

## SECTION 1.0 ENVISIONING THE FUTURE OF BUZZARDS BAY VILLAGE

### 1.1 The Study Area

The Downtown Buzzards Bay Vision Plan study area extends west from the Bourne Bridge/Route 25 ramp along the Main Street Bypass (Route 6) to the Cohasset Narrows Bridge at the border with the Town of Wareham; south along the west edge of the Town Marina and Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) property to the Cape Cod Canal; east to the Bourne Bridge; and north to the Bourne Bridge/Route 25 Ramp. The study area includes all properties along Main Street between Belmont Circle and Memorial Circle, and all properties between the Main Street Bypass and Cape Cod Canal. The Army National Guard armory property and town recreational fields fronting on the north side of the Main Street Bypass are also included in the study area.



Aerial View of the Buzzards Bay Downtown Area

### 1.2 The General Purpose of the Study

The Bourne Financial Development Corporation (BFDC) commissioned this study for the purpose of facilitating creative thinking beyond the current status of the Main Street District, including the rebirth of downtown through new zoning, different traffic patterns, greater density, mixed uses, and new infrastructure that will lead to the private commercial and residential development investment sought by the community.

### 1.3 The Public Visioning Process

Community involvement was an important part of the planning and consensus-building process for the Downtown Buzzards Bay Vision Plan. Participation by the Bourne Financial Development Corporation (BFDC), Town of Bourne elected officials and staff, Buzzards Bay Vitalization Association (BBVA), Cape Cod Commission, Cape Cod Canal Region Chamber of Commerce (CCCRCC), local civic organizations and educational institutions, key property and business owners and the general public was critical to creating a sense of ownership in the visioning and redevelopment process.

The premise of the visioning process was to build on and conceptualize existing projects and programs that are currently under way, as well as those planned for the future. From there, the goal was to assemble these initiatives into an overall conceptual vision plan and action program with broad public interest and support.

**Interviews and Meetings** – The visioning process began with a kick-off meeting between Stantec (the planning consultant) and the BFDC Main Street Steering Committee to discuss the project scope, timeframe, priorities, responsibilities, goals, and expectations. Committee members were asked to identify key development and redevelopment sites and constraints, mixed commercial and housing opportunities, traffic and parking issues, and other assets, problem areas and opportunities within the downtown area. (The minutes from this meeting are included in the appendix). Follow-up interviews with property and business owners, town staff, and interested citizens were conducted throughout the course of the project.

**Visioning and Design Workshop** – On July 24, 25 and 26, a public visioning and design workshop was conducted at the Bourne Community Center to refine the community's vision for the future of the Buzzards Bay Main Street District. The workshop included group sessions and individual interviews. Broad public participation was encouraged and an estimated 75 people attended over the three-days.



The purpose of the Visioning and Design Workshop was to accomplish the following objectives:

- Introduce the project to the community;
- Inform stakeholders about the analysis of the project area;
- Define the values and guiding principles that should direct the future development and redevelopment of Buzzards Bay;
- Solicit redevelopment ideas and solutions to constraints that can be translated into an overall vision and action plan;
- Determine the best locations, proper mix of uses, size, and scale, and parking and transportation needs of the downtown area;
- Determine opportunities for property rehabilitation, filling market niches, infrastructure improvements, waterfront and other recreational amenities, and streetscape enhancements; and
- Inform participants how they can stay involved.

The design workshop was highly interactive and informal. The consulting team assisted participants in developing their thoughts and visions in an open process. A series of base maps, aerial views, recent plans and photos were available on-site and used to identify specific locations for short- and long-term projects. Participants worked one-on-one and in group sessions with the consulting team to create drawings and illustrations for various public and private improvements throughout the district. At the conclusion of the three-day workshop, a public presentation of the results was made at the Beachmoor Inn and Restaurant on July 26<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 40 people attended the presentation.

The design workshop provided the opportunity to work with the community on scenario-building exercises to identify "perfect world" and "plausible futures" for Buzzards Bay. This included the definition of the community's desired scale, composition, and character of redevelopment and renovation/reuse projects in the downtown area. The results of the public input through the workshop are included in the overall conceptual redevelopment plans and graphic illustrations for Downtown Buzzards Bay in Section 3 of this report.

#### 1.4 General Parameters for Revitalization & Redevelopment

Based upon meetings and discussions with the BFDC Main Street Steering Committee, the following general parameters for revitalization and redevelopment apply to Downtown Buzzards Bay:

- Improve visual and physical connections between Main Street and the waterfront, surrounding neighborhoods, and other adjoining areas such as the Cohasset Narrows Bridge and Belmont Circle.
- Support only high-quality development and a pedestrian-oriented, compact village pattern.

- Enhance traditional development characteristics of the village by preserving and restoring key buildings and through moderate density mixed use redevelopment.
- Take advantage of key assets and opportunities that already exist, such as the Cape Cod Canal and its access roads, the Railroad Bridge, views of the Canal and Bay, the Town Marina, railroad station, Community Center and other government services.
- Blend new development with existing buildings and the character of the village.
- Take advantage of the village's excellent highway access and adequate internal circulation in all redevelopment and revitalization efforts.
- Build on existing education and research institutions such as the Massachusetts Maritime Academy and National Marine Life Center.
- Maintain and enhance Buzzards Bay as the civic center of Bourne.
- Become a "place of necessity" with stores, services, and employment opportunities that meet the basic daily needs of local residents.
- Create attractions for local residents and visitors by land and by sea.
- Allow for higher-density mixed uses that reinforce the traditional village patterns of development.
- Create attractive streetscapes that serve as a spine for economic development and new investment in the downtown area.
- Create functional transportation corridors that balance uses between vehicles, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians.



## 1.5 The Village of Buzzards Bay Vision Statement

The following vision statement describes the methods and means of reestablishing the Buzzards Bay Main Street District as a vital, year-round, mixed-use area with commercial, residential, civic, recreational, and entertainment uses.



The vision plan follows these design principles and overall project area redevelopment objectives:

- The Buzzards Bay Main Street District should serve as Bourne's Downtown and government center as well as a destination for people interested in marine education, research, entertainment, and recreation.
- The plan will build off local assets such as the Cape Cod Canal and Trail, ocean views, excellent highway access, the railroad bridge, Bourne Community Center, town park, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, National Marine Life Center, town marina, town hall, police station, fire headquarters, post office, Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center, and a very active community.
- The plan will reflect the goals and serve as the platform for implementing the recently adopted Local Comprehensive Plan, and the relevant recommendations of previous studies, conceptual plans, and reports on the downtown area.

- The plan will incorporate the principles of sustainable development and smart growth in its conceptual designs and recommended actions.
- The Buzzards Bay Main Street District will be an inviting destination for residents and visitors alike, through high-quality residential, commercial, and civic development in a traditional village center pattern and desirable mix of locally owned businesses.
- The plan will illustrate a broad range of commercial development alternatives – retail, service, professional, educational, food and entertainment, hospitality, recreational, and other complementary uses.
- The plan will not be constrained by 18<sup>th</sup> century Cape Cod village standards, but will build into a higher-density, contemporary village with a traditional development pattern, high-quality construction, and attractive design.

Using the thoughts and ideas gathered through the public visioning process, the vision plan addresses the challenges and opportunities for reestablishing Buzzards Bay as the civic, cultural, economic, and recreational center of Bourne. This vision for the future is translated into a series of conceptual plans, perspective drawings, and written recommendations for action in Sections 3 and 4 of this report.