Village Business District & Harbor Village Business Overlay District Design Guidelines

Version 2.0 – Adopted by the Planning Board November 20, 2019 (V2.0 Revised to include Section 7 – HVBOD)
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Photo montage of Cohasset Village.
Introduction, Purpose & Applicability, and Application Procedures

1. Introduction

1.1. These Design Guidelines are adopted pursuant to the authority of Section 18(1)(c) of the Town of Cohasset Zoning Bylaws (the “Zoning Bylaws”). They complement the Zoning Bylaws, and provide the Town of Cohasset with a regulatory framework that defines the public objectives for site and building design within the Village Business District.

1.2. This document is organized into subject headings based on the areas of design. Where it provides greater clarity regarding desired design outcomes, illustrative images have been used to complement these Design Guidelines. Captions have been added to images as necessary to clarify the intent of the illustration and to reinforce the Design Guidelines included in the text.

2. Purpose and Applicability

2.1. These Design Guidelines will be used by the Planning Board of the Town of Cohasset (the “Planning Board”) in their review and consideration of applications for SPP special permits in the Village Business District. Within its review of an application for special permit in the Village Business District, the Planning Board shall review applications for consistency with these Design Guidelines and shall note its findings in its written decision.

2.2. These Design Guidelines supplement Section 18 Village Business District of the Zoning Bylaws. Inconsistency with the Design Guidelines may be used as a basis for conditional approval or denial of an application for a “SPP” special permit in the Village Business District. In addition to its role as a regulatory document within the permitting process, these Design Guidelines are also intended as a public planning document that will guide future public investments in infrastructure and the future use of public land in the Village Business District.

2.3. These Design Guidelines shall be in effect upon adoption by a majority of the Town of Cohasset Planning Board. The Design Guidelines can be amended at any time by vote of the Planning Board within a duly noticed public hearing.

2.4. In the case of inconsistency between the Zoning Bylaws and these Design Guidelines, the Zoning Bylaws shall govern. In the case of inconsistency between applicable state or federal laws, including, without limitation, state building codes or life safety codes, and these Design Guidelines, the applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations shall govern.

3. Application Procedures and Review Process

3.1. Application procedures. Applicants for development within the District shall comply with the application requirements set forth in the Zoning Bylaws.

3.2. Pre-application review. The applicant is encouraged to participate in a pre-application review at a regular meeting of the Planning Board. The purpose of the pre-application review is to minimize the applicant’s cost of engineering and other technical experts, and to obtain the advice and direction of the Planning Board prior to filing the application. At the pre-application review, the applicant shall outline the proposal and seek preliminary feedback from the Planning Board, other municipal review entities such as the Design Review Committee, and members of the public. The applicant is also encouraged to request a site visit by the Planning Board and/or its designee in order to facilitate pre-application review.

3.3. The Cohasset Planning Board, per Section 18 (3) of the Zoning Bylaws, may accept a combined site plan and application for special permits upon the applicant’s written agreement to an extension of the required timelines for public hearing and final action in Section 12.6(5) of the Zoning Bylaws to match the special permit timeline requirements.

3.4. Application contents. In order to be considered complete, all Applications for Site Plan Approval pursuant to the Zoning Bylaws shall be comprised of the following, to be submitted to the planning board, forthwith:

3.4.1. The original and 17 copies of a completed application form, Form 12.

3.4.2. Complete list of abutters certified by the town assessor, including two sets of mailing labels.

3.4.3. Development Plan Narrative Summary including proposed housing unit count and/or square footage of non-residential development. Applications submitted to the Planning Board for a special permit within the Village Business District must ensure that the development plan meets the requirements in the Zoning Bylaws including without limitation Section 12(4), 12(6) and Section 18, and is consistent with these Design Guidelines.
3. Application Procedures and Review Process (cont’d)

3.4.4. Proposed Site Plan, floor plans, and elevation drawings stamped by a Massachusetts Registered Professional Engineer and/or architect including one (1) original and twelve (12) full size copies of all the above no larger than 2’ x 3’ dimension; six (6) paper copies of all the above at 11’’ x 17’; and 18 copies of all other supporting documents. An accompanying electronic copy may be provided at the Applicant’s option.

3.5. The Planning Board may waive requirements of these Design Guidelines upon a finding by the majority of the Board that such waiver is not inconsistent with the intent of these Design Guidelines, and is in the public interest. All waiver requests from provisions of these Design Guidelines shall be made in writing and shall cite the specific provision(s) for which a waiver is requested. Provisions of the Zoning Bylaws may not be waived.

3.6. Review Process. Per Section 12(4) and 18(1) (e) of the Zoning Bylaws, the Planning Board will conduct a review of the special permit application within a duly noticed public hearing to be held within sixty-five days after filing of an application. The Board will issue a final decision within ninety (90) days from the close of the public hearing. Failure by the Board to take final action upon the application for a special permit within ninety days of the close of the public hearing shall be deemed to be a grant of the permit applied for, and the town clerk shall certify forthwith.
4.1. Guiding Principles: General Public Policy Objectives

4.1. **General Public Policy Objectives.** These Design Guidelines are based on site planning and design principles that articulate public interests in the physical design and aesthetic qualities associated with the land and its development. Due to the historic nature of the existing built environment in Cohasset Village, and its proximity to residential neighborhoods, particular emphasis has been placed on the relationship of new development to its surroundings. The following recommended provisions should be considered by the Applicant in designing the overall composition of the site, building improvements and related infrastructure improvements. The Guiding Principles included in this Section 4 are goals, and will not be applied as regulatory standards.

4.1.1. **Preserve and Enhance the Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Village.**
Renovation and new development within the Cohasset Village Business District should emphasize the preservation and restoration of buildings or groups of buildings that have architectural or historical significance, or are listed within public plans or policy documents as contributing to the character of Cohasset Village. Adaptive reuse and renovation of such existing buildings is strongly encouraged where feasible. New development should be complementary to the existing architectural design and form of buildings in the Village Business District. Whenever possible, new development should incorporate elements of, or design inspired by, existing buildings within the Village Business District.

4.1.2. **Promote Mix of Uses.**
The Cohasset Village Business Zoning Bylaw was established in part to encourage the development of mixed-use projects including both residential and non-residential uses within the same structure. Increased commercial and mixed-use activity is intended to strengthen the business climate in the District and help ensure economic vitality in Cohasset Village.

4.1.3. **Promote Variety in Future Development.**
The Design Guidelines and the Zoning Bylaws cannot account for every proposal that will be presented to the Planning Board; therefore, these Design Guidelines strive to allow for creativity and variety in architecture and site design, provided that the end result is of high quality and an asset to the Town of Cohasset. Variety and coherence are not mutually exclusive. Replicating one or two particular styles throughout the District will not create an interesting streetscape, so creativity with design integrity is encouraged.

4.1.4. **Sustainability.**
Sustainable construction techniques and materials should be incorporated in new construction in the Village Business District. As set forth in Section 18(1)(a)(ii), special permits for increased Floor Area Ratio may be permitted if the construction proposed will produce emissions that are at least 50% less than required to comply with the Massachusetts State Building Code. Renovation of existing buildings should seek to improve energy efficiency within the building. Energy efficiency should be a central goal in selection of lighting, windows, materials, insulation and heating/ventilation/air conditioning systems.
4.1. Guiding Principles: General Public Policy Objectives

4.1.5. Coordination with Infrastructure.
The Town of Cohasset has invested heavily in the public infrastructure in Cohasset Village. In its review of applications for special permits, its consideration of requested waivers, and its consideration of a requested Floor Area Ratio bonus, the Planning Board will consider public benefits associated with the proposed development. New developments fronting on public streets are encouraged to propose improvements to the public infrastructure including sidewalks, lighting, crosswalks, street trees and/or other landscaping enhancements. Burial of existing overhead utilities in underground conduits is a public policy goal. Where new development is proposed in proximity to existing public parks or open spaces, the Applicant is encouraged to propose enhancements to these public spaces and the pedestrian connections between said spaces and the new development.

4.1.6. Affordable and Moderately Priced Housing.
The Zoning Bylaws do not require inclusion of deed-restricted affordable housing units within residential development proposals in the Village Business District. However, the Zoning Bylaws provide for increased Floor Area Ratio for residential or mixed-use development proposals including deed-restricted affordable housing. Even where deed-restricted affordable housing is not proposed, modestly priced housing that provides a broad range of residential opportunities at various prices and unity types is encouraged.

4.1.7. Open Spaces and Pedestrian Accessibility.
The Village Business District should provide a safe, convenient and accessible pedestrian network both to and through the District. One policy goal of these Design Guidelines is to encourage the construction of a “new Main Street” with a sidewalk and a series of new building façades along the eastern edge of the Town Parking Lot. Sidewalks and paths throughout the District should be well landscaped, including pedestrian amenities such as benches and trash receptacles, and should be well-lit for clear wayfinding in the evening hours. Directional signage should be installed to encourage walking within the Village Business District. To the extent that new development is proposed on lots that include gaps in the pedestrian network, new sidewalks to close those gaps and enhance the overall pedestrian network are encouraged. Maintenance and enhancement of existing open spaces and pocket parks, and creation of new public open spaces, is encouraged.

4.1.8. Sensitivity to Adjacencies.
The Village Business District is adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods that enjoy the same pastoral tranquility that is central to the residential environment elsewhere in Cohasset. As new development proceeds in Cohasset Village, both site and building design should strive to maintain or enhance the quality of life for Cohasset residents, both within and adjacent to the Village Business District. In particular, the scale of new buildings should “step down” at the edge of the District to better match the height of adjacent buildings. Lighting should be designed using “dark skies” principles to direct light downward and eliminate glare. Screening of new buildings may be appropriate where commercial or mixed-use development is located immediately adjacent to existing residential buildings.
4.2. **Cohasset Village Design Areas.** Although the geographic size of the Cohasset Village Business District is fairly small – approximately twenty-one acres in total – the built environment in the District includes a range of sub-areas with distinct building types and neighborhood functions. The Zoning Bylaws generally apply consistent requirements within the District, although also include specific provisions applicable to lots located adjacent to residential zoning districts. These Design Guidelines offer additional guidance to Applicants regarding the public policy goals for each design area. This guidance should be taken into account within project design to ensure consistency of development proposals with the public policy objectives in Cohasset Village.
4.2. Guiding Principles: Villa Design Areas

4.2.1. In many ways, the Two-Sided Blocks design area represents the heart of Cohasset Village. The scale and massing of buildings, and their relationship to the public realm including sidewalks and pocket parks, defines a standard as a traditional New England village center. A central design element of this location is the visibility of buildings from all sides. Merchants enjoy the benefit of visibility to visitors entering the Village Business District from multiple directions and are encouraged to make the most of this design element. It is important to carry this element forward in new construction, such that the design of buildings, landscaping and pedestrian amenities are both attractive and functional from two or more sides.

4.2.2. As the primary starting point for residents and visitors to the Village Business District, the Town Parking Lot should welcome visitors and give clear direction to the merchants in the Cohasset Village Business District. The Town Parking Lot should provide multiple points of entry to an overall pedestrian network that serves all of the merchants and buildings in Cohasset Village. This area should serve as a “second Main Street” in order to encourage coordinated improvements to the Parking Lot to include the development of a pedestrian-friendly, storefront atmosphere parallel to South Main Street.

The Town Parking Lot design area should be designed to encourage new development and building renovation to include entrances, sidewalks, and benches along the eastern edge of the Town Parking Lot and to capture the interests of visitors as the first point of entry to Cohasset Village. Improvements to this area are recommended to increase pedestrian access and flow along the southeastern border of the design area and to provide pedestrian access from the Town Parking Lot to South Main Street. These Design Guidelines encourage improvements such as wayfinding signage, sidewalks, paths and lighting in order to enhance the safety, attractiveness and function of the Town Parking Lot design area.

4.2.3. The North of Elm/East of Brook/Red Lion Inn design area is largely built out, so new investment in this area is likely to involve renovation and rehabilitation of existing buildings. The scale and massing of the buildings in this location represent what many Cohasset citizens find most attractive about the Village Business District. Historical preservation is a central policy principle, and new investment should seek to maintain and enhance this existing built environment. However, limited opportunities for redevelopment do exist, such as the Cohasset News site at the northeast corner of South Main and Brook Street. Redevelopment should match the traditional setbacks, heights and rooflines already present within the District.
4.2.4. The Ripley Road/Depot Court design area serves as the gateway to Cohasset Village for those approaching from Ripley Road. However, this design area includes several historic and cultural resources including the arts center, antique merchants and the former train depot. Therefore, the design area should function both as an inviting entrance to Cohasset Village, but should also provide pedestrian amenities that make this an attractive place to visit in its own right. Improvements to the public infrastructure including sidewalks, crosswalks, signage and lighting will help to achieve these goals. Existing drainage problems will also benefit from public improvements.

4.2.5. The Interior Parcels design area includes land that is not considered viable for commercial establishments. Several parcels in this location may have potential for multi-family residential development as provided in the Zoning Bylaws Section 18(2). Because of the proximity of this design area to existing residential neighborhoods, development within the Interior Parcels design area is encouraged to employ buffering techniques in order to blend in with the surrounding areas rather than to remain starkly separate from existing residential areas. New development is also subject to setback requirements from residential zoning districts as set forth in the Zoning Bylaws Section 17(5.4).

Residential development within the Interior Parcels design area should incorporate, but not replicate, architectural details of neighboring residential areas. Multi-family housing may be developed with the same character, architectural design and materials as single family homes. Parking should be located to the side or rear of the building relative to the streets, and should be screened with a combination of stone walls or fencing and landscaping. If a residential building includes two entrances, consideration should be given to placing the entrances on two different sides of the building. The building need not be symmetrical in design, and should include a variety of rooflines, as well as features such as porches and terraces.

4.2.6. The Pleasant Street Gateway design area serves as the gateway to Cohasset Village for those approaching from Pleasant Street. This location is well suited for the development of combined housing and commercial activity. Although these parcels are further away from Main Street, those lots with frontage located along Pleasant Street will allow a combination of commercial and residential uses. New buildings should incorporate the close setback from public ways that characterizes the traditional streetscape elsewhere in Cohasset Village. Surface parking should be screened from view from the public ways, and the existing Town Parking Lot in this location would benefit from additional screening.
4.2. Guiding Principles: Village Design Areas

5.1. General

5.1.1. Proposed Development Projects should complement the scale and architecture of existing buildings in the vicinity that have a functional or visual relationship to the proposed building(s). New buildings should be appropriately designed for the site, address human scale by including architectural detail at street level, and become a positive asset to the architectural character of the District.

5.1.2. New construction should incorporate design elements of traditional, significant, or historic uses or structures. When appropriate, the Planning Board will consult with and request opinions and information from the Cohasset Historical Commission regarding specific structures or groups of structures.

5.1.3. Protection of public safety. Site design shall include adequate water supply distribution and storage for fire protection. Vehicular circulation shall meet the access needs of emergency and public safety vehicles. The adequacy of the foregoing public safety measures will be based on the reasonable requirements of the Cohasset Chief of Police and Fire Chief, in their respective fields.

5.2. Materials, Texture and Color

5.2.1. New building materials should reflect the character of the Cohasset Village Business District and should be selected to convey a sense of quality, durability and permanence. Buildings should use materials that are durable, economically maintained, and of a quality that will retain their appearance over time. The use of clapboard, shingle, wood, stone, glass or similar materials as primary building materials is encouraged.

5.2.2. A combination of materials should be used in order to create visual interest.

5.2.3. Where more than one material is used, traditionally heavier materials (stone, brick, concrete, etc.) should be located below lighter materials (wood, shingle, clapboards, etc). The change in material should occur along a horizontal line, preferably at the floor level.

5.2.4. Prohibited materials. Vinyl siding is prohibited on ground level facades that are visible from public ways. The use of exterior insulation finishing system (EIFS) is prohibited. Reflective materials such as porcelain enamel or sheet metal are not permitted.
5.3. Height, Building Massing and Organization

5.3.1. The height of new buildings should reflect the height of adjacent buildings to avoid creating a gap in the streetscape, whether by being constructed to the same height (±5 feet) as an adjacent building, or by use of complementary horizontal design elements. When designing the façade, neighboring window sill lines and sign lines should be extended onto the façade of the new building.

5.3.2. New buildings should reflect and reinforce the scale, massing, proportions, and attention to detailing established by buildings in Cohasset Village built prior to 1/15/1955.

5.3.3. Second and third floors of buildings fronting on streets should have a front setback that is a minimum of 5’ greater than the front setback of the first floor. Balconies are encouraged to generate connection between the buildings and the street.

5.3.4. Front building setbacks for new construction should be located within five (5) linear feet of the front setbacks of neighboring buildings.

5.3.5. A new building may have an inconsistent setback from neighboring buildings if the front setback is to be used for a well-landscaped public space or if the front setbacks of buildings on either side of the new building are greater than ten (10) linear feet. Where differing front setbacks are approved, design elements such as a wall, fencing or landscaping of a minimum height of three (3) feet should be used to reinforce the street line.

5.3.6. Front setbacks for new construction in the District should seek to reinforce the existing street line through consistency with front setbacks of adjacent buildings in existence at the time of application. In most design areas, the recommended front setback is ten (10) feet or less. However, greater front setbacks may be appropriate in the Pleasant Street Gateway and the Interior Parcels design area.

5.3.7. Windows, wall panels, pilasters, building bays and storefronts should be carried across windowless walls to relieve blank, uninteresting surfaces.

5.3.8. Side and rear façades should be articulated in a manner compatible with the design of the front façade. Blank wall surfaces greater than twenty (20) feet are prohibited on walls that are visible from streets or other public areas.

Top: The use of balconies for buildings fronting South Main Street increases connection of buildings to public realm.

Middle: Infill development should match the proportions of neighboring buildings. Image courtesy of Hubert Murray Architect + Planner.

Bottom: When buildings are set back from the street, the use of fencing reinforces the street line.
5.4. Building Facades

5.4. Building Façades.

5.4.1. Buildings more than forty (40) feet wide should be broken down into a series of smaller elements or “bays” – to evoke the rhythm of historic shop fronts and mixed-use town centers, add visual character and maintain the pedestrian scale of the streetscape. No uninterrupted length of any façade shall be permitted to exceed twenty (20) horizontal feet without incorporating at least one of the following design elements: color change, material change, or texture change; and at least one of the following design elements: architectural projections or recesses, trellises, balconies, or windows.

5.4.2. Any side of the building that has frontage on a sidewalk or street should include windows, doors, or other signs of human occupancy, such as porches or balconies.

5.4.3. Buildings within the Two-Sided Blocks design area should be designed with good visibility from both sides including signage, windows, landscaping and entranceways where appropriate.

5.4.4. Building design for multi-story buildings should create or maintain a visual distinction between upper and lower floors. In historic Cohasset Village, storefronts with large windows were on the first floor and residences with smaller windows were on the second floor. Second stories should maintain this distinction whether or not they are residential in use. Buildings with frontage on Main Street are encouraged to incorporate greater front yard setbacks for upper stories, including roof decks above the first floor, to enhance the opportunity for connection between activity within the buildings and activity at the street level.

5.4.5. Building frontage should incorporate recessed or projecting entries, recessed or projecting bays, expression of architectural or structural modules and detail, and/or variations such as surface relief, expressed joints and details, color and texture. Recesses and projections should be a minimum of two (2) feet deep.

Renovation of older buildings, and the use of traditional building forms and materials in new construction, can evoke the architectural heritage of Cohasset Village. Taller buildings, such as the former Masonic Hall, above, should include design detail at the street level.
5.5. Roofs

5.5.1. The Village Business District includes a wide variety of roof lines, many of which are acceptable precedents in the selection of proposed roof forms. Dormers may be roofed with traditional roof forms such as symmetrical gable, hip, barrel or shed roof, among other acceptable roof forms. Roof forms should complement the principal building in terms of style, detailing, and materials.

5.5.2. Roofs should be simple and symmetrically pitched, deviating from symmetry only in the configuration of gables and hips. The pitch of the roof shall be between 9:12 and 14:12.

5.5.3. Shed roofs (roofs which pitch in one direction) are generally discouraged, but may be permitted when the ridge is attached to an exterior wall of a building. The pitch of such roofs shall be between 4:12 and 14:12.

5.5.4. Roof forms should be varied within a block, and should be varied within a building, incorporating parapets, decorative cornice treatments, belt courses, and window bays. However, cluttering of roof lines as a result of too many different angles and roof pitches should be avoided.

5.5.5. Mechanical equipment, including metal chimneys, and elevator penthouses at grade, attached to, or on the roof of a building, shall be screened from view from streets; or they shall be integrated into the overall design of the building by use of materials, placement, roof shape or form, or other means. Skylights, vent stacks, and other roof projections should be designed so as not to be visibly obtrusive from streets and sidewalks.

5.5.6. Flat roofs are generally discouraged, but may be permitted only when they are occupiable and accessible from an interior room and must be edged by a railing or parapet, or when they serve another functional purpose such as accommodating solar panels. Garages may have flat roofs which are not accessible if edged by a parapet wall.

The use of varied rooflines with traditional forms provides visual interest and variety. Screening of rooftop mechanical equipment is required.
5.6. Windows and Doorways

5.6.1. Windows should be inset or projecting from the exterior wall surface to add visual relief to the wall. Bay windows and shutters are encouraged.

5.6.2. In general, all windows should be taller than they are wide. This is true of windows on the first as well as upper floors. Street front windows that are horizontally oriented may be broken up with the use of muntins.

5.6.3. Windows on top floors should generally not be larger than windows on the first floor.

5.6.4. Windows on upper and lower floors typically align vertically, although offset alignments may be appropriate for some architectural styles.

5.6.5. Shed dormers extending the full width of a building façade (“full shed dormers”) are prohibited.

5.6.6. Recessed doorways are preferred, in order to break up the building façade, provide a welcoming space, and provide protection from sun and rain. Where a recessed doorway is not used, an awning can have a similar effect. Adequate lighting for the doorway should be provided at night.

5.6.7. Windows and doorways visible from the street or sidewalk shall not be used for portable air conditioning units. Air conditioning units in new buildings shall be screened with a grille appropriate to the building façade.

Top right: Pedestrian entrances to commercial buildings should be well lighted and protected from the weather. Projecting and recessed windows and doorways enhance the visual quality of residential and mixed-use buildings.
5.7. Location of Building and Garage Entrances

5.7.1. Building and garage entrances should be sited to minimize the impact of vehicular turning movements on safe and efficient movement of vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists within vehicular rights-of-way. New curb cuts should be avoided where access from existing streets or driveways is feasible. Where necessary, new curb cuts should not be located within fifty (50) linear feet, measured on center, from nearby vehicular intersections. Sight distances and potential for creation of vehicular conflicts shall be reviewed within the permit review process.

5.7.2. No new curb cuts will be permitted where the curb cut results in the net loss of on-street parking available for public use.

5.7.3. Building entrances should provide direct access to sidewalks or paths to emphasize pedestrian ingress and egress as opposed to accommodating vehicles.

5.7.4. Doorways to upper floors should be visually separated from street-level shop entries, and doorway location and design should seek to minimize confusion over which doorway belongs to which business.

The 1960 Town Planning Report envisioned infill development in the Two-Sided Blocks Design Area. Consistent with historic development patterns, block layout should minimize vehicular curb cuts.
6.1. Sidewalks and Pedestrian Network

6.1. Placement, Alignment, Width and Grade of Sidewalks.

6.1.1. Where the proposed development abuts streets that lack sidewalks, or where sidewalks abutting the proposed development do not meet applicable standards, Applicants are encouraged to propose improvements to pedestrian walks. Additions to the pedestrian network should include a combination of sidewalks, paths and pass-through walkways.

6.1.2. All new parking areas, sidewalks, paths and pass-through walkways shall be designed and constructed to be accessible to the handicapped in accordance with applicable laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rules and Regulations of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board.

6.1.3. Where existing sidewalks within rights-of-way abutting proposed Development Projects are cracked, broken or uneven, Applicants are encouraged to propose improvements to said sidewalks. Where developments are proposed adjacent to sidewalks that are not accessible to the handicapped in accordance with applicable laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rules and Regulations of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board, improvements to sidewalks may be required as a condition of special permit approval.

6.1.4. Where provided, sidewalks and paths should connect proposed buildings with parking intended to serve the use.

6.1.5. Where pedestrian connections cross a street, a crosswalk should delineate the pedestrian connection with painted striping or, where approved by the Department of Public Works, alternate building materials to improve pedestrian visibility.


6.1.6.1. Sidewalk material should include a mixture of masonry pavers, concrete, and/or bituminous concrete to provide visual interest and to delineate sidewalk areas that are designed to be used for other functions such as outdoor seating areas. However, the use of poured concrete and bituminous concrete within the same sidewalk is discouraged except as necessary to accommodate features such as handicapped access ramps.

6.1.6.2. Sidewalks should include a variety of landscape elements including trees with irrigation grates, planters, and seasonal plantings. Landscape features should be selected that enhance the pedestrian environment such as plazas, sitting areas, and outdoor cafes.
6.1.7. Pass-Through Walkways. Several walkways exist in the District that serve as critical pedestrian connections from parking to shops.

6.1.7.1. In the Two-Sided Blocks design area, pass-through walkways should be preserved where they exist, and should be incorporated into site design of new development to provide mid-block pedestrian access between streets and parking areas.

6.1.7.2. Pass-through walkways should be constructed of a mixture of masonry pavers and concrete, or other materials that complement adjoining sidewalks.

6.1.7.3. Pass-through walkways should be designed for pedestrian use and should provide adequate lighting for nighttime safety. These locations should also include landscaping, public art, and/or street furniture as space allows in order to add visual interest, functionality, and to create a welcoming pedestrian environment.

Two pass-through walkways (shown on facing page) connect the primary Town-owned parking lot with destination locations on South Main Street. However, the photo montage below illustrates that the two locations are not clearly marked, and may not be easily located by visitors to Cohasset Village. New development and renovation of buildings adjacent to the walkways should preserve and, where possible, enhance the pass-through walkways with improved wayfinding signage, lighting, and landscaping.

Buildings in the Two-Sided Blocks design area that have frontage on both South Main Street and the Town-owned parking lot would benefit from streetscape improvements on the western frontage of the properties. Uniform design elements such as a common sidewalk width and materials, lighting, plantings and street furniture would enhance this location both visually and functionally.
6.2. Off-Street Parking + 6.3. Lighting + 6.4. Signage

6.2. Off-Street Parking.

6.2.1. Surface parking lots should be located to the side or the rear of new buildings and such that buildings or landscaping separate parking areas from the street. Wherever feasible, off-street parking lots should be set back a minimum of 10 feet from property lines along public rights-of-way, excluding alleys.

6.2.2. If parking lots cannot be located to the rear of the property, parking lots should be screened from the sidewalk with transparent and well-maintained cast-iron and brick fencing, and plantings. Screening should be at least 3 feet high.

6.2.3. Parking lots should be landscaped as follows:

6.2.3.1. Parking lot landscaping should not have a continuous curb in all places to allow for stormwater runoff to reach the landscaped areas.

6.2.3.2. Parking lot landscaping should be lower than or level with the parking lot to allow for stormwater runoff to reach the landscaped areas.

6.2.3.3. The use of permeable pavement is encouraged in parking lot construction to allow the infiltration of stormwater into the ground.

6.3. Lighting. For reasons of safety and the reduction of light trespass, glare and light pollution, all outdoor lighting in the District should comply with the following provision: Direct light emitted by exterior luminaire should not emit directly by a lamp, off a reflector, or through a refractor above a horizontal plane (90 degrees) through the fixture's lowest light-emitting part.

6.4. Signage. Exterior signage is governed by Section 6 of the Cohasset Zoning Bylaws. In addition to signage for private properties, installation of small, externally illuminated wayfinding signs is encouraged to assist visitors to locate sites of interest within the Village Business District. Wayfinding Signs should not exceed seven (7) feet in height, and may be installed with the approval of the Planning Board for the benefit of both automotive and pedestrian traffic.
6.5. Landscaping.

6.5.1. In establishing the development capability of the site, the following natural site features should be taken into account:

6.5.1.1. Erosion prevention and control, including but not limited to compliance with an approved stormwater management plan.

6.5.1.2. Preservation of existing trees on a site proposed for development, as well as other native site vegetation, including protection of natural area buffer zones.

6.5.1.3. Conservation of water, including but not limited to preservation of existing native vegetation, and reduction in amounts of irrigated areas.

6.5.2. Street Furniture. Landscaping improvements should include amenities such as street furniture, artwork, fences, stone walls, fountains, and courtyards.

6.5.3. Street Trees.

6.5.3.1. The planting of deciduous street trees in sidewalks at a maximum spacing of forty (40) linear feet may be required for new projects which abut streets that do not have street trees.

6.5.3.2. All plantings should be native species. Invasive plant species are prohibited. Plants located near streets, driveways or parking lots must be salt-tolerant.

6.5.3.3. Planting selections should vary from block to block to increase overall resistance to disease and infestation.

6.5.3.4. Street trees should be installed in metal grates at least sixteen (16) square feet in area to allow for infiltration of rain water. Where feasible, the practice of continuous trench planting should be incorporated.

6.5.3.5. Trees should be a minimum of 3” caliper measured at breast level at time of planting.

6.5.3.6. The depth of the hole should only be as deep as the root ball in the center of the hole and deeper outside the root ball.

6.5.4. Street Lintels.

6.5.4.1. Protection of significant root systems of trees, as well as design considerations, should be included in each site plan.

6.5.4.2. The height of street lintels should be consistent with the architectural massing of abutting buildings.

6.5.4.3. A minimum of 10 feet of street width shall be maintained for the entire length of the street.

6.5.4.4. Street lintels should be of durable material that is compatible with the site.

6.5.4.5. Street lintels should be designed to protect ground and subgrade materials.

6.5.4.6. Street lintels should be designed to provide adequate drainage.

6.5.4.7. Street lintels should be designed to prevent the accumulation of ice and snow.

6.5.4.8. Street lintels should be designed to prevent debris and litter from collecting.

6.5.4.9. Street lintels should be designed to prevent the accumulation of trash.

6.5.5. Street Paving.

6.5.5.1. The use of permeable pavers shall be required throughout the site.

6.5.5.2. Permeable pavers around trees allow for irrigation of the root network, and reduce stormwater runoff from this pocket park.

6.5.6. On-Site Stormwater Management.

6.5.6.1. On-Site Stormwater Management should be used to control stormwater runoff from the site.

6.5.6.2. Screening and landscaping limits visibility of service areas from the street and abutting properties.
6.7. Buffering in Relation to Adjacent Properties + 6.8. On-Site Open Space

6.7. Buffering in Relation to Adjacent Properties. New buildings in the Village Business District that directly abut properties in a separate zoning district must comply with the regulations established in Section 5.4 (17) of the Zoning Bylaws.

6.8. On-Site Open Space.

6.8.1. Design and location. Whenever possible, the overall site design should include common open space and facilities designed to be functional and well-integrated with the built environment. Consideration will be given to creating open space that is visually and functionally accessible to the public.

6.8.2. Ownership and maintenance. The plans and documentation submitted to the Planning Board within the permitting process shall include a description of proposed ownership and maintenance of all common open space or facilities.

6.8.3. Within renovation projects, the developer is encouraged to maintain the open space surrounding existing buildings.

6.8.4. Open space should be designed to be accessible and visible from the building.

6.8.5. To minimize water consumption, the use of low water vegetative ground cover other than turf is encouraged.
6.9. Stormwater Management

6.9.1. Stormwater management systems should incorporate “Best Management Practices” (BMP) as prescribed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, in addition to employing Low Impact Development (LID) strategies. BMP/LID means and methods should be carefully integrated within the site design approach with a goal of decentralizing stormwater management systems to the greatest extent practical and minimizing environmental impact of new development. The specific goals of the BMP/LID measures should be mitigation of post-development down stream impacts and achieving the highest level of water quality for all stormwater runoff.

6.9.2. Systems and the designed approach for stormwater management should include elements such as infiltration chambers, landscaped swales, vegetated rain-gardens, infiltration trenches, dry-wells, permeable pavements and other runoff controlling features that in combination serve to achieve BMP/LID goals.

6.9.3. All systems which deliver, treat, infiltrate, and/or discharge stormwater runoff to ground or surface waters should be sufficiently treated and monitored to achieve all applicable effluent standards of the Cohasset Board of Health, Department of Public Works, Conservation Commission and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, as applicable.

6.9.4. At the discretion of the Planning Board, an Operation and Maintenance Plan may be required prior to approval of development. The maintenance plan should be designed to ensure compliance with the Site Plan Approval, the Zoning Bylaws and that the Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards, 314, CMR 4.00 are met in all seasons and throughout the life of the system. Any approved Operation and Maintenance Plan shall remain on file with the Planning Board and the Department of Public Works and shall be an ongoing requirement of permit approval.
7.0 Harbor Village Business Overlay District
Design Guidelines

7.1 All the Village Business District Design Guidelines in this document apply to the Harbor Village Business Overlay District, except by items 5.3.6, 5.3.7, 5.4.3, 6.1.6.2, and 6.5.3.1, which are replaced by the following:

7.1.1 Front setbacks for new construction in the Harbor Village Business Overlay District should seek to reinforce the existing street line through consistency with front setbacks of adjacent buildings in existence at the time of the application. If there are no adjacent buildings, front setbacks should conform to the minimum required by zoning.

7.1.2 At least two (2) of these design elements: windows, wall panels, pilasters, porches, building bays and storefronts should be carried across windowless walls to relieve blank, uninteresting surfaces.

7.1.3 Buildings that have frontages to the street and the water should be designed with good visibility from both sides including windows, landscaping, and entranceways when appropriate.

7.1.4 Sidewalks should include a variety of landscape elements including trees with irrigation grates, planters, and seasonal plantings, unless trees and plantings are provided and maintained on the property within a 5-feet distance of the front property line. In this case, trees should be planted at a maximum spacing of forty (40) linear feet, and installation of grates would only be required if trees are surrounded by impervious surfaces. Landscape features should be selected that enhance the pedestrian environment such as plazas, sitting areas, and outdoor cafes.

7.1.5 The planting of deciduous street trees in sidewalks at a maximum spacing of forty (40) linear feet may be required for new projects, unless trees are planted and maintained on the property within a 5-feet distance of the front property line and at a maximum spacing of forty (40) linear feet.

7.2 Outdoor lighting compliant with item 6.3 of these Village Business District Design Guidelines should be provide along all waterfront pedestrian accessways, promenades, pass-through walkways, and walkways connecting new buildings to the water’s edge. Light spilling and glare emission into the harbor or adjacent properties are prohibited.

7.3 Waterfront pedestrian accessways and promenades along the water should incorporate landscaping, interpretive and/or wayfinding signage, and street furniture as space allows in order to add visual interest, functionality, and to create a welcoming pedestrian environment.