

An aerial photograph of a coastal town with numerous houses, a beach, and a large body of water. In the foreground, there are green marshes with a network of water channels. A dark semi-transparent rectangle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the main title. Below the title, a teal horizontal bar contains the text 'PUBLIC MEETING'. At the bottom center, the date 'MARCH 2025' is displayed. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo consisting of two concentric circles and the text 'CAPE COD COMMISSION' below it.

Regional Policy Plan Update

PUBLIC MEETING

MARCH 2025

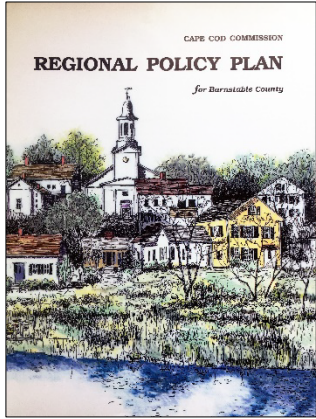


CAPE COD
COMMISSION

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely on a beach. The foreground shows several houses with gabled roofs and porches, some built on stilts. In the background, a prominent white lighthouse with a dark top stands on a small island or point. The ocean is visible on the right side, and the sky is overcast. The entire image has a light blue tint.

AGENDA

- 1. WELCOME**
- 2. 2018 RPP OVERVIEW**
- 3. UPDATE PROCESS AND AREAS OF FOCUS**
- 4. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH**
- 5. DISCUSSION AND FEEDBACK**



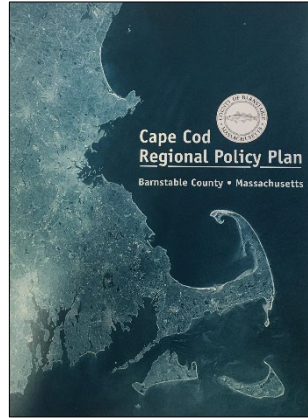
1991

Vision of “protecting the best of Cape Cod and repairing the mistakes of the past”



1996

Updated Regional Policy Plan with a focus on growth management



2002

Updated Regional Policy Plan with a focus on Districts of Critical Planning Concern



2009 & 2012
UPDATE

Updated Regional Policy Plan that divided the planning and regulatory sections



2018 & 2021
UPDATE

Updated Regional Policy Plan with a focus on context-sensitive planning and design and goals and objectives

Key Challenges



**PROTECTING
NATURAL
AREAS**



**FRESHWATER
QUALITY**



**COASTAL
WATER
QUALITY**



**CLIMATE
CHANGE**



**PRESERVING
HISTORIC
RESOURCES**



**EXPENSIVE
HOUSING**



**ADEQUATE
INFRASTRUCTURE**



**ECONOMIC
STABILITY**

PLANNING EFFORTS

SINCE 2018



C A P E C O D

REGIONAL

P O L I C Y P L A N

F R A M I N G T H E F U T U R E

CAPE COD COMMISSION | 2018

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely Cape Cod, showing a dense cluster of houses with gabled roofs, a sandy beach, and the ocean. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal filter.

GROWTH POLICY

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.

CAPE COD PLACETYPES



NATURAL
AREAS



RURAL
DEVELOPMENT
AREAS



SUBURBAN
DEVELOPMENT
AREAS



HISTORIC
AREAS



MARITIME
AREAS



COMMUNITY
ACTIVITY
CENTERS



INDUSTRIAL
ACTIVITY
CENTERS



MILITARY AND
TRANSPORTATION
AREAS

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

Natural Systems

To protect and restore the quality and function of the region's natural environment that provides the clean water and healthy ecosystems upon which life depends.

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

1. Protect and preserve groundwater quality
2. Protect, preserve and restore fresh water resources
3. Protect, preserve and restore marine water resources
4. Manage and treat stormwater to protect and preserve water quality
5. Manage groundwater withdrawals and discharges to maintain hydrologic balance and protect surface and groundwater resources

OCEAN RESOURCES

GOAL | To protect, preserve, or restore the quality and natural values and functions of ocean resources.

OBJECTIVES

1. Locate development away from sensitive resource areas and habitats
2. Preserve and protect ocean habitat and the species it supports
3. Protect significant human use areas and vistas

WETLAND RESOURCES

GOAL | To protect, preserve, or restore the quality and natural values and functions of inland and coastal wetlands and their buffers.

OBJECTIVES

1. Protect wetlands and their buffers from vegetation and grade changes
2. Protect wetlands from changes in hydrology
3. Protect wetlands from stormwater discharges
4. Promote the restoration of degraded wetland resource areas

WILDLIFE AND PLANT HABITAT

GOAL | To protect, preserve, or restore wildlife and plant habitat to maintain the region's natural diversity.

OBJECTIVES

1. Maintain existing plant and wildlife populations and species diversity
2. Restore degraded habitats through use of native plant communities
3. Protect and preserve rare species habitat, vernal pools, 350-foot buffers to vernal pools
4. Manage invasive species
5. Promote best management practices to protect wildlife and plant habitat from the adverse impacts of development

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

1. Protect and preserve natural, cultural, and recreational resources
2. Maintain or increase the connectivity of open space
3. Protect or provide open space appropriate to context

Built Systems

To protect and enhance the built environment and infrastructure necessary to support the region and healthy activity centers.

COMMUNITY DESIGN

GOAL | To protect and enhance the unique character of the region's built and natural environment based on the local context.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.Promote context sensitive building and site design
- 2.Minimize the amount of newly disturbed land and impervious surfaces
- 3.Avoid adverse visual impacts from infrastructure to scenic resources

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

- 1.Minimize development in the floodplain
- 2.Plan for sea level rise, erosion, and floods
- 3.Reduce vulnerability of built environment to coastal hazards

CAPITAL FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL | To guide the development of capital facilities and infrastructure necessary to meet the region's needs while protecting regional resources.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.Ensure capital facilities and infrastructure promote long-term sustainability and resiliency
- 2.Coordinate the siting of capital facilities and infrastructure to enhance the efficient provision of services and facilities that respond to the needs of the region

TRANSPORTATION

GOAL | To provide and promote a safe, reliable, and multi-modal transportation system.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.Improve safety and eliminate hazards for all users of Cape Cod's transportation system
- 2.Provide and promote a balanced and efficient transportation system that includes healthy transportation options and appropriate connections for all users
- 3.Provide an efficient and reliable transportation system that will serve the current and future needs of the region and its people

ENERGY

GOAL | To provide an adequate, reliable, and diverse supply of energy to serve the communities and economies of Cape Cod.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.Support renewable energy development that is context-sensitive
- 2.Increase resiliency of energy generation and delivery
- 3.Minimize energy consumption through planning and design (including energy efficiency and conservation measures)

WASTE MANAGEMENT

GOAL | To promote a sustainable solid waste management system for the region that protects public health, safety, and the environment and supports the economy.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.Reduce waste and waste disposal by promoting waste diversion and other Zero Waste initiatives
- 2.Support an integrated solid waste management system

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

- 1.Promote low or no carbon transportation alternatives and technologies
- 2.Promote low or no carbon technologies for building energy use, including appliances, lighting, and heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC) systems
- 3.Promote carbon sequestration and other emissions removal practices and technologies as appropriate to context
- 4.Promote low or no carbon energy generation technologies as appropriate to context

Community Systems

To protect and enhance the linkages between society, the natural environment, and history vital to the way of life on Cape Cod by supporting development of amenities and life opportunities necessary to support vibrant and diverse communities.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

GOAL | To protect and preserve the significant cultural, historic, and archaeological values and resources of Cape Cod.

OBJECTIVES

1. Protect and preserve forms, layouts, scale, massing, and key character defining features of historic resources, including traditional development patterns of villages and neighborhoods
2. Protect and preserve archaeological resources and assets from alteration or relocation
3. Preserve and enhance public access and rights to and along the shore
4. Protect and preserve traditional agricultural and maritime development and uses

ECONOMY

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

OBJECTIVES

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

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

1. Promote an increase in housing diversity and choice
2. Promote an increase in year-round housing supply
3. Protect and improve existing housing stock
4. Increase housing affordability

AREAS OF FOCUS



**ENCOURAGE HOUSING
IN THE RIGHT PLACES**



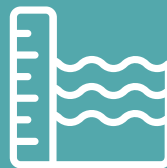
**PROMOTE REUSE &
REDEVELOPMENT**



**PRESERVE
NATURAL AREAS**



ECONOMIC RESILIENCY



CLIMATE ACTION



INFRASTRUCTURE

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

Public Meetings

Update on the process and feedback on potential changes

SPRING

Draft Completed

Draft of proposed update completed

LATE MAY/
EARLY 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

RECENT ENGAGEMENT



**RESIDENTS
SURVEY**



HOUSING



TRANSPORTATION



ECONOMY



OPEN SPACE



CLIMATE CHANGE

FOCUS GROUPS

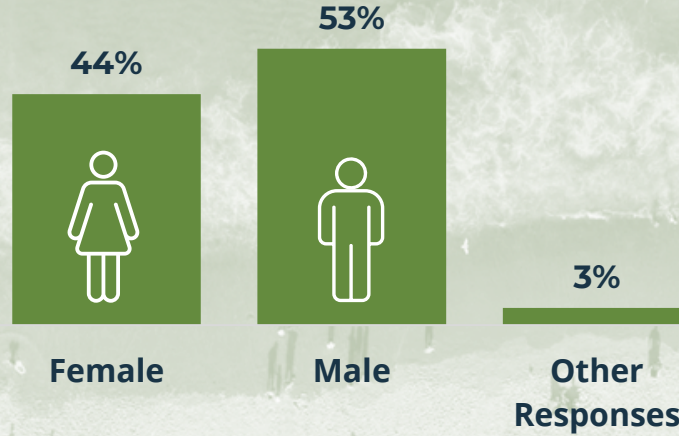
RESIDENTS SURVEY

WHO RESPONDED?

1,241 resident respondents

95% identify as white

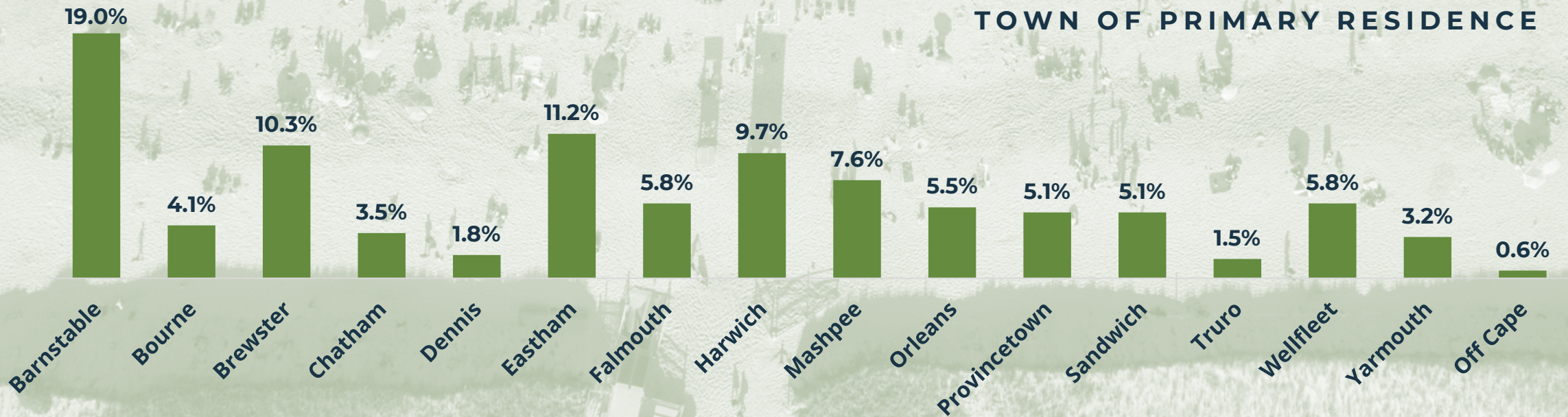
57% retired



52% reported an annual household income

over \$100,000

TOWN OF PRIMARY RESIDENCE



RESIDENTS SURVEY

IMPORTANT OR VERY IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS IN INITIALLY DECIDING TO MAINTAIN A HOME ON THE CAPE (TOP 10)

91%  ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

75%  HISTORIC CHARACTER ↑

91%  ACCESS TO THE COAST

73%  GOOD PLACE TO RETIRE ↓

85%  OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ↑

72%  ACCESS TO PONDS AND LAKES*

83%  HOUSING THAT THEY COULD AFFORD ↑

71%  PUBLIC SERVICES ↓

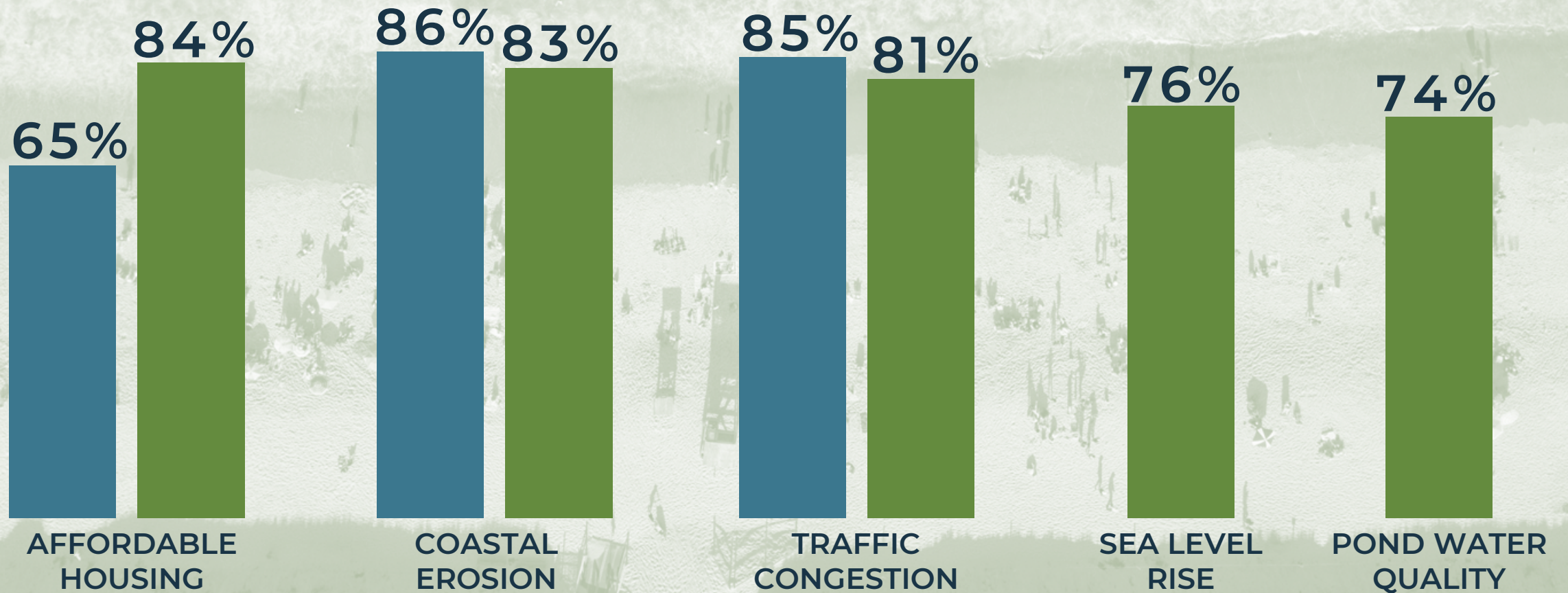
79%  REASONABLE TAXES ↓

61%  PROXIMITY TO FRIENDS AND RELATIVES

RESIDENTS SURVEY

CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Percent identifying the below as a serious or moderate problem now or in the next 5 years in their town



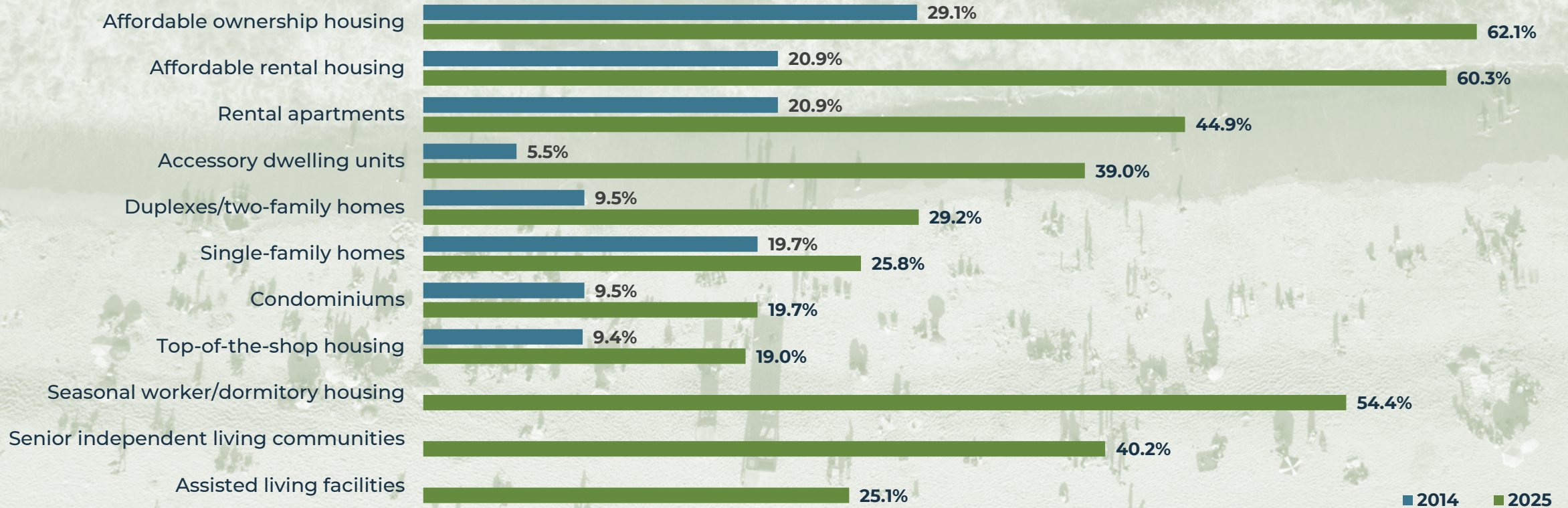
2014

2025

RESIDENTS SURVEY

HOUSING NEEDS

Percent of respondents indicating they believe more of each kind of residential development is needed in their town



STRONGLY OR SOMEWHAT SUPPORT

60%

a tax on real estate sales over \$1 million to fund affordable housing

67%

tax breaks for developers who build affordable housing

69%

making more households eligible for affordable housing by raising the income thresholds

RESIDENTS SURVEY

REGULATORY ACTIONS

Percent of residents strongly or somewhat supporting the following regulatory actions around development

Make development easier in already-developed commercial areas but harder in less developed areas



Make development easier in already-developed residential areas but harder in less developed areas



Make development easier everywhere



Make development harder everywhere



Make (re)development easier in developed areas



Make development harder in less developed areas



RESIDENTS SURVEY

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTED OR STRONGLY SUPPORTED

88%  DRINKING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

84%  WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

85%  BIKE PATHS

83%  BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

85%  SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING FACILITIES

47%  IMPROVED COMMERCIAL HARBOR FACILITIES

84%  REPLACEMENT OF THE CANAL BRIDGES

24%  PUBLIC PARKING GARAGES

84%  SIDEWALKS

RESIDENTS SURVEY

SUPPORT FOR PROJECTS IN THEIR TOWN IF FUNDED BY A TAX INCREASE

Top 5 for support or strongly support



PURCHASE OF OPEN SPACE FOR WATER SUPPLY PROTECTION



CONSTRUCTION OF SIDEWALKS OR BIKE PATHS



PURCHASE OF OPEN SPACE SO IT WILL REMAIN OPEN



CONSTRUCTION OF WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES



PURCHASE OF OPEN SPACE FOR A VARIETY OF RECREATIONAL USES

SUBREGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Support or strongly support purchasing land for Affordable housing



Outer Cape residents



All Cape residents



Mid Cape residents

Support or strongly support preservation or restoration of historic buildings



Outer Cape residents



All Cape residents



Upper Cape residents

RESIDENTS SURVEY

WATER QUALITY

COASTAL WATER QUALITY



42% reported noticing a decline

54% did not change participation in water-based activities

35% changed or stopped swimming

POND WATER QUALITY

63% reported noticing a decline 

50%
Outer Cape residents

70%
Lower Cape residents

54% changed or stopped swimming 

41% did not change participation in water-based activities

RECENT ENGAGEMENT



**RESIDENTS
SURVEY**



HOUSING



TRANSPORTATION



ECONOMY



OPEN SPACE



CLIMATE CHANGE

FOCUS GROUPS

OPEN SPACE

FOCUS GROUPS

FEEDBACK & DISCUSSION

- Prioritize open space with conservation value, but also consider connectivity
- Address vulnerability of recreational, agricultural, and institutional lands
- Protect as much as possible of remaining land and make development of natural areas difficult
- Community activity centers need open space
- Incentivize redevelopment
- Consider undevelopment, restoration
- Cash contribution needs updating
- Allow for mitigation outside of town, regional perspective
- Encourage regional policies in local plans

POTENTIAL AMENDMENTS

- Technical refinements to Objective OS1
- Considering adding Recreation goal
- Clarifications and additions to the Technical Bulletin regarding recreation
- Defining “open space”
- Discussing importance of lands providing community benefits, connectivity in landscape
- Mapping changes to refine natural areas
- New methods to address floodplains, wellhead protection areas
- Action item: regional open space plan

PARTICIPANTS

Land trusts, environmental advocates, MA Department of Conservation and Recreation staff, MA Department of Agricultural Resources Staff, attorney, realtor

CLIMATE CHANGE

FOCUS GROUP

FEEDBACK & DISCUSSION

- Consider impacts of new development and ways to better support redevelopment
- Look at carbon accounting and changes for wetlands, trees
- Consider the region's vulnerabilities: drought, heat, wildfire, etc.
- Consider tradeoffs; some necessary accommodations will have climate impacts
- RPP should be visionary and should consider and prepare for redevelopment post-disaster
- More education, communication is needed around climate change and its impacts generally

OTHER

- Discussion around adaptation strategies to integrate into other issue areas

POTENTIAL AMENDMENTS

- Increase emphasis on quantifying GHG impacts where possible and prioritize GHG reduction
- Add clarity about methods that should be prioritized and identify where incentives may be available

PARTICIPANTS

Scientists, environmental advocates, Cape Cod Climate Change Collaborative members, municipal staff, Climate Action Network members

TRANSPORTATION

FOCUS GROUPS

FEEDBACK & DISCUSSION

- Safety should remain the top priority
- “Vision Zero” is the latest effort to prioritize safety
- Continue to focus on all road users
- “Complete streets” as a practice has evolved since the last RPP
- Encouraging multi-modal connectivity remains important
- Congestion still important, but regulatory approach could use more certainty
- Maintain appropriate references to context sensitivity

POTENTIAL AMENDMENTS

- Increase references to complete streets and add in Vision Zero
- Increase the integration of climate resilience through references to vulnerable roadways work
- Technical refinements to trip generation approach – prioritize local data where available
- Technical refinements to congestion management approach

PARTICIPANTS

Municipal staff (DPW and planning), CCRTA, regional transportation official (MPO), MassDOT access management expert, transportation consultants/engineers

ECONOMY

FOCUS GROUP

FEEDBACK & DISCUSSION

- Need support for new types of businesses as well as business continuity/succession, including streamlining and demystifying permitting processes
- Affordable housing, childcare, and transportation solutions are critical for a healthy economy
- Access to training and education is vital; provide a greater focus on workforce training and education
- Towns and businesses need help obtaining grants and funding
- Bridge replacement is imperative

POTENTIAL AMENDMENTS

- Broadening the economy goal, getting into the specifics in the objectives
- Focusing more on workforce training, education, and support (childcare, housing, etc.)
- Draw on and integrate 2024 CEDS goals

PARTICIPANTS

Local and regional chambers of commerce, developer, realtor, builder, entrepreneur and business support organizations, workforce training and education organizations, town community development staff, fishermen's alliance, business owners

HOUSING

FOCUS GROUP

FEEDBACK & DISCUSSION

- Preservation of existing housing is important, not only production
- Important to support a range of income levels, not only focused on deed-restricted Affordable housing
- Support strategies that go beyond the 10% affordable housing mandate
- Raising thresholds for housing projects in appropriate locations makes sense
- Consider ways to incentivize and prioritize infill and redevelopment in appropriate locations

POTENTIAL AMENDMENTS

- Greater emphasis on attainable housing
- Review community activity centers and how they can better support and encourage housing (re)development that is more affordable and attainable
- Look at review thresholds for housing in certain areas, as well as the building reuse/change of use threshold

PARTICIPANTS

Municipal planning and housing staff

OTHER AREAS OF CHANGE



**REVIEW
THRESHOLDS**



**TECHNICAL
GUIDANCE**



MAPPING

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE

Public Update Meetings

Overview of process to date, what to expect moving forward

MARCH 26 & 28

Subregional Meetings

Meetings in subregions on proposed changes

END OF APRIL/
EARLY MAY

Draft Completed

Draft of proposed update completed; subcommittee and Commission review

LATE MAY/
EARLY JUNE

Public Comment Period

60-day public comment period on the draft

SUMMER

Subregional Hearings

Hearings on the proposed draft during the public comment period

SUMMER

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

An aerial photograph of the Cape Cod coastline, showing a mix of green marshland, residential houses, and a sandy beach meeting the blue ocean. A dark, semi-transparent rectangular overlay is centered over the image, containing white text.

Thank you!

Written comments may continue to be submitted by mail to the
Cape Cod Commission, P.O. Box 226, 3225 Main St.,
Barnstable, MA 02630 or online using the form located at
www.capecodcommission.org/2025RPP

www.capecodcommission.org/rpp-update



CAPE COD
COMMISSION