurtenances: Ornamental signals and mast arms shall be required when the town and the Commission deem it appropriate. Crosswalks shall be constructed of a different texture. In historic areas, the design of roadway appurtenances shall be consistent with historic district styles.



Technical Bulletin 96-001

Best Development Practices

HPCC2.15

Conservation Restrictions for Landscapes and Viewsheds: Maintaining the integrity of natural landforms and broad, open views of the landscape as seen from any public way or waterway is encouraged and should include long-term protection through conservation restrictions or other means.



Technical Bulletin 96-001

HPCC2.16

Specimen Trees and Original Topography: Preserving the distinguishing original features of a site such as specimen trees, existing plantings, and topography is encouraged.



Technical Bulletin 96-001

HPCC2.17

Impervious Parking Areas: Shared parking, on-street parking, and community parking lots are encouraged in order to reduce the amount of land devoted to parking. In individual developments, methods to reduce exposed paved areas such as parking underground or in a portion of the building's first floor, separate parking structures consistent with the Commission's Design Manual, and use of alternate paving materials are encouraged.



Technical Bulletin 96-001

HPCC2.18

Public Open Spaces, Public Art, and Related Amenities: Public open spaces with benches and amenities, as well as public artworks, are encouraged in developments accessible to the public.



Technical Bulletin 96-001

HPCC2.19

Multiple Stories to Reduce Building Footprint: Two-story buildings are encouraged to reduce the building footprint and to incorporate mixed use into the design of buildings.



Technical Bulletin 96-001

HPCC2.20

Underground Utilities: Roadway improvement projects associated with DRIs are encouraged to include undergrounding of overhead utilities.



Technical Bulletin 96-001