



**DRAFT**

TOWN OF ONANCOCK  
CONCEPTUAL LIGHTING, SIGNAGE, AND  
PARKING STUDY

ONANCOCK, VIRGINIA

January 5, 2024



HILL  
STUDIO

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The consulting team would like to thank the many town administration, staff, public participants, and stakeholders for their guidance, leadership and thoughtful direction through this process.



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Onancock: A little slice of nowhere else



Chapter 1:  
INTRODUCTION



Design workshop, May 2023

# INTRODUCTION: THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

Over the last several years, the Town of Onancock has created a new comprehensive plan, several visioning documents, and a new town branding package. With each of these complete, the town retained Hill Studio to further the design of specific details. Hill Studio was commissioned to incorporate the ideas of the completed documents into specific recommendations for:

- Lighting
- Signage
- Parking

The Town of Onancock is interested in actionable plans and product specifications in the following areas:

## **LIGHTING PLAN**

- The Comprehensive Plan requires the Town to move toward becoming Dark Sky Compliant and Town desires to exchange its light fixtures (beginning Downtown) with ornamental fixtures.
- The actionable plan for lighting will create a townwide lighting plan and provide product suggestions for street lighting fixtures. The fixtures should include varying lumens for purpose of use and location but maintain design continuity throughout the Town.

## **SIGNAGE PLAN**

We developed options for five distinct types of signs in a family of signs:

- Town main entrance sign.
- Display options for community organizations to advertise events.
- Wayfinding signs that direct visitors throughout Town.
- Design of street signs, parking signs, and other signs and postings.
- Town wharf and marina sign

## **PARKING PLAN**

- The study is set to help determine parking spaces available versus the demand, will identify tiers of parking supply regarding user desirability, optimum ways to link parking with desired facilities, heritage tourism sites, and downtown businesses, as well as recommend immediate and long-term strategies to make parking and walking in Onancock an enjoyable part of the visitor experience.
- Compose a strategy for dealing with event parking. Events may have 450-500 attendees per event in multiple locations. This study is especially important at the Historic Onancock School located at 6 College Ave.



Onancock is full of unique design elements that contribute to its distinct sense of place.

## Chapter 2: LIGHTING

# LIGHTING



Light Pollution vs Dark Sky Friendly Lighting

## Lighting selection considerations

### Dark Sky

Onancock strives to use more dark sky friendly lighting. Being dark sky friendly means respecting the following criteria:

1. Controlled. Lights only on when needed - to conserve energy. Using automatic time controls.
2. Minimize Light Trespass. Only lighting the areas that need it - to conserve energy and to prevent light trespass.

3. Minimize Brightness. Lights are no brighter than necessary - conserves energy and reduces harmful effects on plants, animals, and people.
4. Fully Shielded (points downward). Keeps unwanted light from polluting the night sky.
5. Minimize Blue Light Emissions. Prevents disturbance of circadian rhythms in animals and people. Lights only have a maximum color temperature of 3000K.

### Color Temperature

Color temperature is a measure of the appearance of light that comes from a light bulb. It is measured in degrees of Kelvin (K) and uses a scale between 1,000 to 10,000. The temperature of commercial and residential outdoor lighting typically falls anywhere between 2000K to 6500 K.

Warmer color temperatures (2000K-3000K) are considered to be more inviting, and they create a warm and cozy atmosphere. They are often used for outdoor living areas, patios, and walkways. Cooler color temperatures (4000K-6500K) are more crisp and clear, and are often used for security lighting and driveways.

### Marine Animal Friendly

The best lighting for marine life is low intensity, warm-colored light. This type of light is less likely to disrupt the natural behavior of marine animals, and it can even attract some species of fish.



Color Temperature Chart



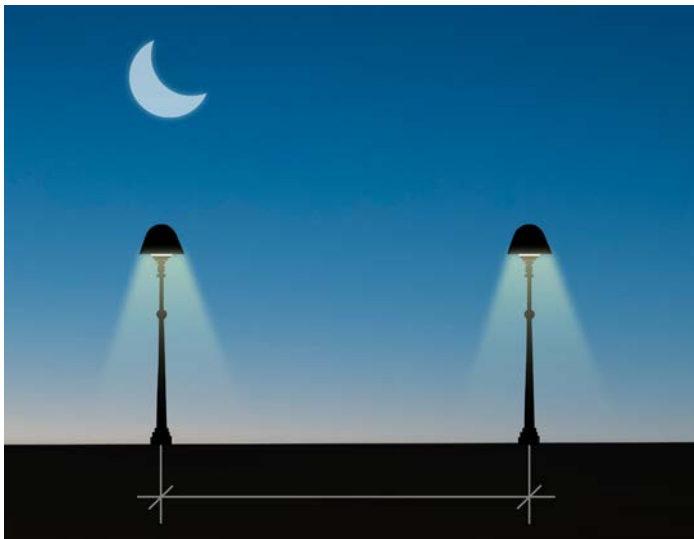
Specifically, light with a color temperature of 2,000-3,000 Kelvin (K) and a long wavelength light at 560 nanometers or longer is ideal for marine life. This type of light is similar to the natural light that penetrates the ocean, so it is less likely to disorient or attract marine animals.

In addition to color temperature, the intensity of light is also important. Too much light can be harmful to marine life, so it is important to use low intensity lighting. This can be done by using a dimmer switch or by choosing light fixtures with a low wattage.

More information can be found at: <https://conserveturtles.org/beachfront-lighting-turtle-friendly-fixtures-lights/>

### Spacing

Spacing of lighting can extend beyond the typical spacing of lights based on footcandle spread to light entire square footages of spaces. Onancock prefers moments of dim pools of light or light that provides general guidance along a streetscape. Other lighting such as those provided by the businesses or property owners supplement the spaces between.



Even Light Spacing Depending on Neighborhood

### Use Time

In accordance with being dark sky friendly as well as saving energy, lighting should be time controlled. The best method involves installing a dusk to dawn sensor that turns on the light at dusk and off at dawn.



Lighting from Dusk to Dawn with Sensor

### Character

Light character is defined as the style of light, such as type of light base, light pole, the luminaire, and whether the light has banners, flagpole holders, hanging baskets, and if these features have ornamentation or not. The location of the light may dictate the type of character.



Typical Downtown Fully Shielded Light Features

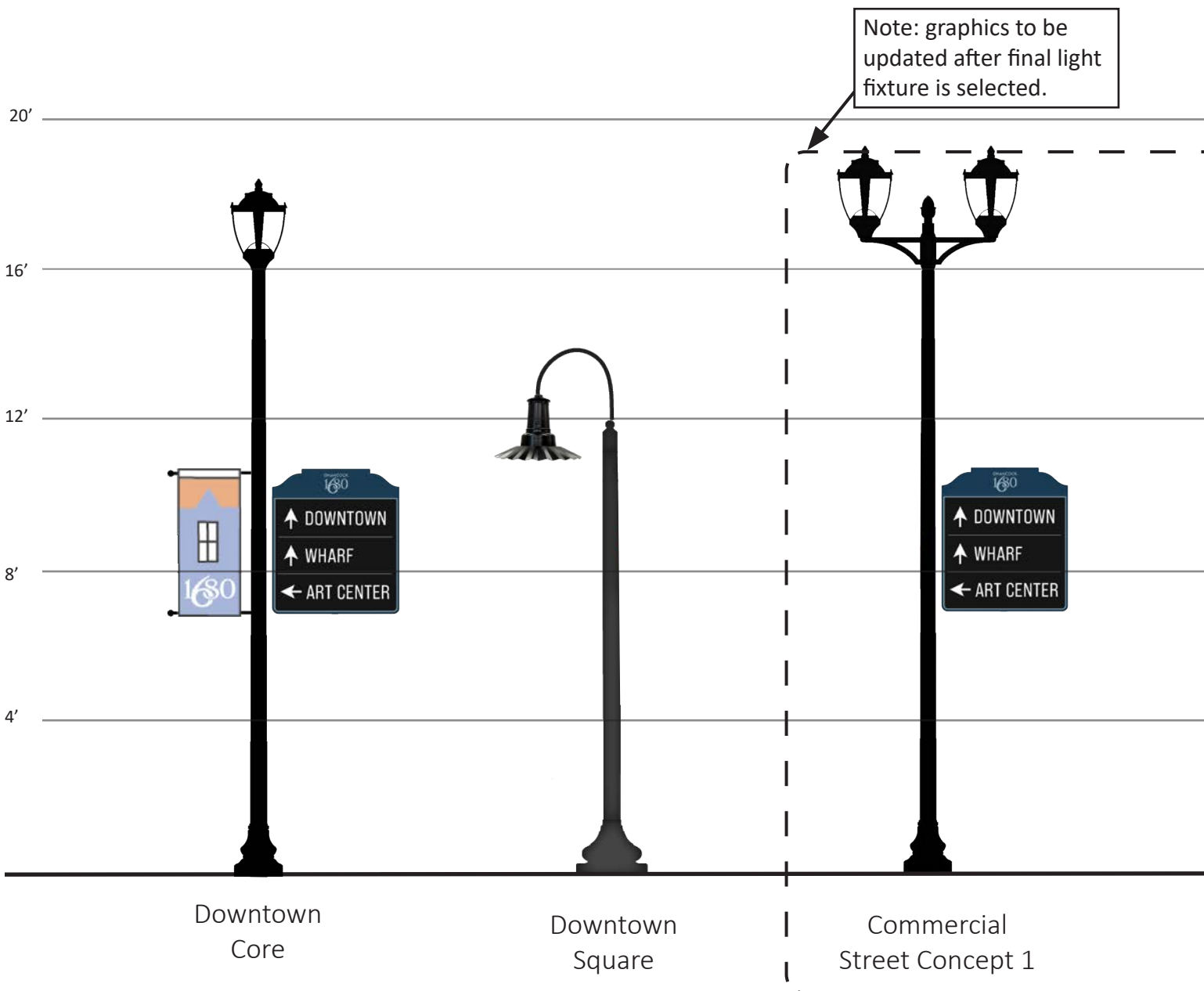


# LIGHT STYLE PALETTE

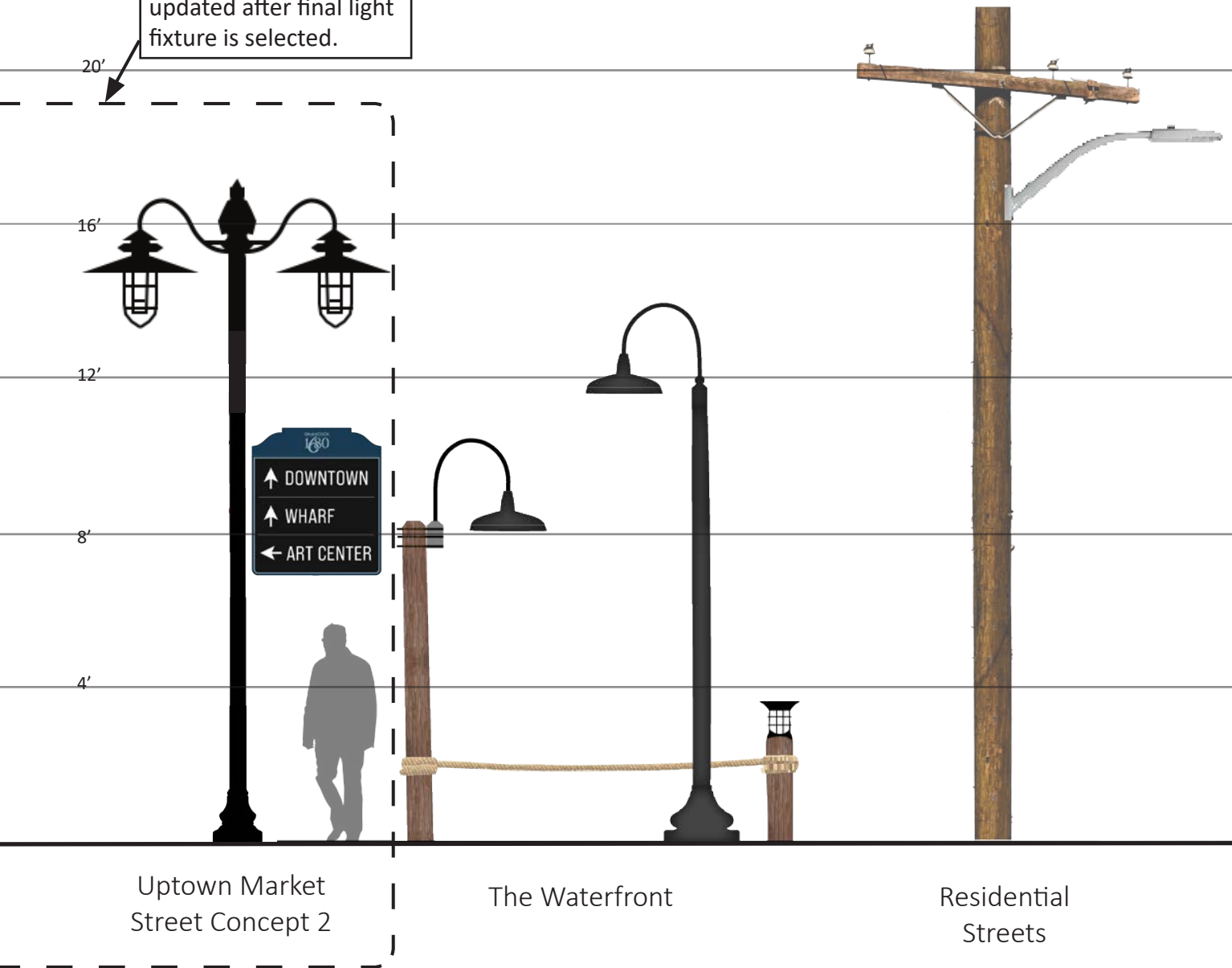
From the workshop with designers and residents, several design ideas were presented to show a palette, or family, of lights that best represent Onancock. Out of three styles presented, the following palette below represents the favorite from feedback from the community input sessions.

The style is inspired from the working wharf history in the area, but does not overplay that heritage, only acknowledges it. The pole remains minimal, and the base has minor ornamentation. The light is meant to be merely the stage to accessories such as banners, flower baskets, and street signs.

Several versions of this design were studied for different areas in the study area and included lighting for: Downtown Market Street, Town Square, Uptown Market Street, the Wharf, and Residential Areas.

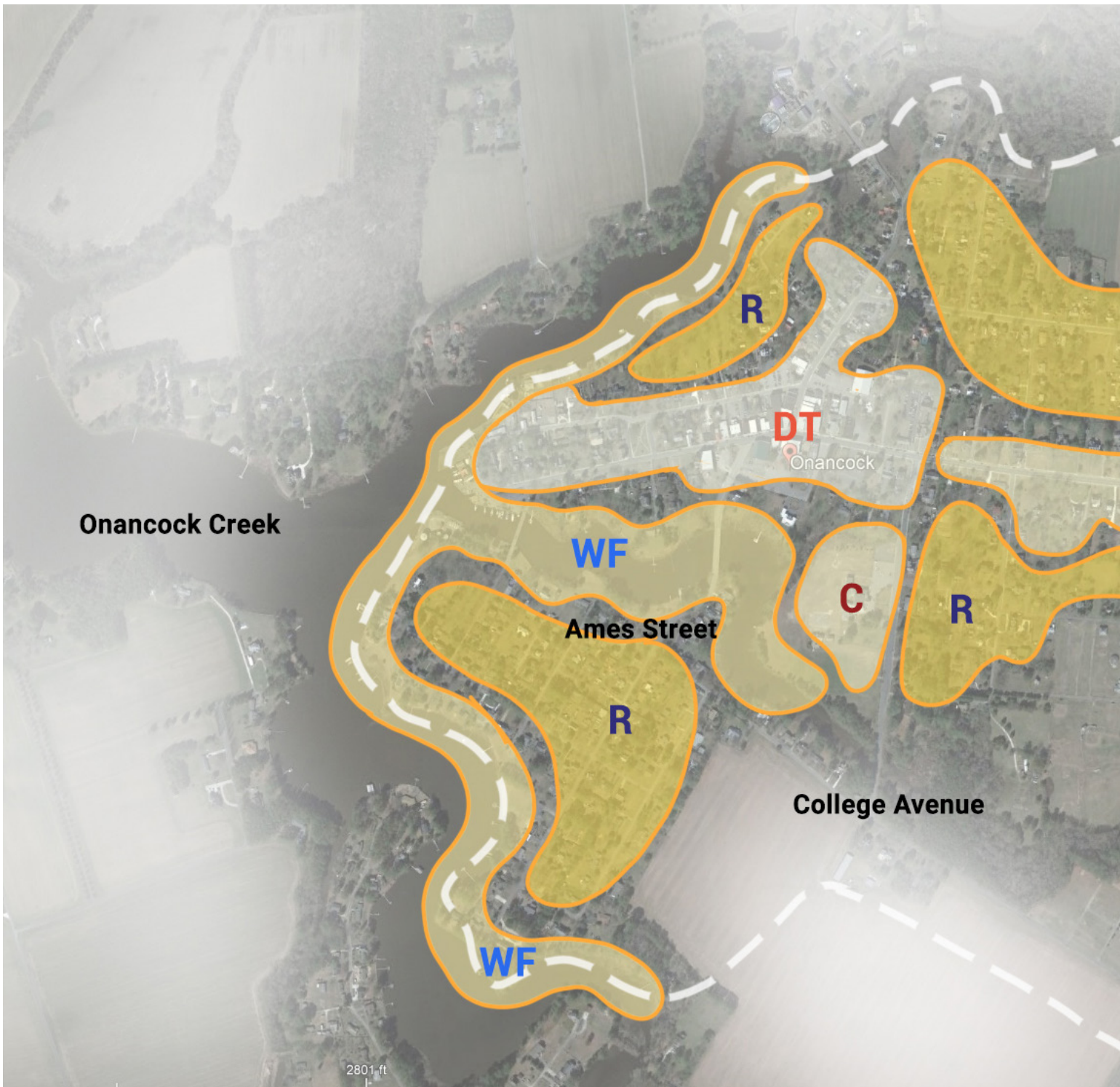


Note: graphics to be updated after final light fixture is selected.

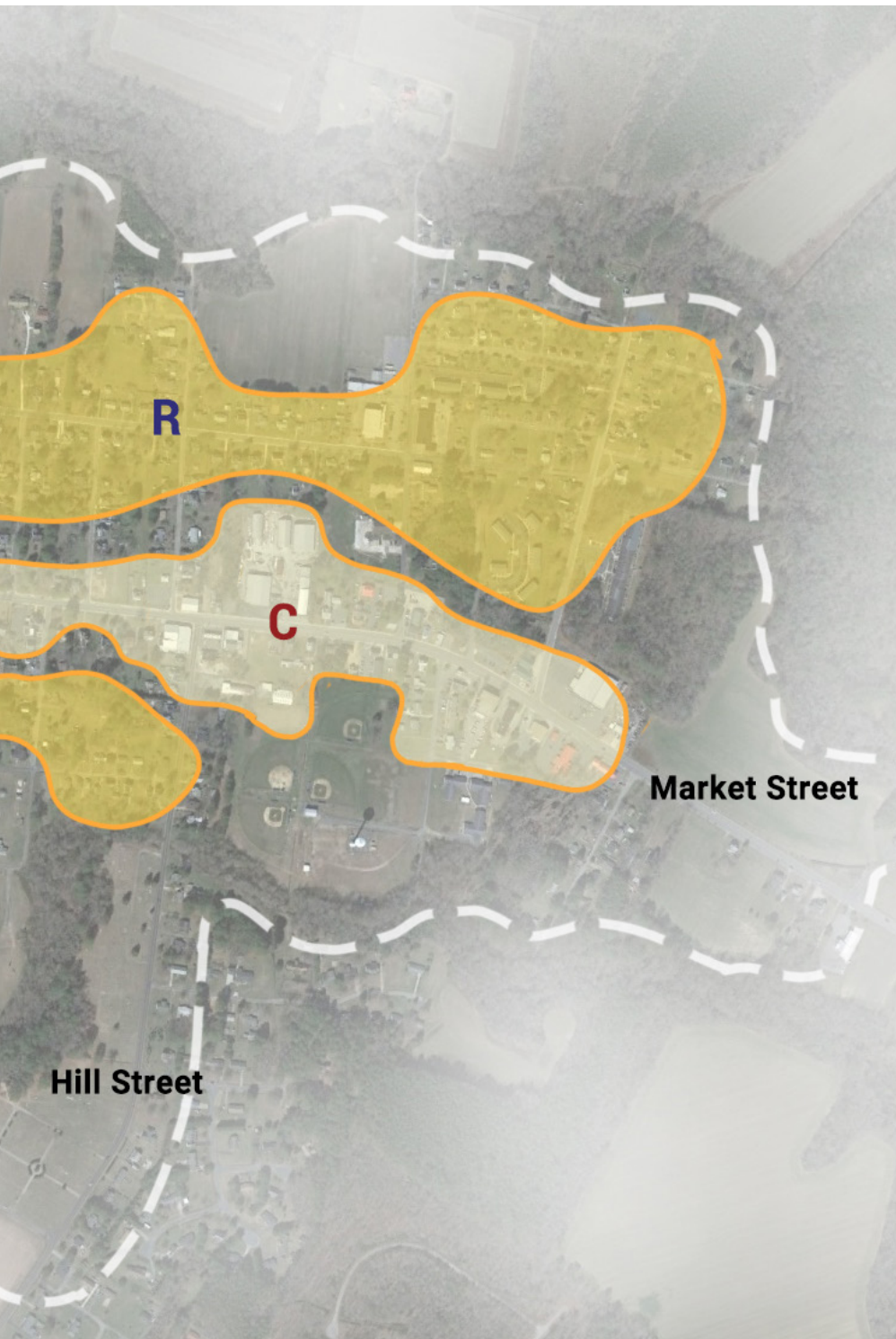


# LIGHTING TYPE ZONES

The illustration below defines zones for lighting types by neighborhood.







## Lighting Type Zones

**DT Downtown**



**C Commercial**



**R Residential**

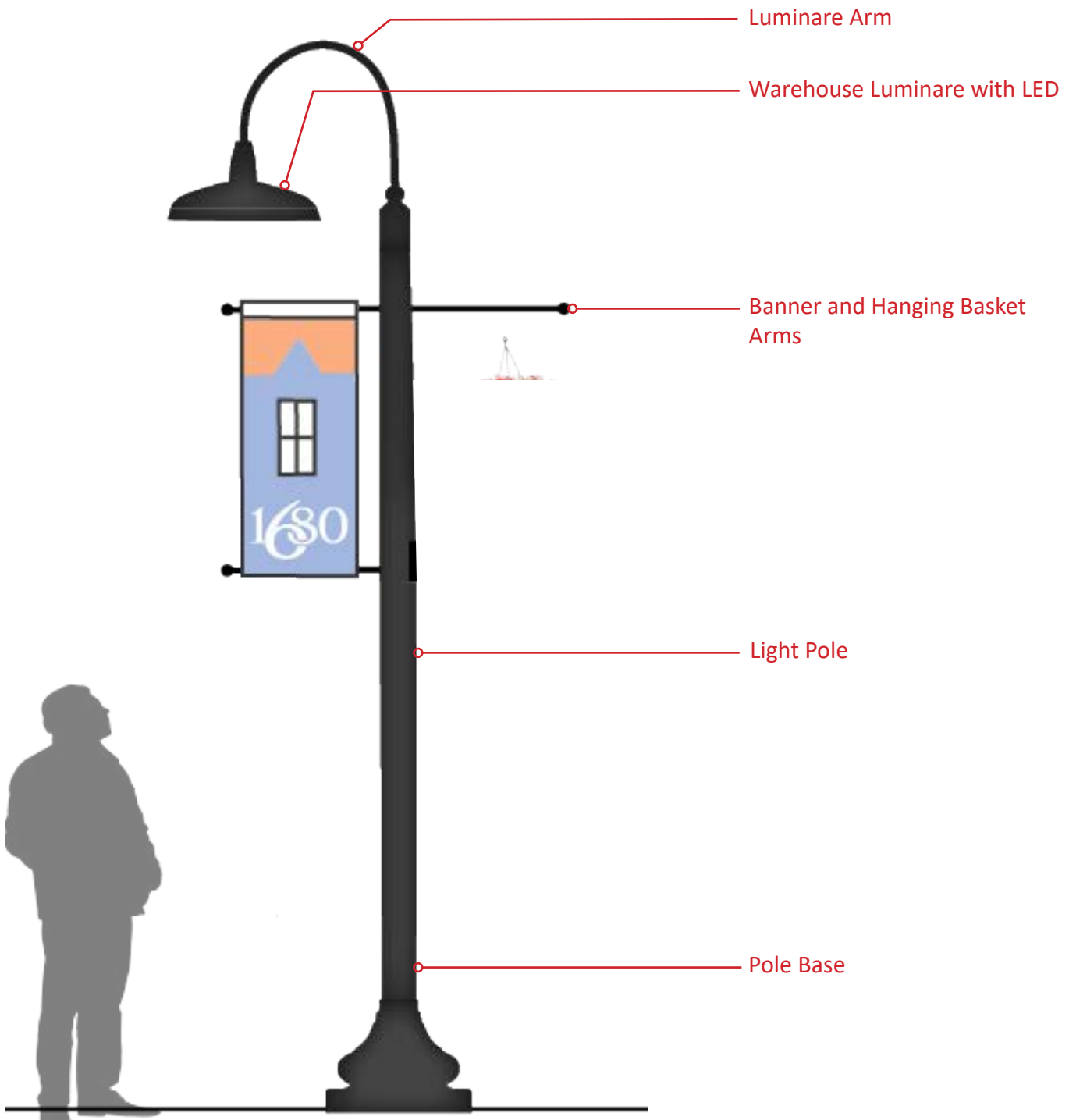


**WF Waterfront**



# LIGHTING CHARACTERISTICS

The illustration below describes the general components for the light standard. Banners, hanging baskets, and street signs can be oriented per light, per location given a best fit for the space. All poles will be installed with a VDOT approved breakaway base.



## LIGHTING MANUFACTURERS

Based upon the selected palette on the previous pages, several light manufacturers are recommended with matching design components. These lighting manufacturing companies and their contact info are listed below. The following pages illustrate recommended lighting components from these companies.

### **Spring City Electrical Mfg. Co.**

Hall and Main Streets - P.O. Box 19 - Spring City, PA 19475  
610-948-4000  
[www.springcity.com](http://www.springcity.com)

### **Cooper Lighting**

JJM ASSOCIATES INC.  
549 Southlake Boulevard  
Richmond, VA 23236  
804-377-8249

### **Musco Lighting**

Joe Forche  
Sales Representative  
Powhatan, VA 23139  
[joe.forche@musco.com](mailto:joe.forche@musco.com)  
804.385.8950  
[www.musco.com](http://www.musco.com)

### **Visa Lighting**

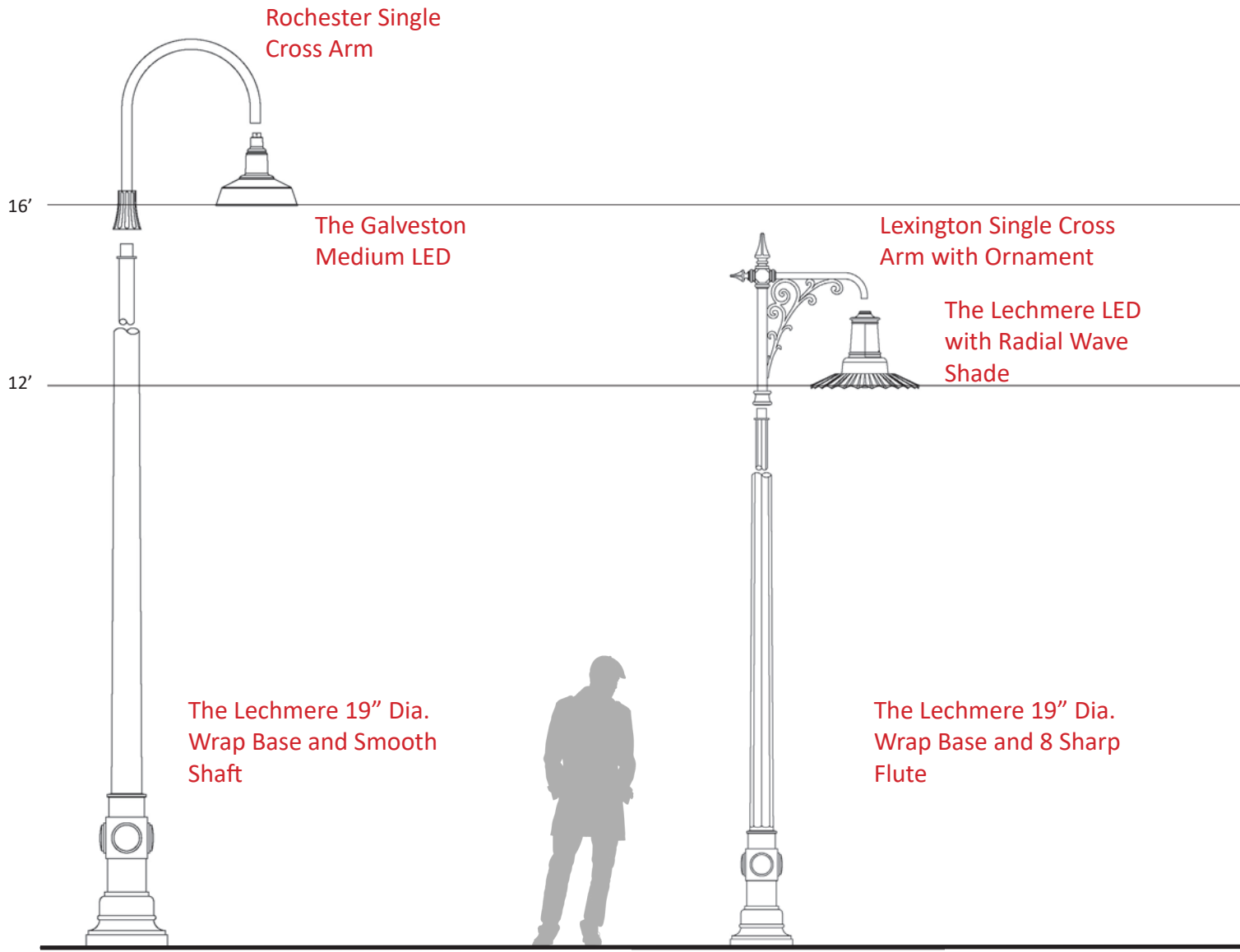
Dave Bray  
Sales Representative  
Roanoke, VA 24016  
[dbray@visalighting.com](mailto:dbray@visalighting.com)  
540.344.2068  
[www.visalighting.com](http://www.visalighting.com)

### **Sentry Electric**

Michael Shatzkin  
Director of Marketing and Business Development  
[Michael@SentryLighting.com](mailto:Michael@SentryLighting.com)  
516.379.4660  
[www.SentryLighting.com](http://www.SentryLighting.com)

# LIGHTING SELECTION

Several components are interchangeable and are represented in the following suggested combinations.



Downtown

Spring City Electrical Mfg. Co.

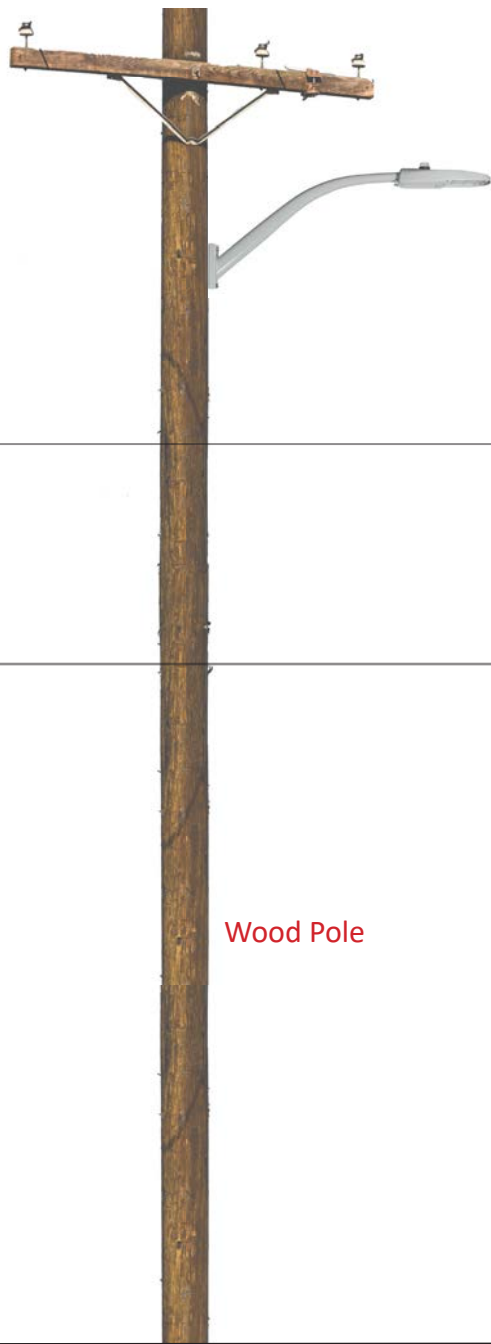
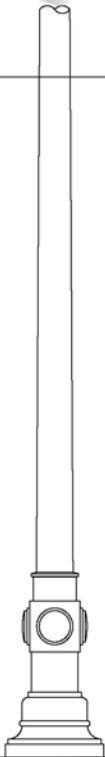
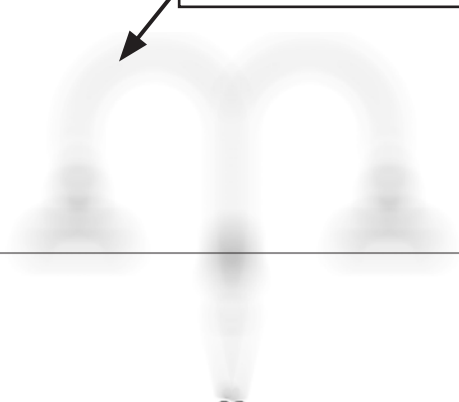
Town Square

Spring City Electrical Mfg. Co.

Recommended Fixtures



Note: graphic to be updated after final light fixture is selected.



Wood Pole

### Uptown/Commercial

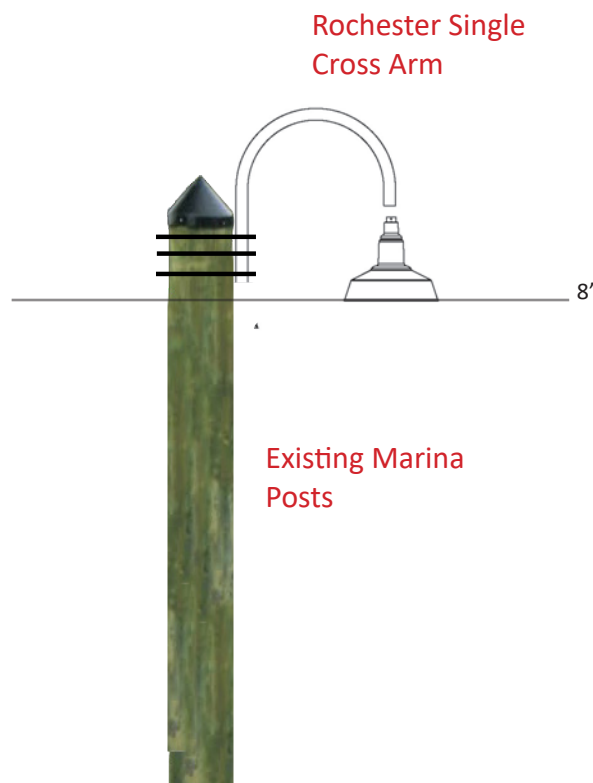
Uptown Market Street Concept 1 or 2

### Residential Streets

Cooper Lighting

Recommended Fixtures

# LIGHTING SELECTION



## Wharf Lighting

Spring City Electrical Mfg. Co.

Suggested Fixtures

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# LIGHTING EXAMPLES

These illustrations show the lighting palette in action. On this page, the post office alley is shown with dark sky friendly warehouse lights with preferred mounting, with fixtures mounted on the building. Paving, signage and planting also complement, to make the alley more pleasant.



Existing



Proposed

Other amenities such as murals can add to a building's sense of place. Lighting fixtures can be adjusted to showcase these amenities.

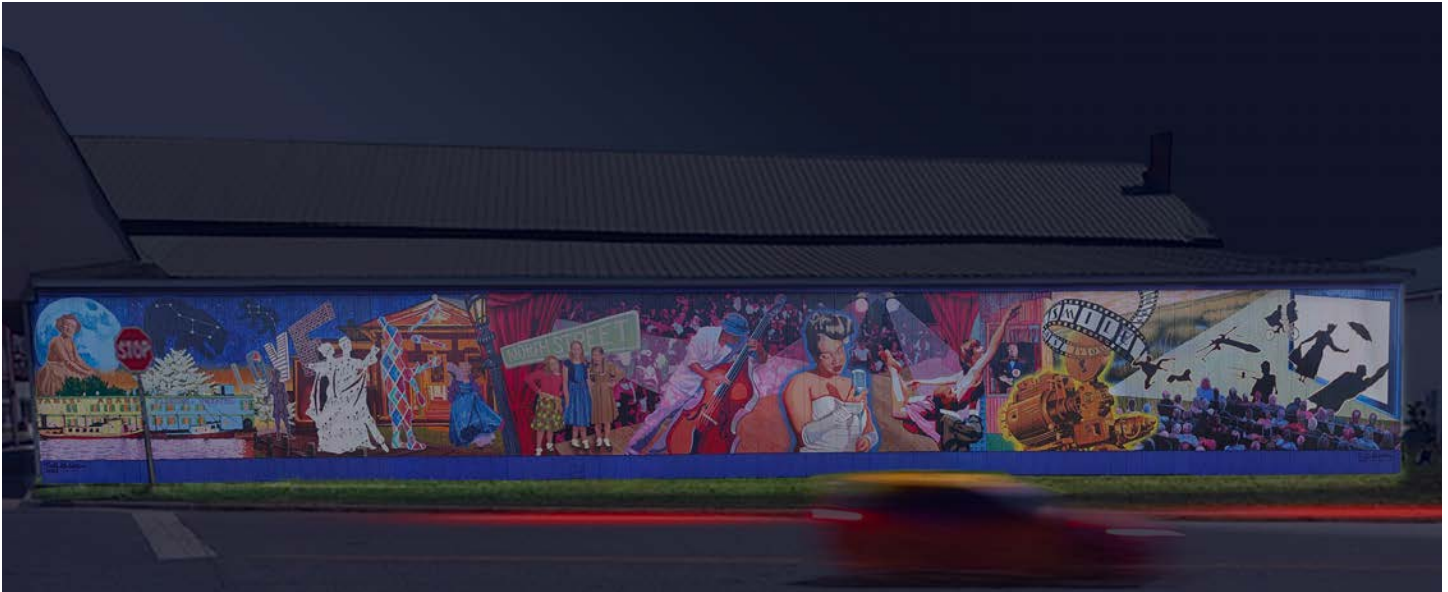


Proposed





Lighting is proposed to illuminate the mural for all to enjoy and create a sense of place at night. A dark sky friendly track lighting system provides consistent lighting for the mural, preventing hot spots.



Proposed

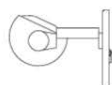
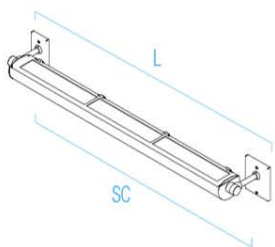


**DIMENSIONS<sup>1</sup>**

	L = Length		SC = Stem Center		WT = Weight	
	24"	36"	48"	60"		
<b>L</b>	27-7/8" (707 mm)	39-1/4" (996 mm)	50-5/8" (1285 mm)	61-15/16" (1574 mm)		
<b>SC</b>	26-1/2" (673 mm)	37-7/8" (962 mm)	49-1/2" (1257 mm)	60-5/8" (1540 mm)		
<b>WT</b>	5.5 lb (2495 g)	7.5 lb (3402 g)	10 lb (4536 g)	12 lb (5443 g)		

**FEATURES**

- Remote driver included; driver suitable for remote mounting in dry or damp locations only
- One RMD box per fixture; all model lengths use one size RMD
- Multiple optic options for flood, wash and graze applications
- 0-10V dimmable to 1% (dimming connections at remote driver)
- Wall or ceiling mount
- Easy mounting with secure aiming lock - aimable to 360°. Die-cast mounting plate allows direct access to junction box
- Zero clearance end mount for easy installation and maintenance in tight mounting applications
- Snap-in, snap-out clear acrylic lens allows for toolless access to source. Lens remains unseen in most applications
- Extruded aluminum housing with die-cast end caps and mounting hardware
- No VOC powder coat finish
- ETL listed for wet locations



Detail for wall mounted light fixture, Courtesy of Visa Lighting



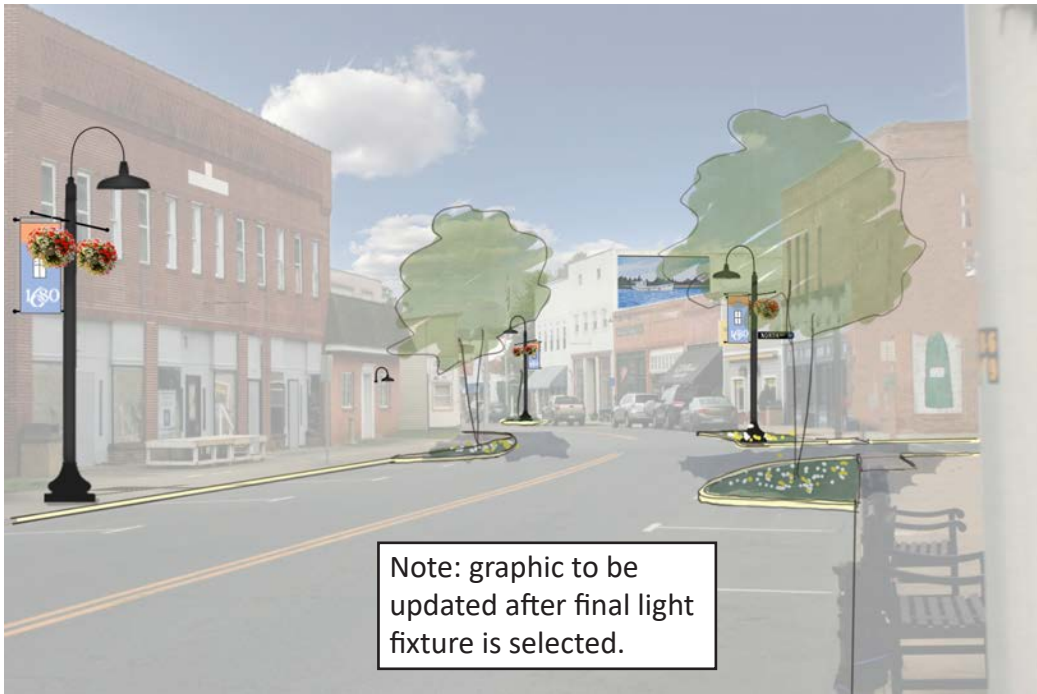
## LIGHTING EXAMPLES (CONTINUED)

Market Street currently features some lighting along the street but would benefit from additional lighting. Additional amenities such as street trees, plants, and banners would also create a sense of place downtown.



Existing

Below, Market Street is shown with lights installed at back of curb, and a few street trees. A new mural on the side of a building will highlight Onancock's marine environment and culture. At night, lights will illuminate the mural and some spots along the street, but the street will remain only partially lit in order to maintain a quiet village character.



Proposed



Proposed Fully Shielded Lighting at Night

## LIGHTING EXAMPLES (CONTINUED)

East Market Street serves as a gateway to downtown. Existing lighting requires overhead powerlines.



Existing

These illustrations show the double lights on East Market Street, along the gateway to downtown. The powerlines will need to be placed underground to allow for these lights, which illuminate both sidewalk and street. The bottom illustration shows the general effect of the dark sky friendly luminaires.



Note: graphic to be updated after final light fixture is selected.

Proposed



Proposed Fully Shielded Lighting at Night





Existing sign

## Chapter 3: SIGNAGE

# SIGNAGE

## The Signage System

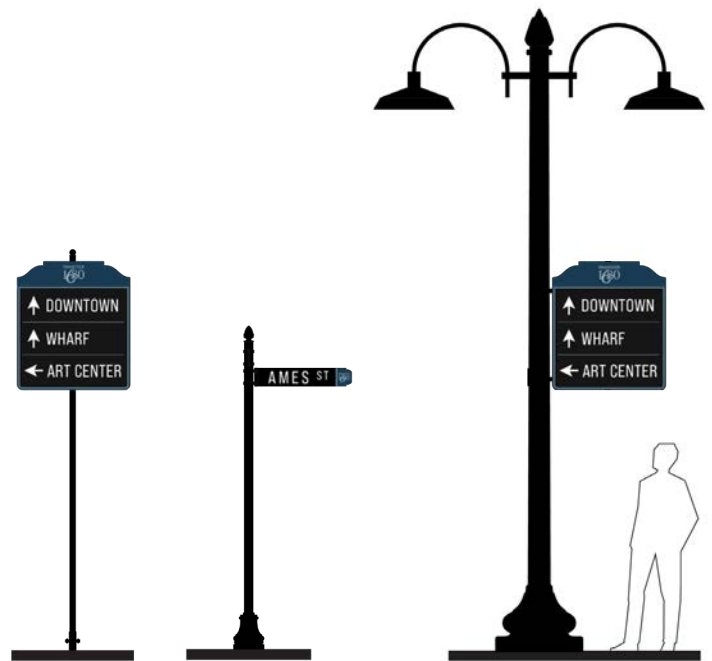
Based upon current needs, and considering citizen and staff input, a system or “family” of signs for Onancock has been developed with the goal of providing clear direction and orientation for visitors and residents, and to continue to reinforce and build the town’s brand identity, in addition to the highly recommended SGS signs on Route 13. The sign family includes four types, each of which is explained in further detail in the following sections:

- 15 Miles VDOT Supplemental Guide Signs (SGS) on Route 13 to make people aware of historic downtown
- Welcome Sign at town gateways
- Vehicular Directional and Street Signs
- Destination Signs
- Interpretative Signs

Graphic to be updated; awaiting final light fixture selection

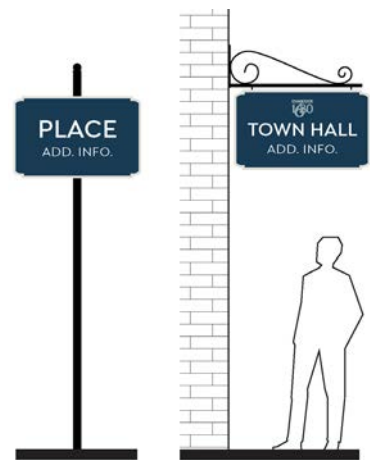
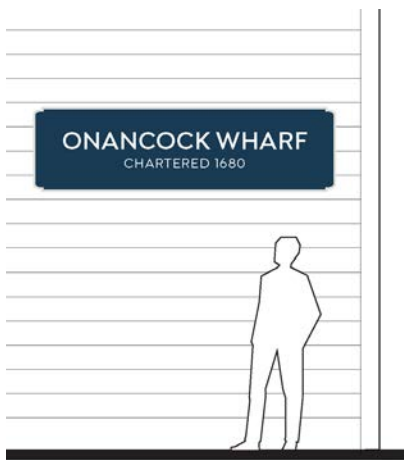


The Sign Family



Note: graphic to be updated after final light fixture is selected.





Note: graphics to be updated after final destination sign system is selected.

# SIGNAGE

## VDOT SGS Highway Signs

Onancock should continue to pursue the maximum use of VDOT SGS signs along Highway 13. These will be effective to guide visitors into town, and further establish the Town's recognition and brand along the highway and Eastern Shore. Signs can be placed as far as 15 miles from town.

## Welcome Sign

Also referred to as the gateway sign, this sign will replace the existing sign on the eastern edge of town near the intersection of Market Street and Fairgrounds Road.

Several welcome sign concepts were considered by the Town. The final welcome sign embodies Onancock's small town simplicity while celebrating the region's wildlife. This sign consists of a stone base and side pier similar in form to traditional National Park welcome signs. The stone base forms a bracket for a sandblasted and painted wood signboard. The signboard graphics display Onancock's brand logo - Spanish Moss color lettering on a Slate Blue background. The border is also Spanish Moss color. The stone pier will act as a base for a bronze sculpture reflecting the area's wildlife and/or natural beauty. (The sculpture could be designed and produced by a local or regional artist. The sculpture shown in the graphic on this page is for representative purposes only). Signboard dimensions: 4' x 9', overall sign structure, not including sculpture: 5.5" x 12.5".



## Vehicular Directional Signs

The vehicular directional signs include both directional signs and street signs. Both signs feature a modified ogee profile reflecting the historic character of the town. The signs also incorporate a modestly sized Onancock 1680 emblem, subtly reinforcing the towns brand identity. The sign board color palette includes: white letters on black, “Foggy Gray” logo and “Slate Blue” end tab or header (colors as defined in Onancock’s brand guidelines). Base, pole, brackets, fasteners and finial will be black. The font for direction/destination and street names will be Bebas Neue Pro (Semi-Expanded Regular).

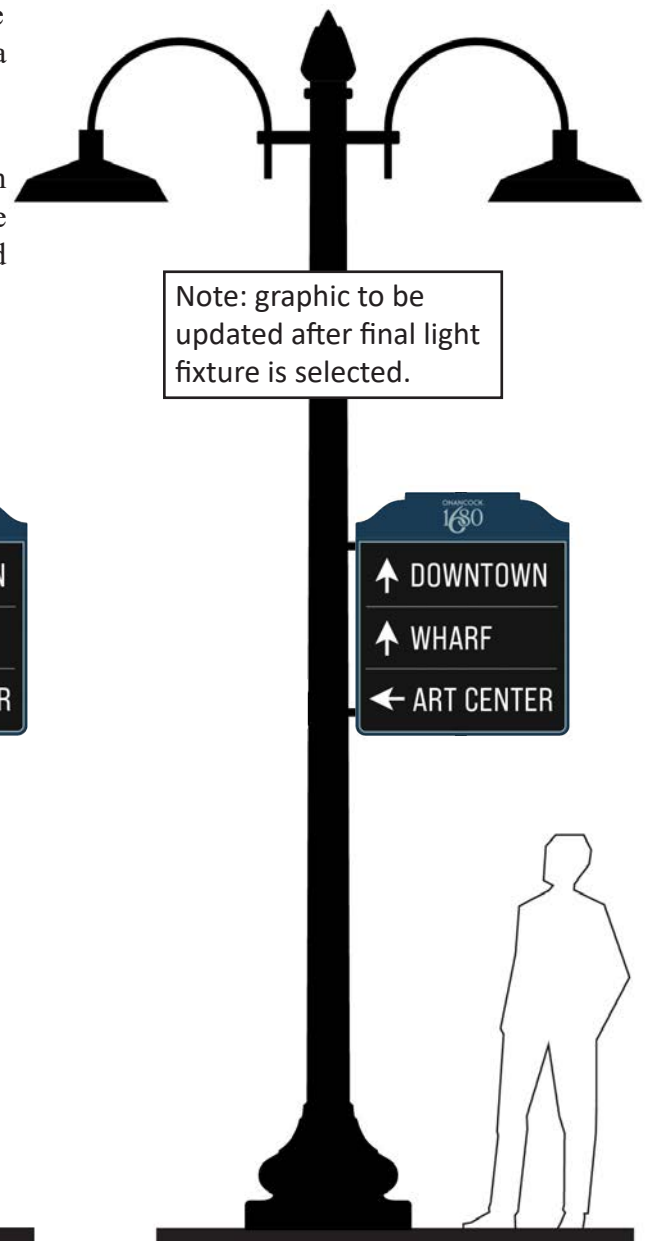
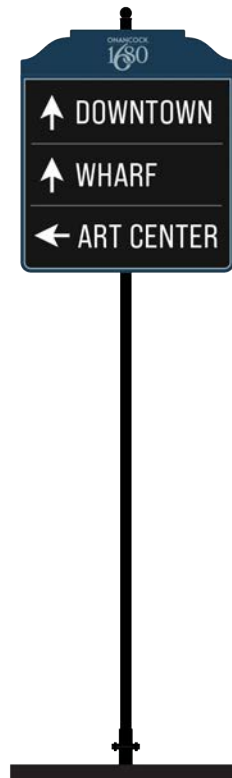
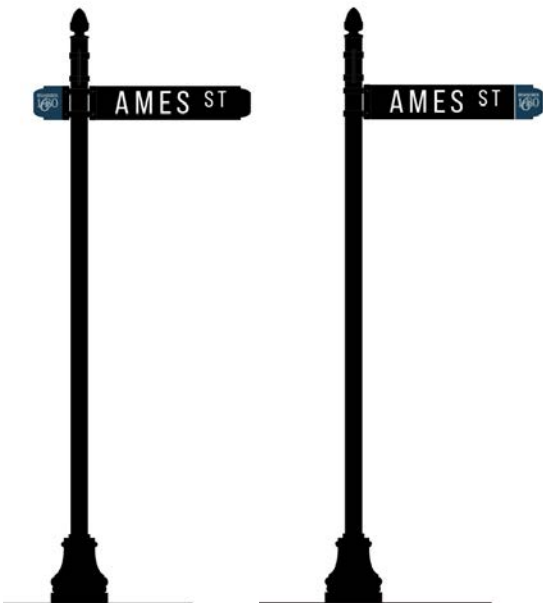
### *Directional Signs*

A series of vehicular directional signs will be located throughout the Town to direct visitors to key destinations. Destinations could include, but are not limited to: The Wharf, Downtown, Town Hall, the Arts Center, the town park, historic sites and parking. Signs can be mounted on either 2x2 inch metal tube, 3 inch diameter pole with decorative base and finial, or on a light pole. All poles will be installed with a VDOT approved breakaway base.

### *Street Signs*

Street signs will be mounted on a 3 inch diameter pole with decorative base and finial, or on a light pole. Two options are shown below. All poles will be installed with a VDOT approved breakaway base.

Vehicular Directional Signs



# SIGNAGE

## Destination Signs

These signs define arrival at the Town’s key destinations. Destination signs might include, but are not limited to: The Wharf, Downtown, Town Hall, the Arts Center, the town park, historic sites and parking. All destination signs will be “Slate Blue” with a “Spanish Moss” border (both colors per the Town’s brand guidelines). Font will be white, Isidora Sans (Semi Bold).

### *Onancock Park and Onancock Wharf*

The signboard will be sandblasted or routed wood or PVC. The lettering and border will be relief offset from the surrounding signboard. The park sign be a low 2’ x 8’ sign mounted on 6” x 6” posts.

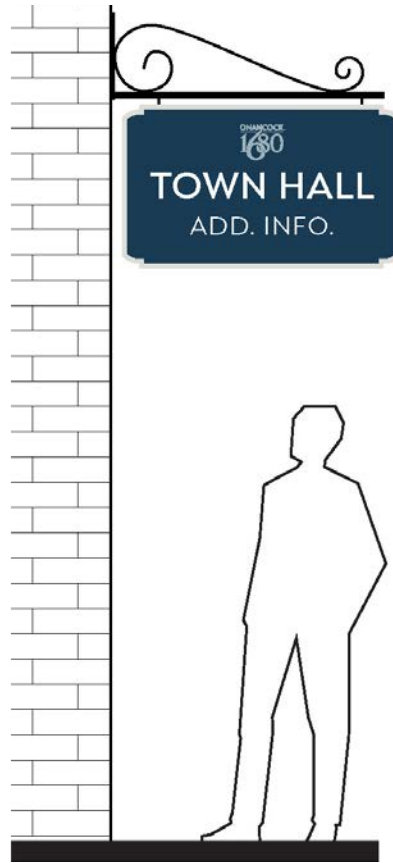
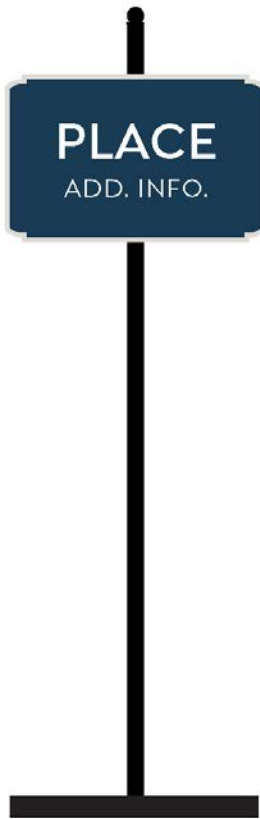


Destination Signs

Note: graphics to be updated after final destination sign system is selected.

## Smaller Destination Signs

Smaller destination signs should be used where appropriate, and either attached perpendicular to or flush with the building face. Signboard will be painted metal. Wherever possible signage should be attached to an existing structure, in a manner that fits the architecture, to minimize potential “clutter” caused by an over abundance of sign posts. All poles will be installed with a VDOT approved breakaway base.



Destination Signs

Note: graphics to be updated after final destination sign system is selected.



# SIGNAGE

## Large Letter Sign

The large letter destination sign will be located at the park at Ames and Market Streets. Its intent is a destination 'selfie' location, which will also reiterate Onancock's history from 1680. The adjacent space within the park will also provide interpretive display opportunities to illustrate the story behind 1680.



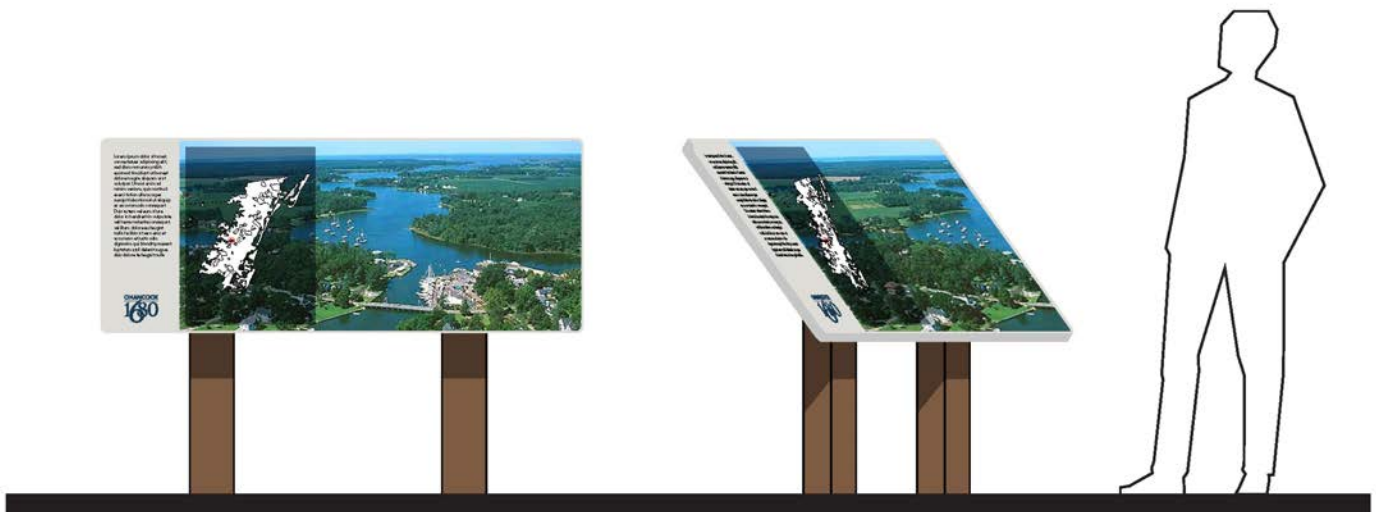
Large Letter Sign (Corner Park at Ames & Market)

## Interpretive and Orientation Signs

Interpretive signs will be developed to tell the story of Onancock, past and present. A number of locations around the town would be ideal for interpretive signs; in particular, informational kiosks are recommended at the Wharf and at North and Market (outside the town owned building on the south side of Market).

Signs shall be 2' to bottom edge, 4.5' to top edge, from 4' to 6' wide, and made of Folia ALTO™ Aluminum.

Folia ALTO™ Aluminum signs are made with an aluminum alloy known for its strong, ductile and lightweight profile. It is corrosion resistant, especially in saltwater and marine atmospheres.



Interpretive and Orientation Signs



Market Street

## Chapter 4: PARKING



# PARKING

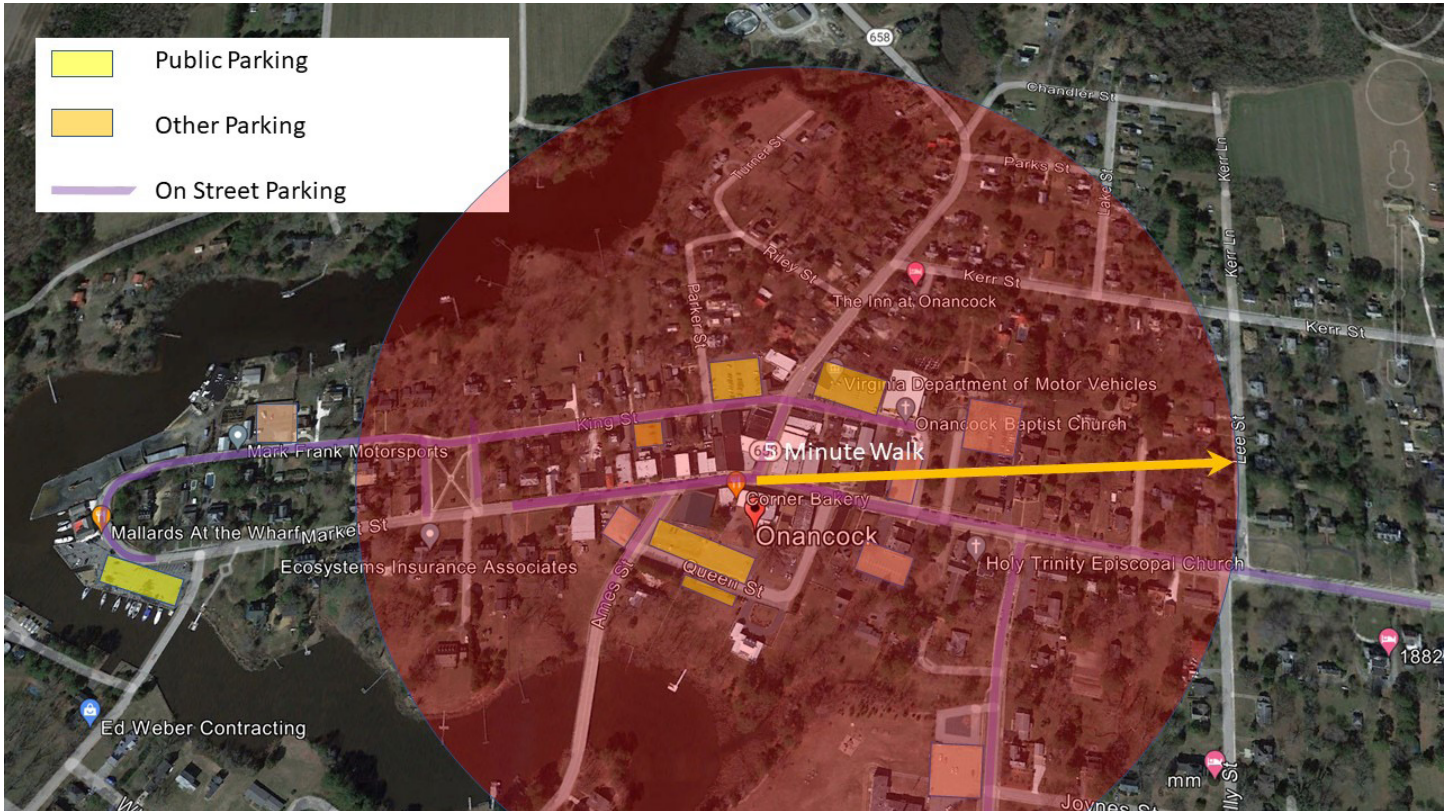
The team prepared an evaluation of and recommendations for parking and circulation in the Town of Onancock. Most work was completed during a two-day onsite workshop with citizen stakeholders engaged in the planning process. In preparation for the two-day onsite session, the team reviewed background information, maps, and data to get an understanding of the current situation regarding parking and circulation within the Town of Onancock.

The team mapped the existing parking resources: public parking (on street and off-street) as well as private lots that could be candidates for shared parking.





This exercise revealed that most of the parking resources within the heart of the Town were located within a 5-minute walk (1/4 mile) of the intersection of Market Street and North Street, which most residents consider the center of the Town.



An inventory of the spaces within the 5-minute walk radius yields that there are 220 spaces available on-street with an additional 230 spaces in public lots, for a total of 450 spaces available. Initial observations of space occupancy indicated that for a typical day or evening that there would be adequate parking spaces within the Town center, both for existing and known planned uses.





# PARKING

However, when we arrived in Onancock and had our first community meeting the design team heard loud and clear that there was a “parking problem” in the Town. Given the supply observed that appeared adequate for the amount of development that was not only in the Town today but that could potentially be accommodated through redevelopment, it became apparent that a strategy to maximize the parking supply through effective management techniques would yield positive results in the perception that there would be enough parking for normal days and weekends. Special events that brought larger surges of people into the Town Center would need additional consideration. Techniques to better utilize the existing parking supply included a combination of policy and physical enhancements to bring more of the available parking “closer” to attractions in the Town Center.

## Managing Parking

- Protect parking for businesses
- Tier parking resources by value
- Benevolent enforcement
- Implement wayfinding
- Leverage Existing Resources (maximize space count thru reconfiguration)
- Enhance the pedestrian realm
- Minimize barriers





# All Parking is NOT Created Equal

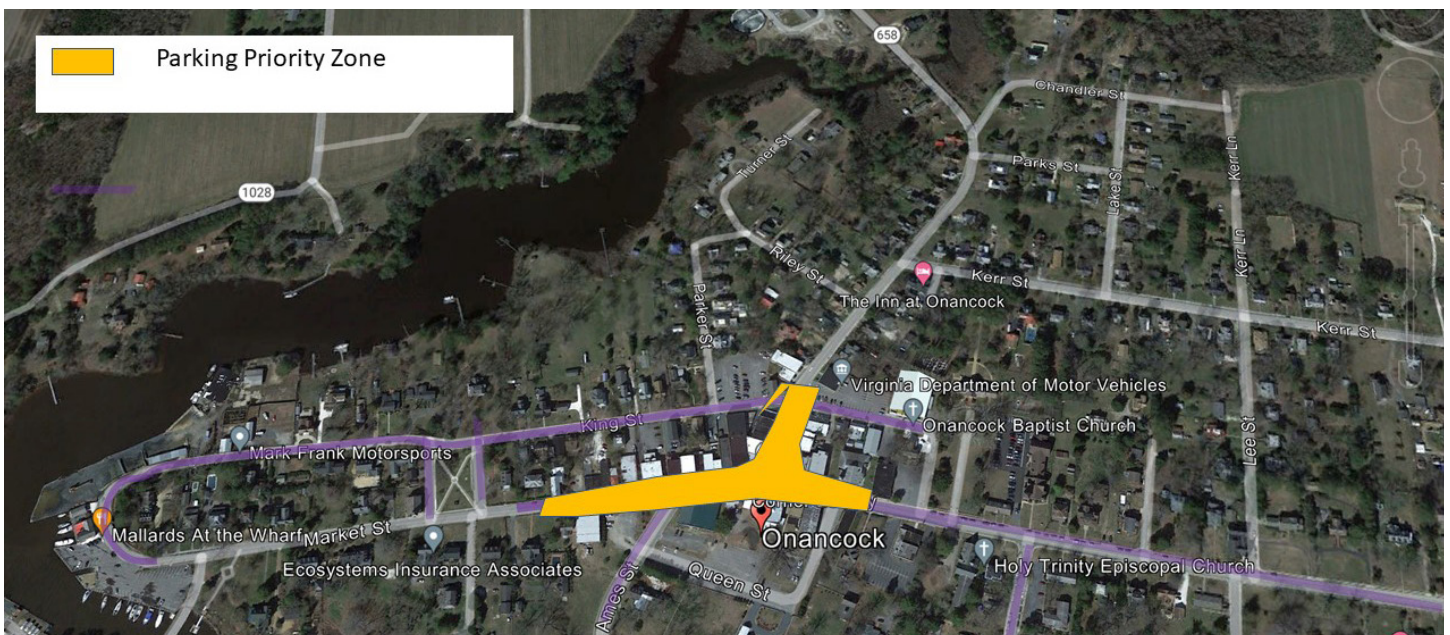


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One such technique would be to establish a hierarchy of parking spaces according to their value. According to research, each on-street space in a Main Street environment can contribute upwards of \$25,000 - \$50,000 per year to small town Main Street businesses. Given that the intersection of Market and North Streets were referred to as the “heart” of town, the on-street spaces within the Parking Priority Zone, shown in yellow on the map below, should be held as the most “valuable” spaces where customers could find convenient, short term parking to conduct business with local merchants.



Short term time limits should be established at 2 hours between 8 AM and 5 PM, Monday to Friday to reserve parking for customers of downtown merchants and encourage turnover. If necessary, this priority zone could be expanded west along Market to the Square, and east to College Avenue.



# PARKING

The team also convened a walking audit on the first day of the workshop to get residents' perspectives on the physical attributes of parking within the Town Center. The team looked at the connections between parking resources not within the immediate area of Market and North to determine potential barriers to their use and to explore options that would make them better connected and attractive to users.



One area that became evident was that the lots that were not located directly on Market Street did not have direct, visible connections for people who parked there and were trying to walk to a destination in the Town Center. One measure that could alleviate this perception would be to create more visible and more direct pedestrian connections from the lots back to Market Street by utilizing existing passages between buildings and creating a more walkable pathway by enhancing the walk environment through lighting, landscape, and wayfinding to direct patrons from their cars to the most direct connection to the Town Center.





Such pathways could be accomplished by connecting between buildings with sidewalks and shade trees, and making these passageways inviting to pedestrians who have parked their cars in a lot north or south and are trying to access Market Street.



Increasing the aesthetics of the public parking lots will also make them more inviting for visitors. The lot by the Town offices is a good example of how landscape and green stormwater management techniques can create an attractive and inviting parking lot that people will be more comfortable using.

The use of permeable pavers could also be applied to larger parking lots such as the Queen Street public lot south of Market Street or in the grass lot adjacent to the Onancock School to avoid large expanses of asphalt pavement and the need for stormwater collection. In addition, the use of permeable pavers such as this example creates a much more attractive parking lot.





# PARKING

Removal of barriers also extends to creating safe street crossings for pedestrians. While on the walk audit, the team heard from concerned citizens who found it difficult to cross Market Street at times due to fast moving traffic and a lack of protected crosswalks. To better facilitate pedestrian crossings, the team recommends that enhanced and new crossings be developed at the blue shaded locations; high visibility crosswalk markings as well as passive and active crosswalk signs would create a safer and more comfortable crossing experience for pedestrians. Furthermore, the addition of midblock pedestrian crossings at the locations with the blue bars would better connect pedestrians along desire lines and not require them to walk in excess of several hundred feet to reach a crosswalk.







Paddle signs in the middle of Market Street will better alert motorists to the crosswalk and will also encourage slower vehicle speeds.



Pedestrian-activated rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) signs offer a higher level of awareness to the driver at crossing locations. These signs have strobes that are activated when pedestrians wish to cross the street by pushing a button. They can also be activated in a passive manner using thermal imaging so that they activate whenever a pedestrian approaches the crosswalk. The fact that these are dark until activated and not constantly flashing offers a higher level of warning to the drivers of pedestrian crossing activity.

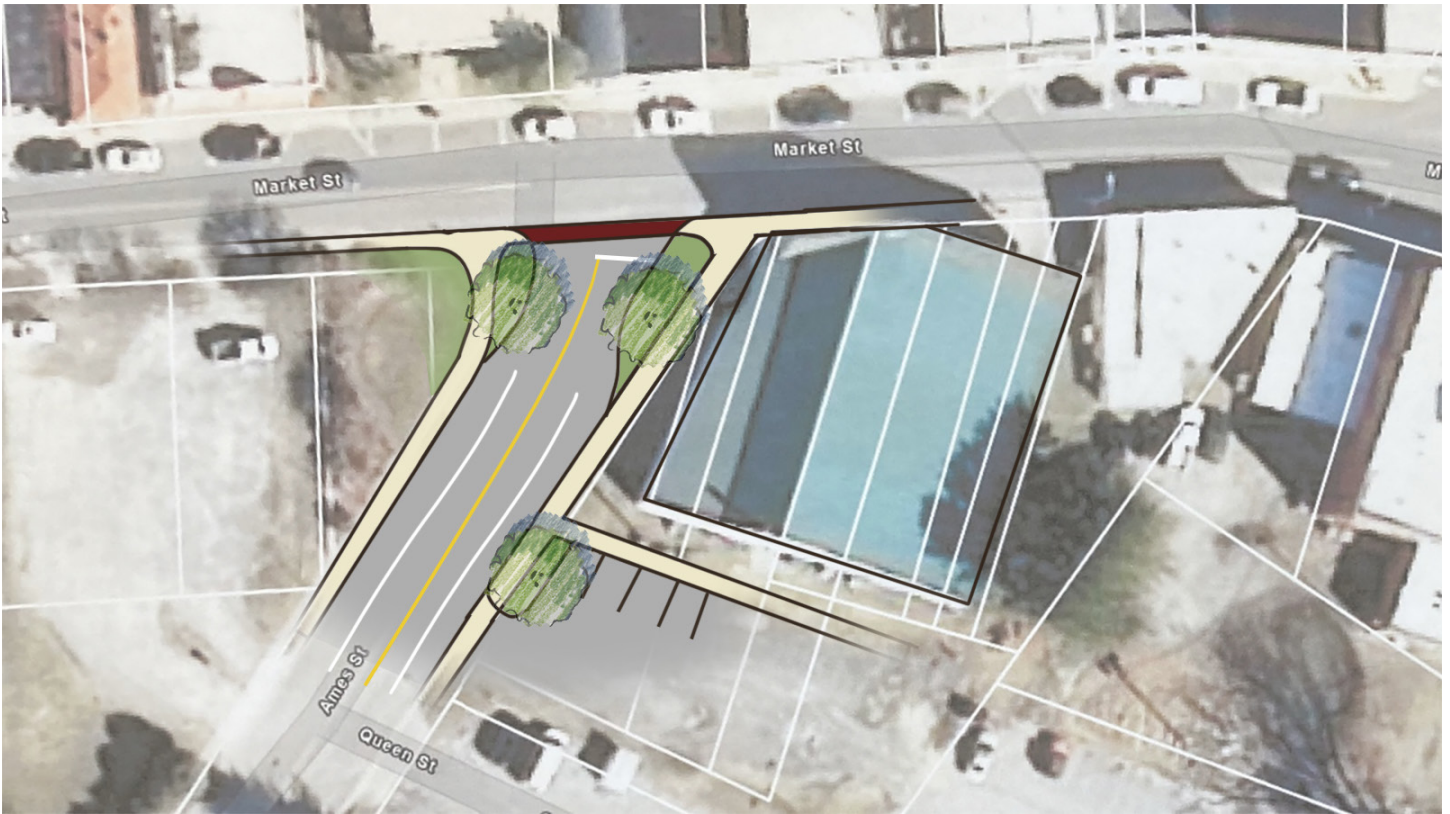


# PARKING

Other measures that can be used on Market Street are curb extensions which will shorten the distance a pedestrian has to cross. These could be built at the intersections and in conjunction with midblock crossings, and can be planted with trees or other landscape. The curb extensions will also visually and physically narrow the street by moving the curb out to the edge of the travel lane and shielding the existing on street parking.







One location that curb extensions could be used to shorten crossing distances is the intersection of Market Street and Ames Street in the vicinity of the current Farmers Market location. During the walk audit with the citizens, several participants mentioned how “big” the intersection is and how long it takes to cross. By tightening and realigning the intersection approach on Ames with curb extensions, the crossing distance can be significantly shortened, the approach can be normalized into an almost 90-degree intersection, and valuable space can be added to the small park on the southwest corner of Ames and Market Streets.

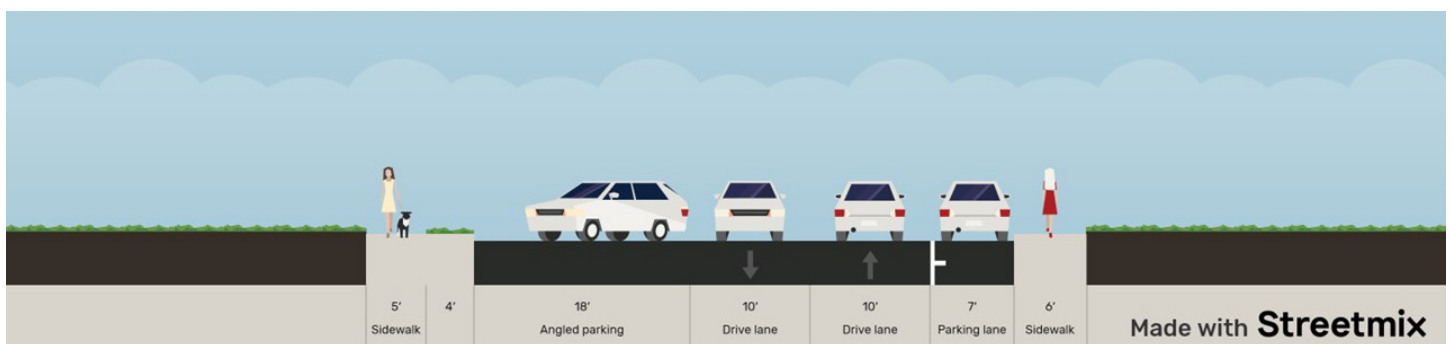


This image from Pinehurst is an example of how curb extensions can better define an intersection while shortening crossing distances, shielding on-street parking, and creating space of landscape and shade structure.



# PARKING

While the Town Center has parking that can be better accessed with the enhancements shown previously, there is the ability to create additional parking through reconfiguration of the cross sections on College Avenue and Queen Street. Formalizing the space on Queen Street and College Avenue can yield almost 70 additional spaces within walking distance of the Town Center, which can be used during special events at the Onancock School or in the Town.



On College Avenue, enough space exists on the current street to accommodate angled parking on one side and parallel parking on the other while maintaining two-way traffic flow. One citizen participant in the design workshop pointed out that when he attended the Onancock School years ago, that was the way the street operated then with parking. Coupled with the use of the lot at the school, the addition of the on-street parking can serve most events at the Onancock School and contribute to the overall parking pool in the Town for larger events.



Should the need arise for occasional large-scale events, the Town should utilize remote parking resources located along Market Street between Midtown and Four Corners. One such plaza that has been used previously for events is the shopping center on the northeast corner of Market Street and Boundary Avenue. This lot could accommodate between 130 and 150 spaces depending on configuration, and could be connected to the Town Center via a regular shuttle service for events. Shuttle service could be contracted either by the Town or by the event organizer.

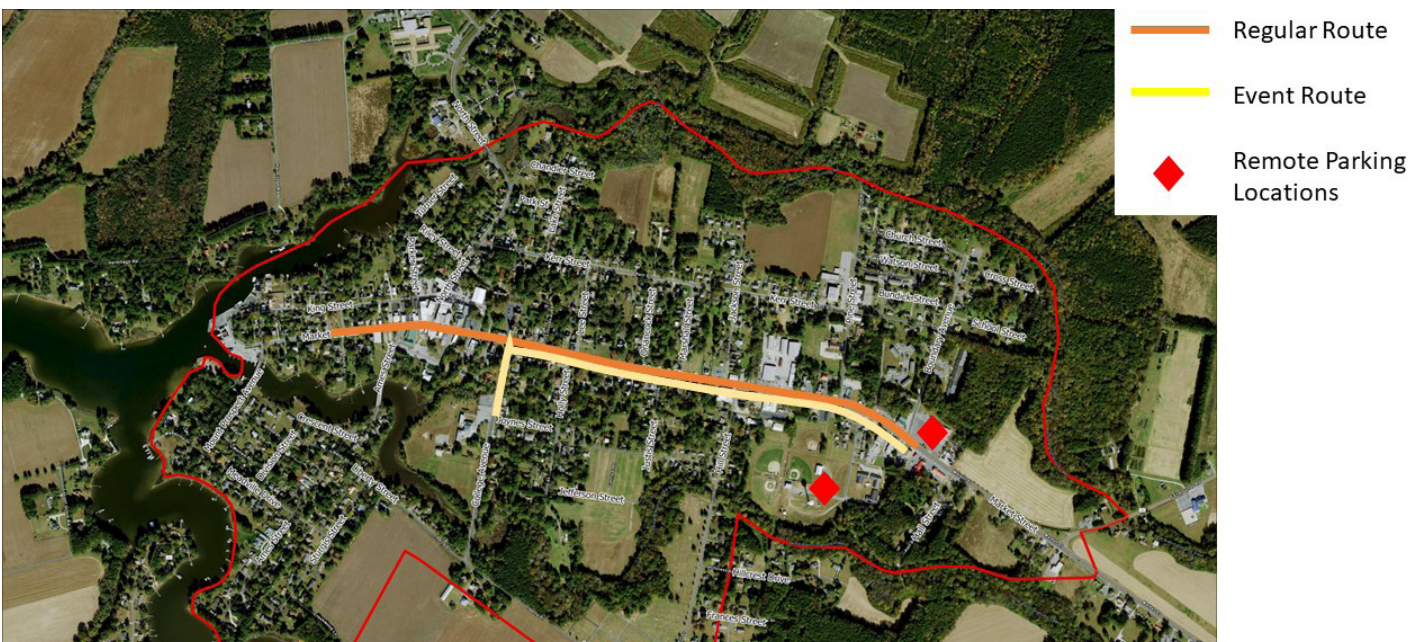
## Remote Parking with Shuttle

Approximately 130-150 spaces



***New Tally: 655 – 675 Spaces***

Remote parking could be accommodated at the shopping center or at the baseball fields on south Hartman Avenue. Shuttle routes could connect these resources either with the Town Center or pier for events held there or to the Onancock School for events that would be held at that location.



# PARKING

## Make the Shuttle Fun



The shuttles need not be a typical city or school bus; rather, using open-air trams or golf carts would reinforce the fun nature of the coastal place that is Onancock. Emerging technology also could utilize autonomous/driverless vehicles along the route. These type vehicles would be much less expensive to operate, could maintain 10 minute headways or less with more vehicles, and would blend well with the coastal fishing village context of Onancock.



### *Short-Term Actions*

- Consider time limits for on-street spaces within priority zone
- Connect Remote Lot w/ Shuttles for surge events (contract)
- Benevolent Enforcement
- Pursue agreements for sharing private parking
- Stripe Intersection Crosswalks
- Bike racks, corrals

### *Mid-Term Actions*

- Reconfigure Queen Street Lot, include golf cart parking
- Reconfigure streets for additional parking
- Refresh curb and parking stall markings
- Enhance passageways to Market Street
- Add curb extensions on Market Street
- Add midblock crosswalks

### *In the Fullness of Time*

- Add curb extensions to Market Street
- Implement full-time shuttle (Farmers Market, weekend nights, Second Friday)
- Downtown Valet
- Develop greenway to connect Downtown to Four Corners and Rail Trail
- Micromobility

In summary, there are many strategies that the Town can pursue to alleviate current parking and circulation issues while planning for growth and demand in the future. The table lists short, medium, and long term strategies that the Town should consider. Street reconfigurations and pedestrian crossing enhancements on Market Street will require coordination with VDOT, and that coordination should start immediately; many of the restriping projects may dovetail with VDOT programmed resurfacing schedules.



Photo courtesy of Matt Spuck

# IMPLEMENTATION: WHERE IT ALL COMES TOGETHER

## Chapter 5: THE WHARF and TOWN SQUARE



# THE WHARF

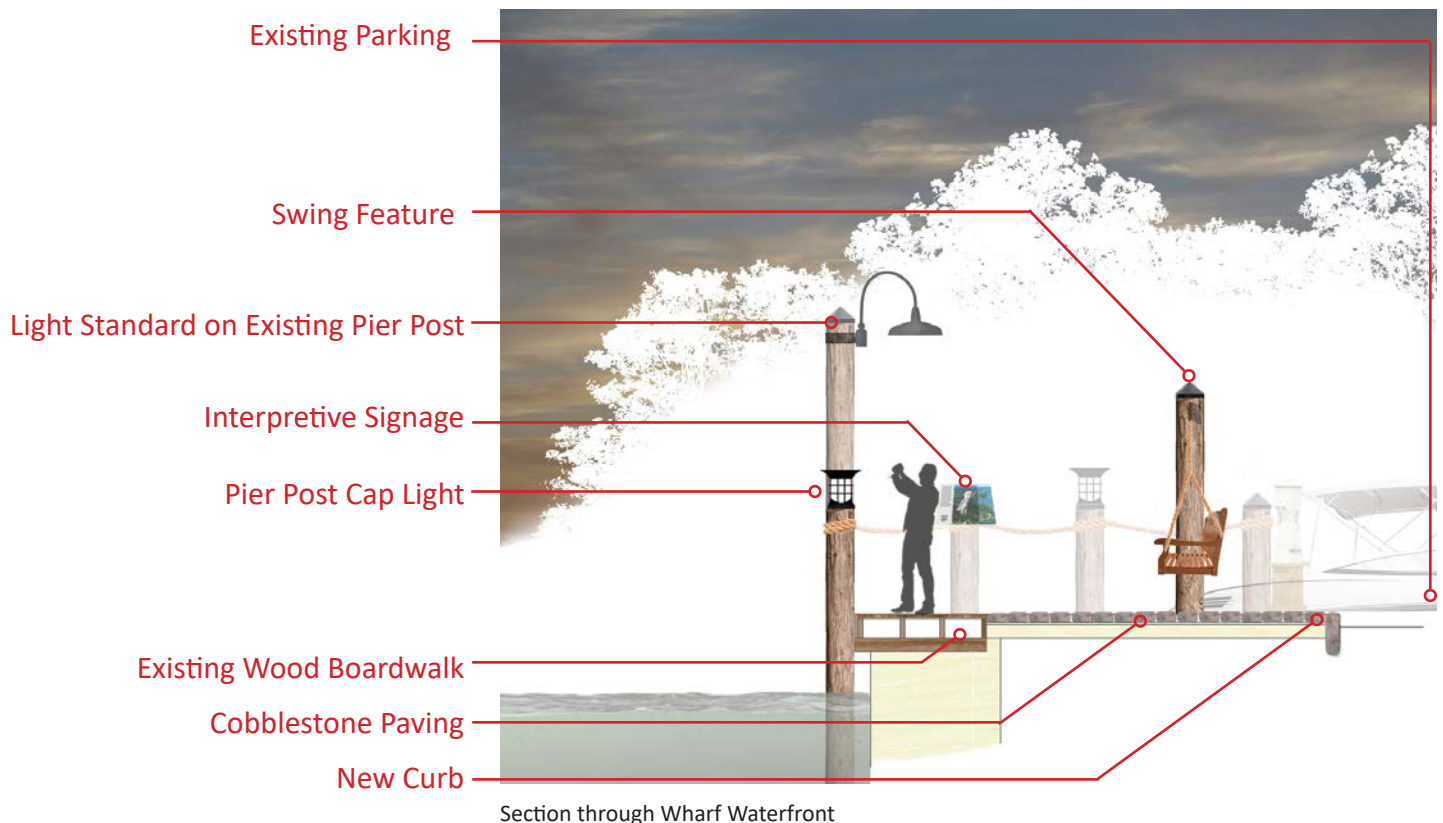
The Onancock wharf is rich in history. It was built in 1680, making it one of the oldest wharves in the United States. The wharf was originally used for shipping agricultural products, such as tobacco and corn, to market. It was also a major stop for steamboats that traveled between Baltimore and Norfolk.

In the early 1900s, the wharf began to decline in importance as other transportation methods, such as railroads, became more popular. However, the wharf was still used for a variety of purposes, including fishing, boatbuilding, and recreation.

In the 1970s, the wharf was restored and is now a popular tourist destination. It is currently home to a shop and restaurant, as well as a public boat ramp and also a popular spot for fishing, crabbing, kayaking, and enjoy the scenic beauty of the Chesapeake Bay.

The proposed design is meant to not only showcase this history, but also to create a thriving public place for residents, and visitors to continue to enjoy. One of the main proposed components is to create a continuous waterside walkway along the wharf and connect to a new waterside observation deck just past the Mt. Prospect bridge. The materials for the walkway are a 5 ft. wood boardwalk with a 4 ft. granite cobble walk adjacent. Granite cobble was historically used as “ballast” to equalize the weight on ships, and when no longer needed the ballast or cobblestone was used in streets and walks.

Other key design components include updating parking layouts for better maneuverability additional pockets of greenspace within the hardscape area, identification signage, historical interpretive signage, updated lighting, and swings to enjoy the waterfront views.





Concept site plan for the Wharf improvements



Example of granite cobblestone walkway, Boston Waterfront



# THE WHARF



Example of Wharf Swing



Example of Observation Deck at end of Boardwalk





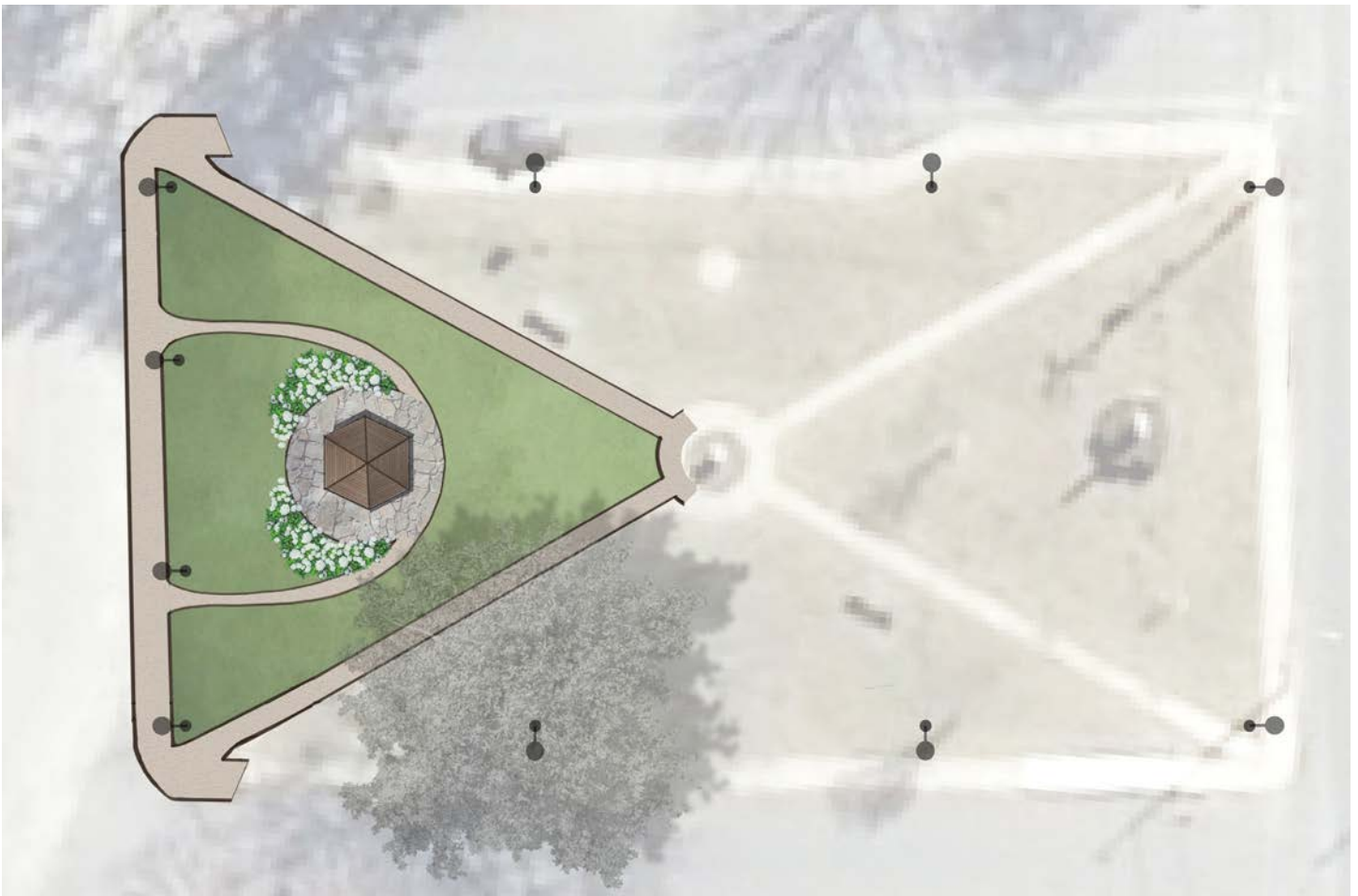
The existing wharf



Proposed concept showing swings, lighting, and walkway materials

# TOWN SQUARE

Minor improvements to the central town square are recommended and include relocating the existing gazebo central to the north triangle quadrant and raising the grade in this area approximately 3 ft. to elevate the gazebo to give a subtle prominence. Also recommended is to provide a bluestone terrace around the gazebo base. Railings can be eliminated to provide access at any point around the gazebo. Two gracefully rising 3 ft. walks rise up to the gazebo's stone terrace. Two masses of Annabelle Hydrangea are nestled between the walk and the terrace and reinforce a southern charm to the park. New lighting is proposed around the perimeter that is similar to the downtown lights, but with a bit more park charm in ornamentation. Several groupings of Adirondack chairs can be placed randomly in the park for one or groups of people.



Plan showing proposed improvements to Town Square





Example of Bluestone Paving Terrace



Example of Wood Bench



Light Standard for Parks, see selection for Town Square lighting on page 18



Example of Wood Adirondack Chairs



Simulation of gazebo in new location and raised slightly with grades gently sloping up to stone terrace



Simulation of gazebo with park lighting at night

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## Chapter 6: RECOMMENDATIONS



# RECOMMENDATIONS

While we have tried to confine our services on this study to lighting, signage and parking and mobility, Hill Studio has been working with Onancock since we were first invited to help with the downtown revitalization in 2005. Onancock is our home away from home when we work on the Eastern Shore, so we feel like we have been informally collecting data and considering alternatives for nearly 20 years. In this chapter will share some observations outside the specific focus of the study, in the spirit it can help along some additional modest progress.

## 1. What should NOT change?

The “1680 idea” is thoroughly imbued into the image and brand of Onancock. Jamestown settlement is older, but nobody lives there. Where else can we find a town that has gradually and gracefully adapted to nature and culture for 350 years? ... Pretty rare indeed. The brand is fitting, and the color palette couldn't be more spot-on. But wider understood and more important than any brand can describe, is the deep-rooted sense of belonging that can be felt in Onancock. The timeless elements that have endured centuries welcome every visitor and resident. The centuries-old oaks, the old sidewalks and mounting blocks, the churches, the houses, small buildings renovated many times, the wharf, perfect horizontal horizons along the Bay and countless other tiny and different details all contribute to this message. But what is most interesting to us is that it is in no way a museum. That's what distinguishes Onancock and that is what should NOT change. The essence of this quality is alluring. Even trying to capture it into a set of design guidelines if misunderstood can have the undesired result of ruining what we are trying to preserve – the diversity brought about by hundreds, thousands of contributors through time. It's not the individual details, it is the entire ensemble. Christopher Alexander spent a career trying to describe the elements of timelessness. Perhaps the work that relates to Onancock most closely is *The Timeless Way of Building*. This book should be required reading for anybody trying to build more than a single structure in Onancock. Large developments should be off the table, unless they can provide a failsafe method of fitting into this heritage landscape. It is individual contributions that make this town, not broad design gestures. “A little slice of nowhere else” ... Onancock is a patchwork quilt of ideas through time.

## 2. What could be made better?

With reference to the above statement, several small, “surgical” improvements can be made, which contribute to the overall health and safety of Onancock, as well as its enjoyability by residents and visitors. These are listed first by Main Street's list, found on their website, followed by a few more freeform observations.

## CONVENIENCES

Wharf – Tangier Ferry Parking – The boardwalk has untapped potential as a gathering place, and sunset watching hangout. A concept for its improvement is described in Chapter 5 of this report. For complete design and construction services, the budget is \$550,000. Grants to implement the design and construction area available from multiple sources, especially because the improvements directly better the Bay from nearby pollutants.

Kayak Launch / ATM – See the description of improvements in Chapter 5. For complete design and construction services, the budget is \$150,000. Like the Wharf area, grants to implement the design and construction area available from multiple sources, especially because the improvements directly better the Bay from nearby pollutants.

Farmers Market – Several Alternatives for a long-term vision for the Farmers Market were explored in the Design Workshop. The current location may not be possible for a long-term location, as this private property may need to be utilized for income generation. An alternative site for the market is along Queen Street, in front of the new mural, as shown in the diagram:



New Area for Saturday Farmers Market

Blacksmith Shop – This building has a great story, and the most recent chapter is remembered by current leaders in Onancock. Now is the time to put in place an interpretive plan for this facility, that may also include a Historic Structures Report, which details how to care for the building over time. Grants for these activities are available through NPS, Virginia DHR, and some foundations.

## GREEN SPACES

Onancock Landing – This park offers beautiful sculptures and plantings already. Illustrated on the plan in Chapter 5, it can be supplemented with the easternmost component of the boardwalk – an observation deck to be placed on the water’s edge. This would be a great place to watch the sunset. Using special criteria in the design, both design and construction can qualify for grant funding as a universally accessible fishing pier.

Town Square – Unlike their New England counterparts, most Virginia towns do not have an historic town square. This is an exceptionally rare space. Onancock has taken great care of the space over time. Recommendations to better the lighting and pedestrian circulation, as well as the Gazebo, are shown in a sketch plan in Chapter 5.

Custis Garden – This space is proposed to be transformed and substantially upgraded. Currently the Y-shaped intersection at the intersection of Ames and Market Streets is awkwardly wide, with the mouth of Ames street stretching 80’ at the intersection. A traffic calming improvement project is prescribed in Chapter 4. On the west side of the new improvements a 350th Anniversary celebration exhibit is proposed, which will include the large 1680 “selfie sculpture.” People have stated, “to the unaware, 1680 seems like a street address.” Several interpretive plaques are proposed to remedy that problem and provide highlights of Onancock’s history through the ages. Design and Construction grants are available through Virginia DHCD, or possibly along with the road improvements as part of a VDOT grant.

## RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTINUED)

Creekside Greenway – Continuation of the Nature Trail at Historic Onancock School – while the nature trail is a great amenity at the school and park grounds, it has opportunities to be substantially expanded, going all the way to the Hospital and potentially beyond Route 13. The trail can parallel the creek through the woods, link to the Dog Park and the Little League Fields, and become a nature focused greenway, extending for several miles. This project can be an excellent alternative transportation project, funded through a series of VDOT grants over the years.



Potential Creekside Greenway Connecting Major Parks and Hospital

Dog Park and Little League Fields – Both of these newer parks could benefit from a master plan, which can help to organize a slate of future facilities, and a design and construction phasing program. A thorough master plan for these facilities together should include significant public engagement.



Examples of master plans for community parks featuring amenities including dog parks and sports fields





Crockett Avenue shows great potential for Shared Green Parking

Crockett Avenue and associated parking facilities – Crockett Avenue has existed as a “B” Street, meaning with a general service orientation, without significant width, travel, or improvements. There is nothing wrong with that. It is charming and walkable scale. However, over time some significant facilities have been built along it, and they have some big parking facilities. The proximity of the parking lots and potential for their shared use is obvious. Parking lots at the DMV, Onancock Baptist Church Family Life Center and Onancock Baptist Church Activities Building could supplement many other occasional downtown uses, at times when these parking lots are empty. Ideas to make these a win-win for the Church and the town are to install parking meters in the lots and have the weekday parking fee acknowledged through signage as a donation to support church activities. Another idea is for the Town to initiate a green-designed parking lot,

like the one behind the Town Hall. The lot would need to create more parking (possible if DMV and Family Life lots were combined). Significant aesthetic and green design issues could be addressed through this upgrade. Because it is “green” grants can be obtained to assist with the design and construction.

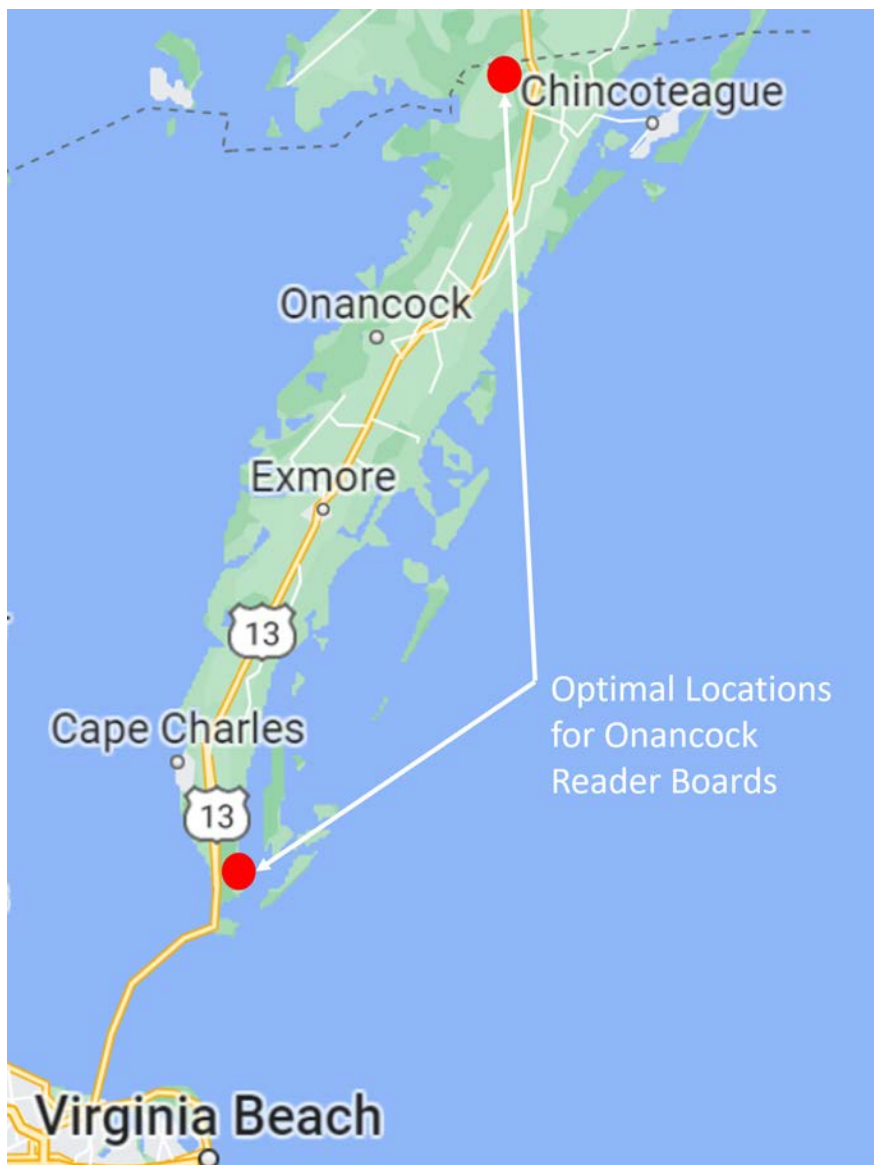


5 Possible Locations for Trails to Overlooks Using Public ROWs

Town Owned Creek and Bay access areas – Onancock has no shortage of public rights-of-way that connect from existing streets to the water. Over the years adjacent property owners have maintained them, but they still belong to the public. Although this will be a sensitive topic, and should be approached as such, we have seen in other communities how these can be made into trails that do not bother the adjacent land but enhance it with access to viewing fishing platforms at the end. A map overlain on the tax map reveals streets like Ames, Division, Mount Prospect, Meadville all have water access at their termini, and there are small trail size accesses north of Town Square that can be put to use. Low impact trails with access to shoreside decks can be implemented (fences can be provided to keep public out of private yards). Grant money is available from a number of sources.

## RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTINUED)

Reader Board Sign – We have been asked about the possibility of a reader board sign adjacent to or near the Welcome sign along East Market Street. With reference to the “what not to change” paragraph, the reader board is most effective reaching an audience that isn’t already “in the know.” For example, the handheld smartphone has gone a long way toward making reader boards obsolete for Town residents. An alternative audience to reach with a reader board is travelers along Route 13 who have no idea about Onancock. In this regard a reader board located near the traffic signal on Route 13, or better yet at the entrance to the Eastern Shore (first traffic light from northbound or southbound travelers) might have a more positive effect to steer new tourists.



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**Thank you.**

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Design Team ready for Interactive Sculpture

1680

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**ONANCOCK**<sup>SM</sup>

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A LITTLE SLICE OF NOWHERE ELSE

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- End of Document