

An aerial photograph of a coastal area in Cape Cod. The top half shows a residential neighborhood with many houses and green trees. To the right is a sandy beach and the ocean. A long pier extends into the water. The bottom half of the image shows a vast area of green marshland with winding water channels. A dark semi-transparent rectangle is overlaid on the middle of the image, containing the main title. Below it, a teal horizontal bar contains the subtitle. At the bottom center, the date is displayed, and at the bottom right is the Cape Cod Commission logo.

Regional Policy Plan Update

STAKEHOLDER MEETING

MAY 2025



CAPE COD
COMMISSION

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely on a small island or peninsula. The town features numerous houses with gabled roofs, some with porches, and a prominent white lighthouse with a dark top. The town is surrounded by water, and the background shows a vast expanse of water under a cloudy sky. A dark teal banner is overlaid on the top center of the image.

AGENDA

1. WELCOME
2. OVERVIEW OF THE RPP UPDATE PROCESS
3. MEASURING PERFORMANCE
4. POTENTIAL CHANGES
5. FEEDBACK

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 a mix of green forests, residential buildings, and a harbor with several boats. A dark blue banner is positioned at the top of the image, containing the title in white capital letters.

A REGIONAL VISION FOR CAPE COD

2018 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 resources while promoting economic and community resilience.”

Measuring Performance



PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2018 REGIONAL POLICY PLAN



PROTECTED
HABITAT



DRINKING
WATER



SIDEWALK
NETWORK



COASTAL
WATER



HISTORIC
RESOURCES



ACTIVITY
CENTERS



HIGH-WAGE
JOBS



HOUSING
DIVERSITY



FLOODPLAIN
DEVELOPMENT



GREENHOUSE
GAS EMISSIONS



Natural
Systems



Built
Systems

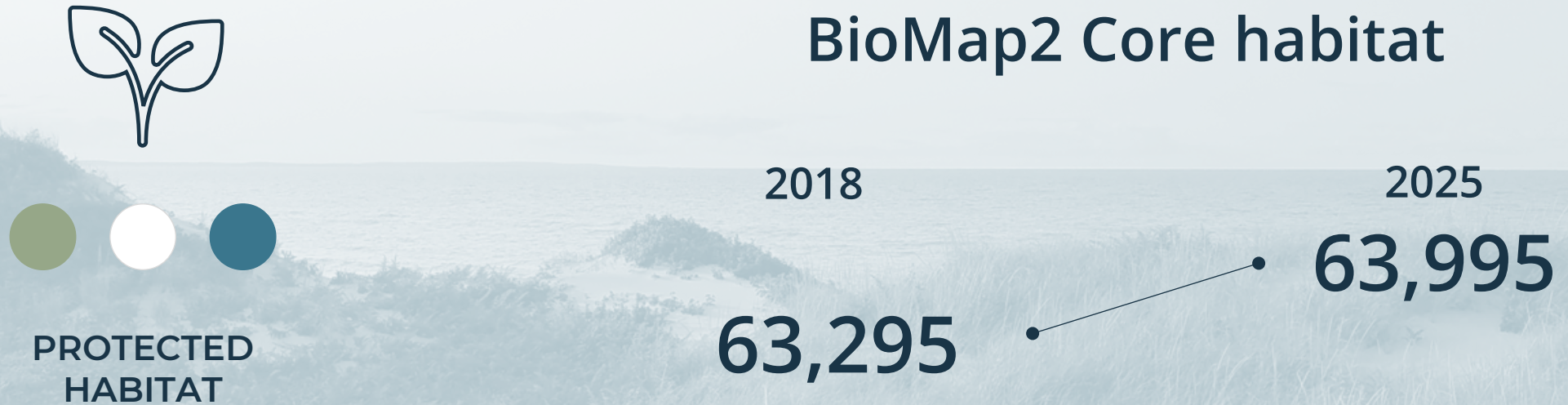


Community
Systems

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2018 REGIONAL POLICY PLAN

Acres of Protected BioMap2 Core habitat



Preserving the natural environment and habitats is essential to the region's environmental and economic resilience. An increase in the number of acres of protected BioMap2 Core habitat will show progress towards safeguarding the Cape's valuable natural environment.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2018 REGIONAL POLICY PLAN

MACRIS Inventoried Properties



The historic character of the Cape plays a huge role in attracting visitors and residents to the region, however many of these critical historic resources are unprotected. The first step towards protecting these historic resources is inventorying them, either for the first time or conducting more detailed inventories of previously inventoried structures. An increase in the number of historic resource inventories will show progress toward greater protection of these unique structures.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2018 REGIONAL POLICY PLAN



FLOODPLAIN
DEVELOPMENT

Increase in protected
open space in floodplain
from 2018 to 2025

213
acres

Structures within the
floodplain that were
built or rebuilt between
2018 and 2025

313

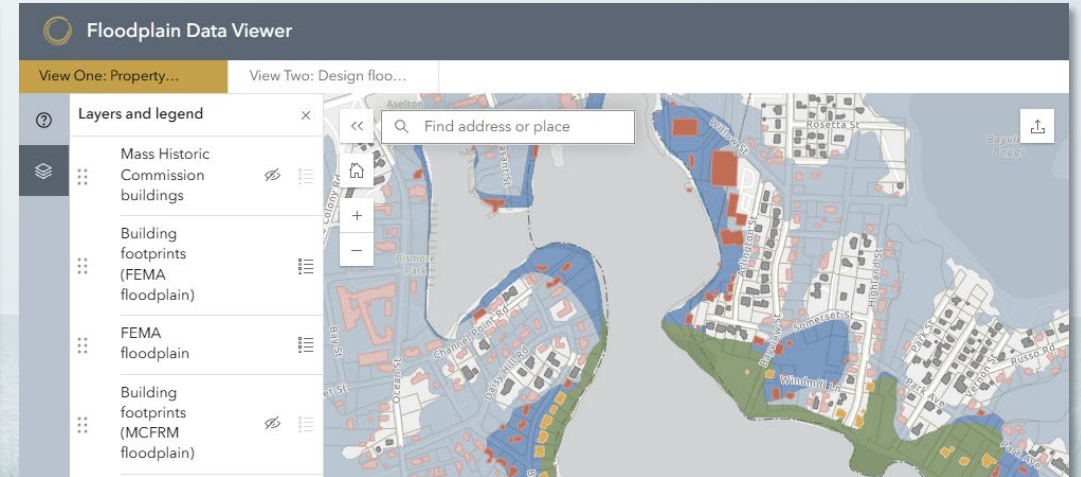
Climate change and sea level rise are threats posing a significant challenge for the Cape. A decrease in development within the floodplain, adapting development through new codes or regulations, or additional protected lands in strategic areas will help protect the environment and the population of the region and ensure its viability and sustainability for the next several decades.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2018 REGIONAL POLICY PLAN



FLOODPLAIN DEVELOPMENT



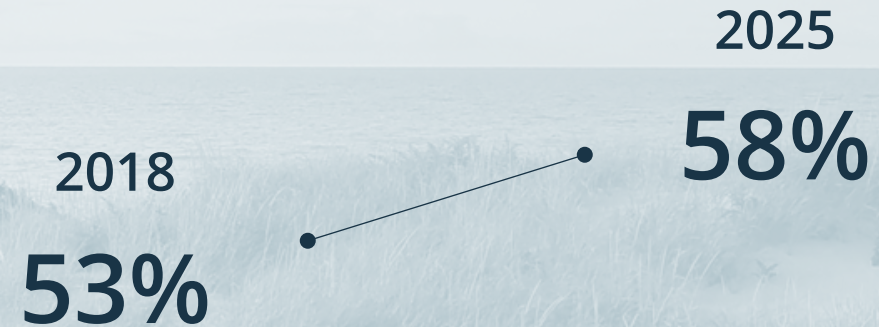
PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2018 REGIONAL POLICY PLAN



SIDEWALK
NETWORK

Percent of Route 28 with a Sidewalk



In order to achieve the vision of a region defined by vibrant and healthy communities, residents and visitors must be able to move through the area safely and efficiently and not solely using vehicles.

Increasing the number of parcels connected to the sidewalk network, where appropriate, will indicate an increased ability for more people to travel around the region without getting in their cars, and getting people outside and walking around is also a key contributing factor to creating a vibrant community.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2018 REGIONAL POLICY PLAN



COASTAL
WATER

Marine Water Portal

Discover marine water quality data and analyze trends for multiple characteristics at hundreds of monitoring stations across Cape Cod.

[EXPLORE THE DATA](#)

The health of marine water ecosystems depends on the quality of coastal waters; the Cape's economy is tied to its quality of life, and thus, to the quality of its coastal and other natural resources. Nitrogen travels through groundwater to coastal embayments and, in excess, results in degraded water quality. Decreased concentrations of nitrogen at monitoring stations in each of the region's coastal embayments is indicative of water quality improvement.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2018 REGIONAL POLICY PLAN



COASTAL
WATER

\$309
MILLION

committed to
Cape Cod
water quality
projects

\$105.5 Million
2025 Projects

\$64.9 Million
2024 Projects

\$14.1 Million
Pre-existing debt

\$7.6 Million
2018 Projects

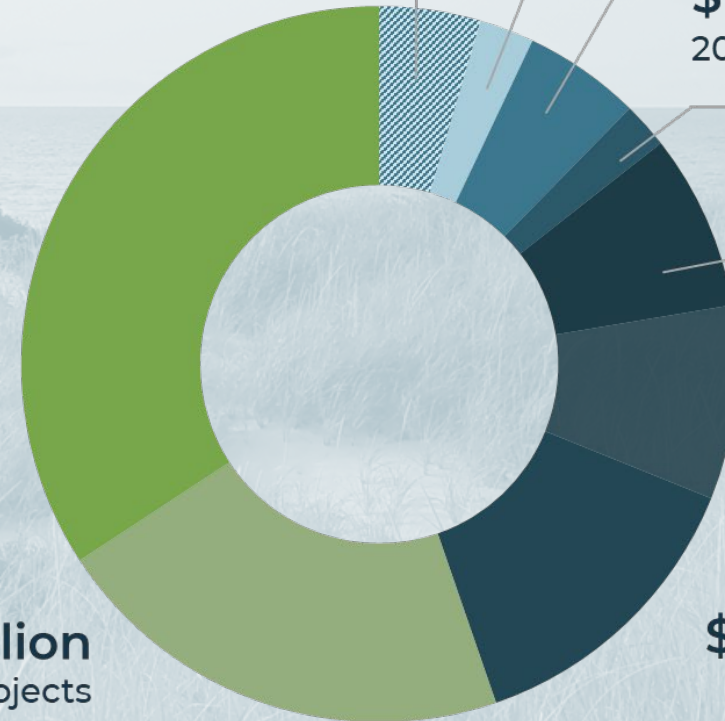
\$16.3 Million
2019 Projects

\$6.4 Million
2020 Projects

\$24.5 Million
2021 Projects

\$27 Million
2022 Projects

\$41.9 Million
2023 Projects



PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2018 REGIONAL POLICY PLAN



HOUSING DIVERSITY



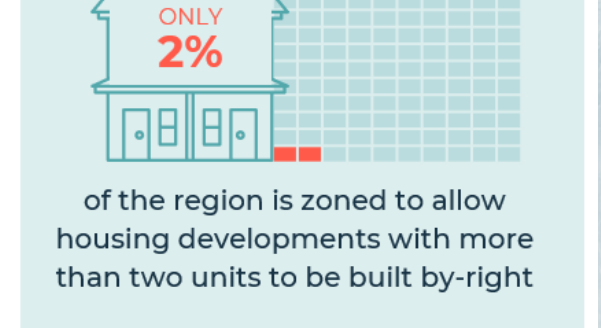
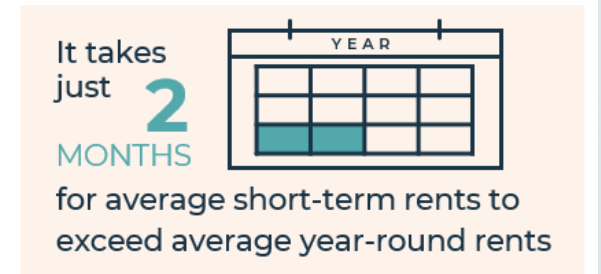
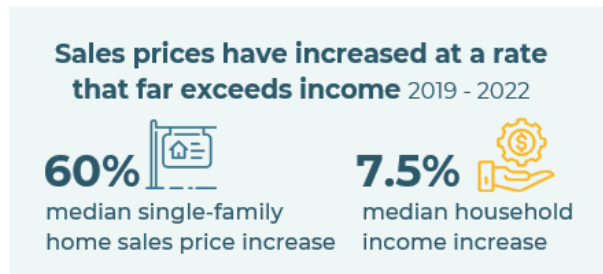
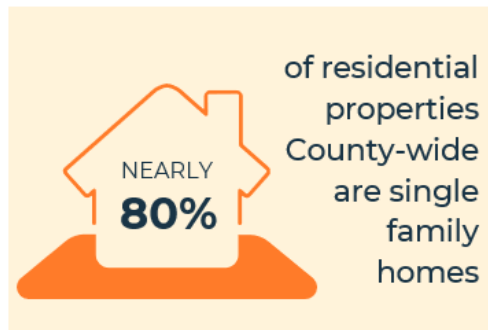
Housing affordability is a large challenge to the year-round population and is compounded by the fact that over 80% of the Cape's housing stock is detached single-family homes. An increase in housing diversity in terms of housing type, size, and rental vs. ownership units, will show that there are more opportunities for people of different ages and economic backgrounds to live on the Cape.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2018 REGIONAL POLICY PLAN



HOUSING DIVERSITY



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PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2018 REGIONAL POLICY PLAN



HOUSING DIVERSITY

**ONLY 2% OF THE
REGION IS ZONED TO
ALLOW MORE THAN 2
UNITS TO BE BUILT BY
RIGHT**



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PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2018 REGIONAL POLICY PLAN



PROTECTED
HABITAT



DRINKING
WATER



SIDEWALK
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HIGH-WAGE
JOBS



HOUSING
DIVERSITY



FLOODPLAIN
DEVELOPMENT



GREENHOUSE
GAS EMISSIONS



Natural
Systems



Built
Systems



Community
Systems

An aerial photograph of a coastal landscape. In the foreground, a wide, light-colored sandy beach curves along the edge of a body of water. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, with some darker patches visible beneath the surface. A long, narrow strip of land, possibly a causeway or a small island, extends into the water, lined with numerous small, dark-colored vehicles or boats. In the background, a large area of green, marshy land is visible, with intricate patterns of water and vegetation. The overall scene suggests a remote or protected coastal environment.

Potential Changes

Natural Systems

WATER RESOURCES
OCEAN RESOURCES
WETLAND RESOURCES

WILDLIFE & PLANT HABITAT
OPEN SPACE

Built Systems

COMMUNITY DESIGN
COASTAL RESILIENCY
CAPITAL FACILITIES &
INFRASTRUCTURE

TRANSPORTATION
ENERGY
WASTE MANAGEMENT
CLIMATE MITIGATION

Community Systems

CULTURAL HERITAGE
ECONOMY
HOUSING

A long wooden boardwalk stretches from the foreground into the distance, flanked by lush green marshland and a body of water. The boardwalk is made of wooden planks and has wooden railings on both sides. In the far distance, a few people can be seen walking on the boardwalk. A dark blue banner with white text is overlaid on the middle of the image.

DRAFT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

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

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

Water Resources

Goal: To maintain a sustainable supply of high quality ***untreated*** 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 and restore fresh water resources
- Protect, preserve and 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

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 ***stormwater discharges*** and changes in hydrology
- ~~*Protect wetlands from stormwater discharges.*~~
- Promote the restoration of degraded wetland resource areas

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
- ~~Protect or~~ 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

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 *while protecting regional resources.*

Objectives:

- Ensure capital facilities and infrastructure promote **efficiency**, *long-term* sustainability, and resiliency
- *Coordinate the siting of capital facilities and infrastructure to enhance the efficient* **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 ~~a balanced and efficient transportation system that includes~~ 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** ~~that will serve the current and future needs of the region and its people~~

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 ~~in the floodplain~~ **and reduce vulnerability of the built environment within areas vulnerable to flooding**
- Plan for ~~sea level rise, erosion, and floods~~
- ~~Reduce vulnerability of built environment to coastal hazards~~
- **Restore coastal resource areas to promote their natural beneficial functions**

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
- ~~Minimize energy consumption through planning and design (including energy efficiency and conservation measures)~~ **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 and supports the economy.

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 Mitigation

Goal: To support, advance and contribute 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 **and technologies** as appropriate to context
- Promote low or no carbon energy generation **technologies** as appropriate to context

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 sustainable regional economy comprised of a broad range of businesses providing employment opportunities to a diverse workforce.

Objectives:

- Protect and build on the Cape's competitive advantages
- Use resources and infrastructure efficiently
- Foster a balanced and diverse mix of business and industry
- Encourage industries that provide living wage jobs to a diverse workforce
- Expand economic activity and regional wealth through exports, value added, import substitution, and local ownership



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***
- ***Enable local workforce participation***
- ***Support local 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 affordability

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS



2018 RPP Recommended Actions

The RPP recommends regional planning actions within the construct of natural, built and community systems along with regional regulatory actions.

A banner image for 'Natural Systems' showing a coastal landscape with a sandy beach, waves, and a grassy dune in the foreground under a blue sky with light clouds.

Natural
Systems

A banner image for 'Built Systems' showing a large steel truss bridge spanning a body of water, with a ship visible in the distance.

Built
Systems

A banner image for 'Community Systems' showing a coastal community with a white lighthouse, a small building, and a parking lot on a grassy area overlooking the ocean.

Community
Systems

A banner image for 'Regional Regulatory Actions' showing a landscape with trees and a body of water under a clear blue sky.

Regional
Regulatory
Actions

2018 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

NATURAL SYSTEMS



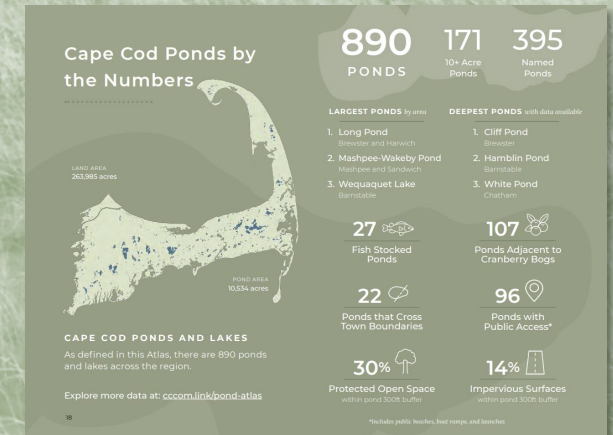
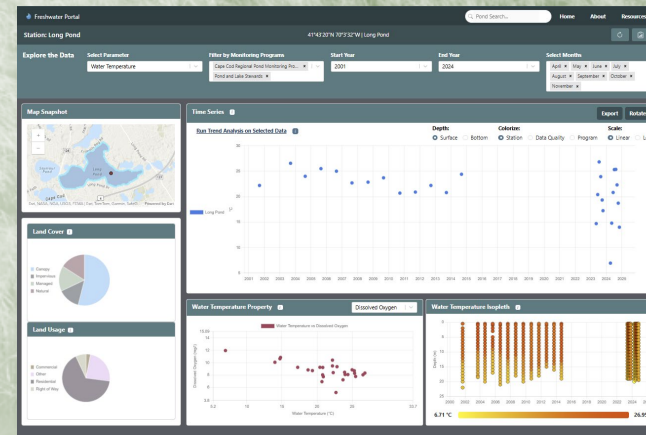
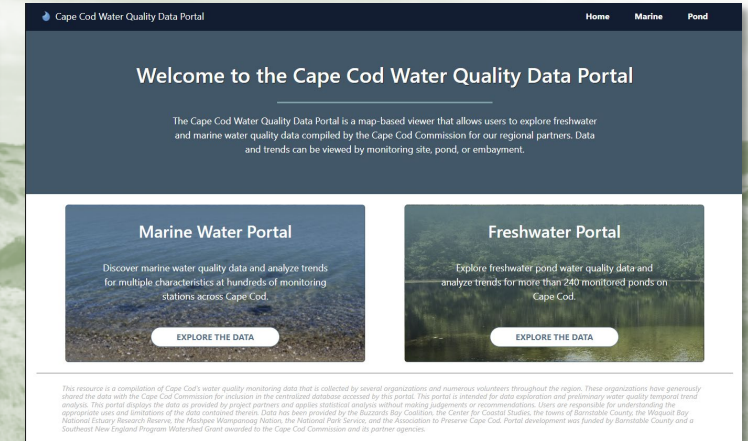
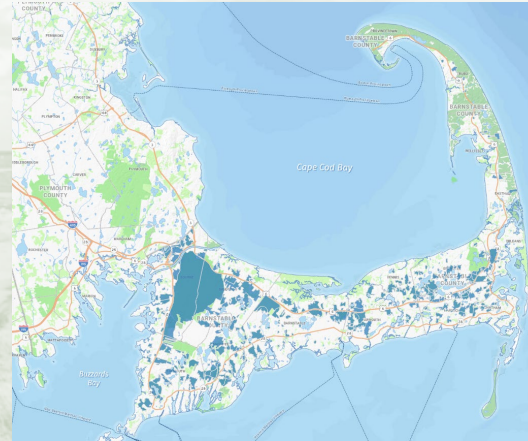
Identify Priority Lands
for Future Water Supply
Development



Support Water Quality
Planning in Priority
Watersheds



Update and Expand
Understanding of Fresh
Water Resources Data



2018 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

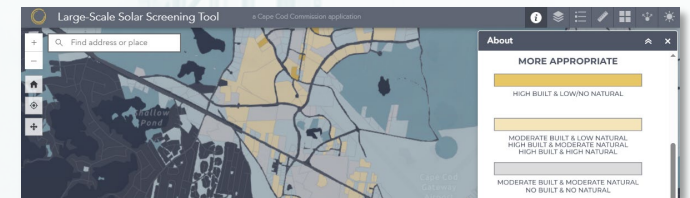
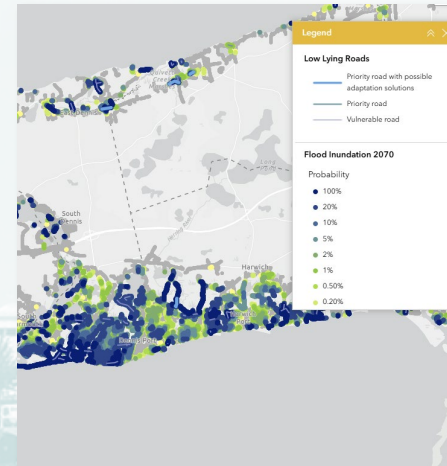
BUILT SYSTEMS



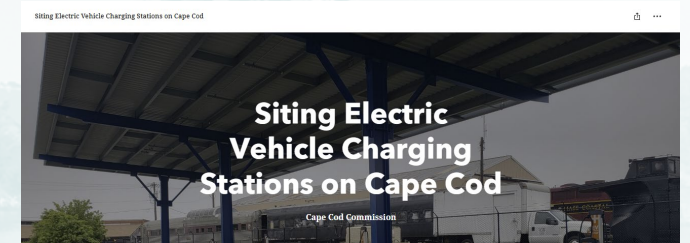
Develop a Regional Capital Infrastructure Plan to Support Sustainable Economic Development



Update the Cape Cod Regional Transportation Plan



Climate Change Response, Readiness, and Mitigation



Continue Coastal Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Planning

2018 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

COMMUNITY SYSTEMS



Develop a Regional Housing Plan



Improve and Update Historic Inventories



Update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy



Continue to Develop Land Use Decision Support Tools



Update Local Comprehensive Plan Regulations



Coordinate Annual Regional Planning Forum



2018 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

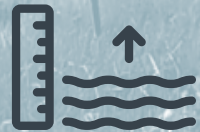
REGIONAL REGULATORY ACTIONS



Consider Development of Regional Impact Threshold Revisions and Other Amendments to the Commission's Code of Regulations



Revise Regional Design Guidelines



Amend Technical Bulletins to Better Respond to Climate Change

Cape Cod Multifamily Housing Design Guidelines Place Types

These Design Guidelines are meant to extend the unique cultural landscape of Cape Cod into the future, ensure healthy and vibrant spaces, make the Cape more resilient and a contributor to the State's carbon emissions reduction goals, and inspire more predictable built-form outcomes, helping to build support for new housing.

This matrix includes rows for each place type including community activity centers, historic, suburban, rural and maritime areas, and columns with building typologies, setbacks, and front facade window-to-wall ratios that are appropriate for the different place types to encourage pedestrian-focused buildings. Historic buildings don't need to change to meet setbacks or window-to-wall ratios.

	Sub-categories	Characteristics	Examples	Building Typologies	Setbacks Following desired setback pattern	Front Facade Window-to-wall Ratio
Community Activity Centers	Most dense	Characterized by shared building walls and zero setbacks	• Downtown Provincetown • Falmouth • Hyannis • Chatham • Mashpee	Rowhouse Apartment building Townhouse Duplex	Front: 0' min 15' max Side: 0' min Rear: 0' min	Upper Stories: 15% min Ground Floor: 70% min
	Moderate density	Characterized by space between structures and some suburban forms	• Downtown Orleans • Harwich Port • Dennis Port • West Dennis • South Yarmouth • Woods Hole • Buzzards Bay	Medium multi-family Single-family Townhouse Duplex	Front: 2' min 15' max Side: 7' min Rear: 7' min	Upper Stories: 15% min Ground Floor: 60% min
	Less dense	Characterized by front and side yards and a more residential feel	• Westport Village • Dennis Village • Barnstable Village • Sandwich Village • Osterville	Single-family Townhouse Duplex	Front: 10' min 20' max Side: 10' min Rear: 10' min	Upper Stories: 15% min Ground Floor: 60% min
	Most dense	Characterized by shared building walls, zero setbacks, and historic door/window patterns	• Downtown Provincetown • Downtown Hyannis • Chatham	Rowhouse Apartment building Townhouse Duplex	Front: 0' min 15' max Side: 0' min Rear: 0' min	Upper Stories: 15% min Ground Floor: 70% min



Climate Mitigation

This guidance is intended to clarify how the Climate Mitigation Goal and Objectives of the Regional Policy Plan (RPP) are to be applied and interpreted in Cape Cod Commission Development of Regional Impact (DRI) project review. This technical bulletin presents non-exhaustive, non-exclusive methods by which a project can meet this goal and objectives.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

NATURAL SYSTEMS



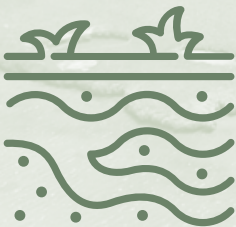
**DEVELOP A REGIONAL OPEN
SPACE PLAN**



**SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF
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**



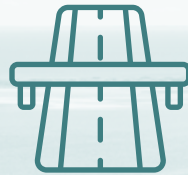
**UPDATE THE OCEAN
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

BUILT SYSTEMS



**ADVANCE
REGULATIONS
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

Next Steps



ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

Subregional Stakeholder Meetings

Meetings on proposed changes

MAY

Draft Completed

Draft of proposed update completed; subcommittee and Commission review

JUNE

Public Comment Period

60-day public comment period on the draft

SUMMER

Subregional Hearings

Hearings on the draft during the public comment period

SUMMER

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

PROVIDING FEEDBACK

>> VISIT THE TABLES AROUND THE ROOM

>> 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/2025RPP

An aerial photograph of a coastal area in Cape Cod. The foreground shows a vast, green marsh with a complex network of water channels. Above the marsh is a dense residential neighborhood with many small houses. To the right, a sandy beach meets the blue ocean. A long pier extends into the water. The background features a forested headland and a body of water.

Thank you!

www.capecodcommission.org/rpp-update



CAPE COD
COMMISSION