

Cape Charles Historic Sources

for reference in the ongoing

Railroad & Harbor Area Master Plan Development

Cape Charles has a rich history as a port and railway town, with abundant historical documentation. As progress is made toward the development of a Master Plan for the harbor and railway areas, referencing the available historical documentation can help pave the way for development that is cohesive with the town and highlights its unique and vibrant history.

The Master Plan will be integral to designing the future of this vital area in Cape Charles. The ways in which future development integrates with the adjacent townscapes, particularly along Mason Avenue, are crucial to maintaining and complementing the historic character of the Town.

The attached photos present interesting opportunities for understanding the history of the town and letting that understanding inform plans for the future:

1) The Master Plan area is directly adjacent to the Cape Charles Historic District, and a small area along Mason Avenue is within the boundaries of the Historic District. Will the portion of the Master Plan area that is within the Historic District be addressed differently from the rest? How will the master plan put strategies into place to ensure that the south side of Mason Avenue, which directly faces the main historical streetscape, will be developed in a way that is sensitive to the historically designated area?

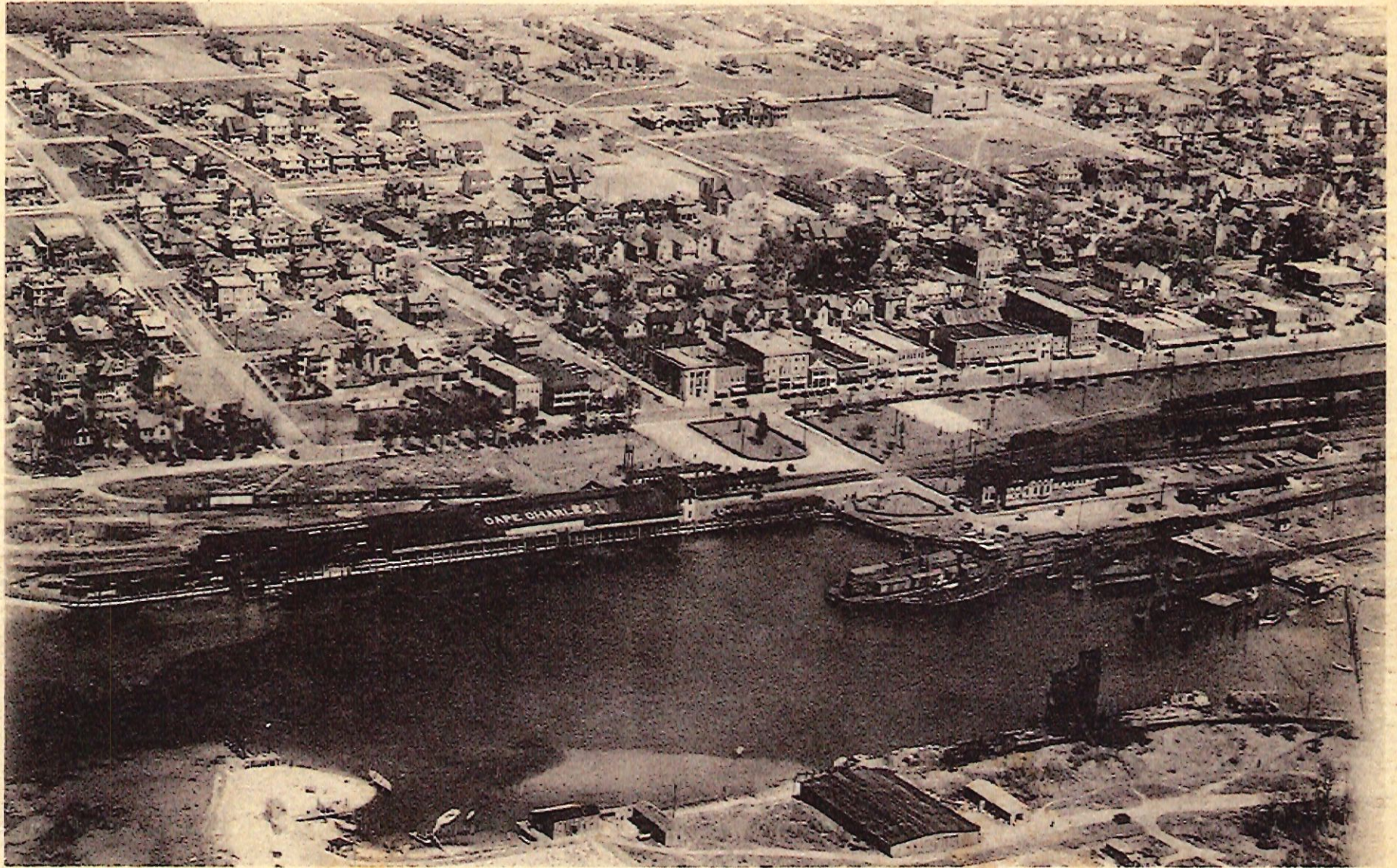
2) Aerial photos of the harbor, town, and Mason Avenue from the late 1800s and early 1900s show a carefully composed flow from the town and Mason Avenue to the railyard and harbor, with public areas and parks near the termination of Pine Avenue. Could this inform a future strategy for the area?

3) The character and scale of historic harbor buildings were integral to the development of the town. Could these be referenced or considered in the planning for this area?

4) Cape Charles is a railway town without a railway. In what ways could the Master Plan give life to that history in a way that will both preserve the heritage and accomplish the needs and desires of the community?



Cape Charles Harbor Terminal Building, 1911.



AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF CAPE CHARLES, VIRGINIA

Image 1: Cape Charles Aerial, 1925. This image and several other historic photos give a striking view of what portions of the master plan area adjacent to Mason Avenue looked like historically, and how the town/rail/harbor connection was addressed. Elements from this early/historic layout might help inform visioning for the Master Plan area, and help create a plan that will cohesively integrate new development with existing and historic buildings and spaces.

Proximity to and overlap with the Cape Charles Historic District:



WHERE SHOULD FUTURE DEVELOPMENT BE LOCATED?



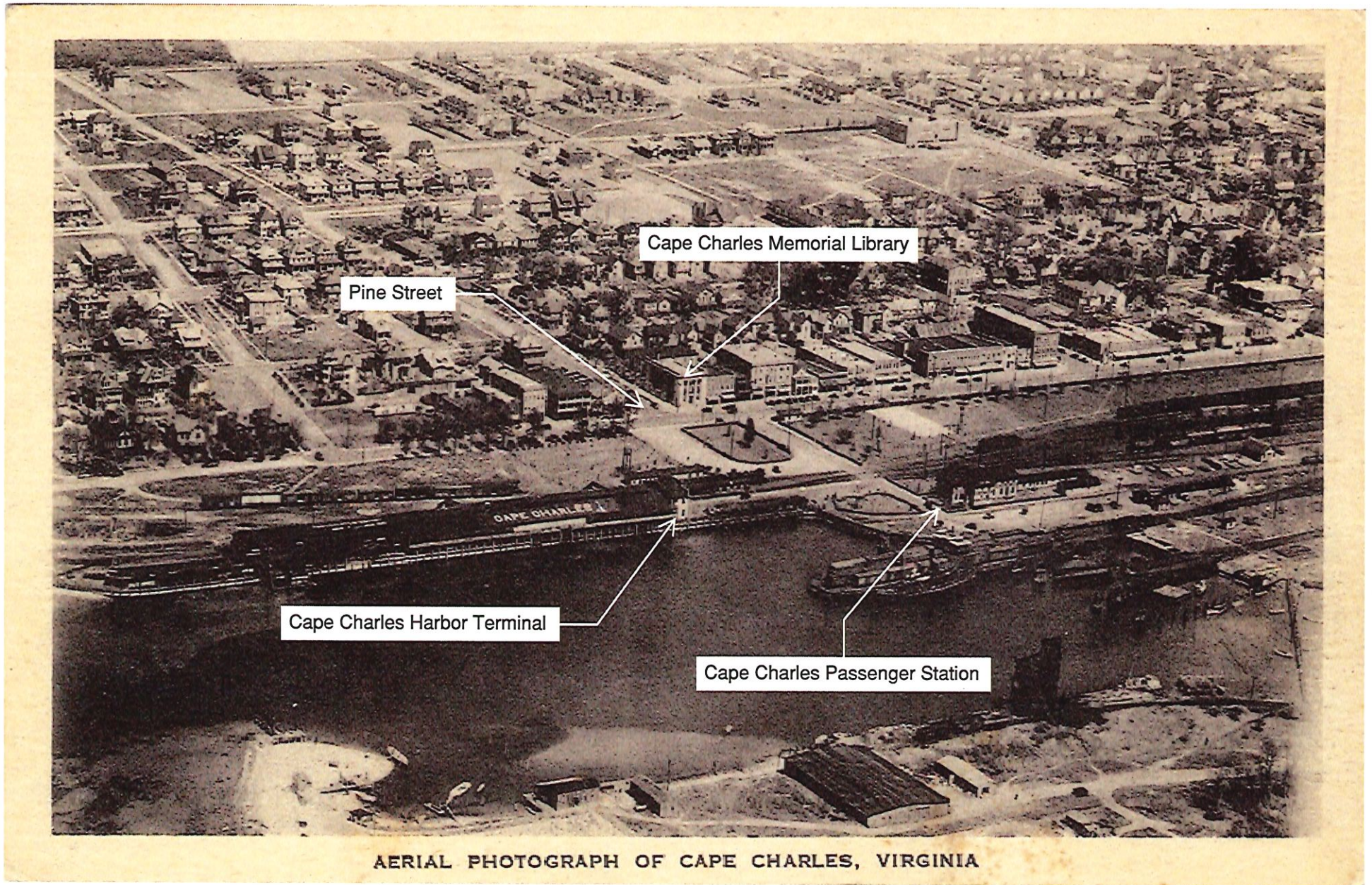


Image 1: Cape Charles Aerial, 1925, annotated.



Image 2: Cape Charles Harbor and Monroe Ave, 1927. This view provides insight into the historic flow from the town across Mason Ave and into the railyard/harbor area. Public space extending from Pine Avenue functioned as a central axis. The axis and associated public parks and open spaces provided viewsheds and pedestrian access, with industrial-related structures built up along the harbor to the west, and along the railway to the east (see images 1, 5, and 11).



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Image 3: Cape Charles Monroe Ave, 1925. The area across Mason Avenue opposite Pine Street was the central connection between the Town and the industrial railway and harbor areas.

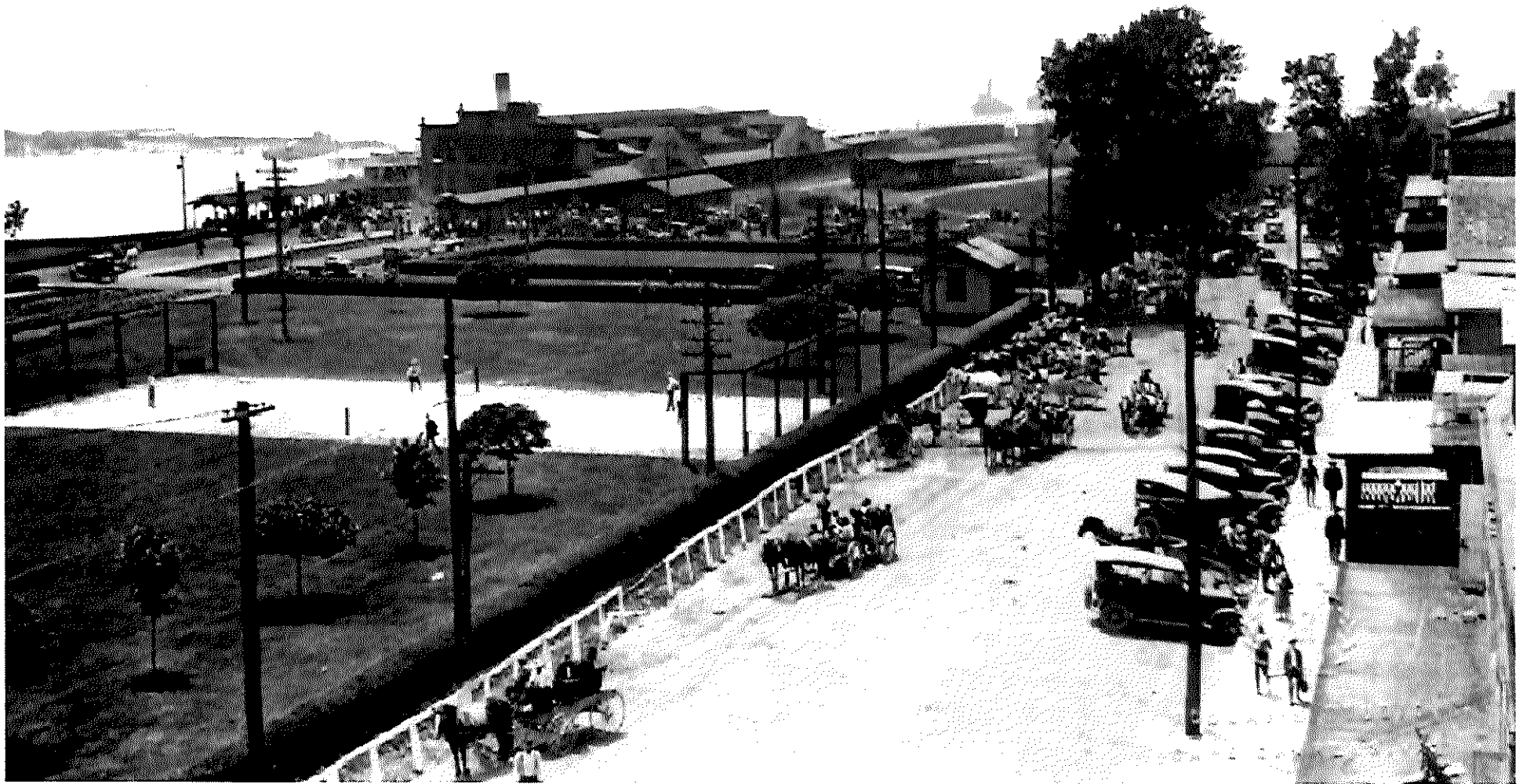


Image 4: Cape Charles Monroe Avenue and Harbor, 1925. The overlap of public space, recreation, and industry is fascinatingly evident in this snapshot of a time of transition between the horse and carriage, and motorized vehicles.

7— Penna. R. R. Terminal and Ferry Dock, Cape Charles, Va.



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Image 5: Cape Charles Monroe Ave, 1950. This relatively late image shows public/open green space that retains and highlights views from the town to the harbor, creating a transition between town and industry.

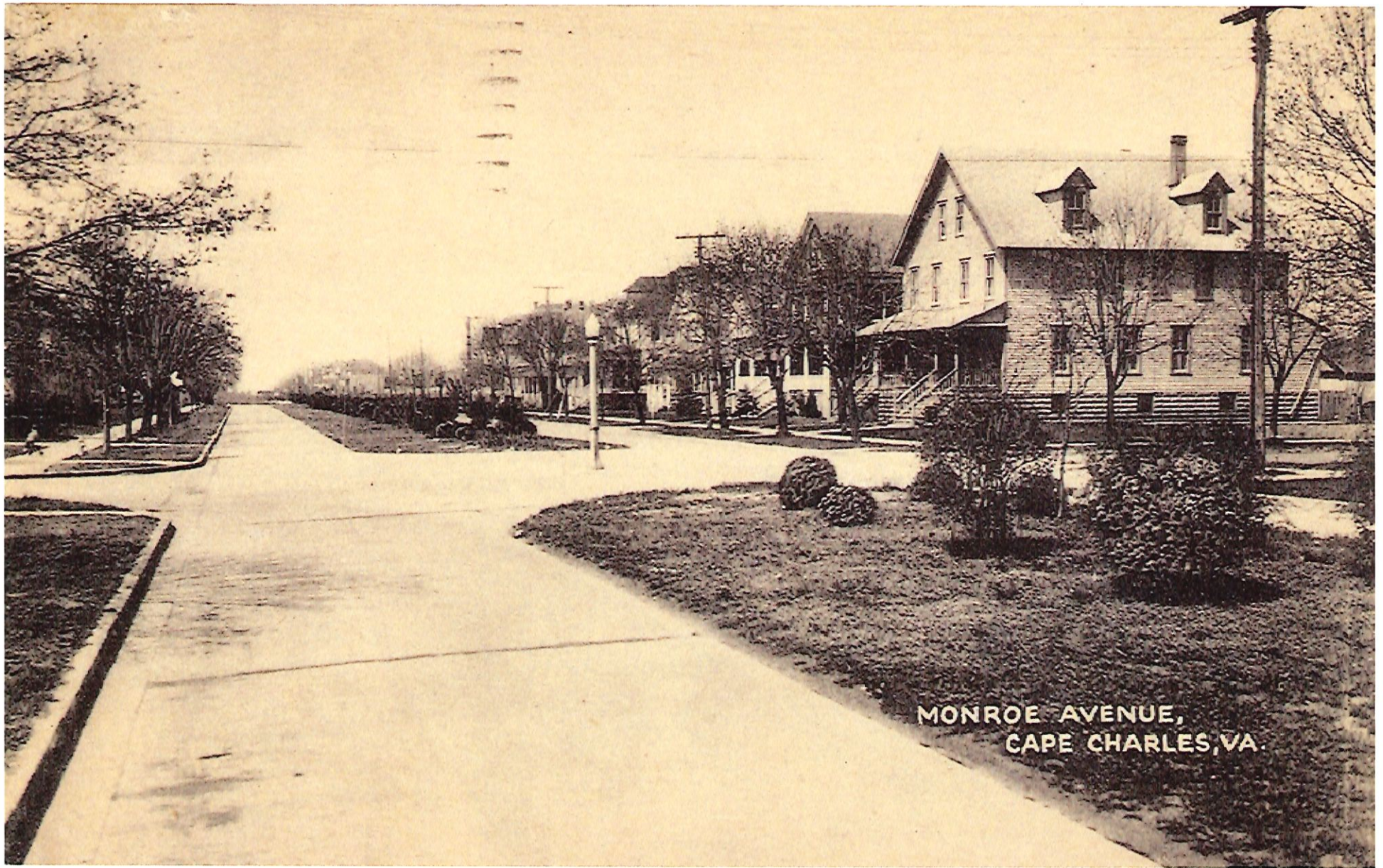


Image 6: Cape Charles, Monroe Ave, 1930. Understanding the character and feeling of historic Cape Charles, as seen in this image of Monroe Avenue, may help inform a plan for integration and flow between the town and the Master Plan area.



Image 7: Cape Charles Harbor and Terminal Building, date unknown. The Cape Charles terminal building was formidable with a careful design that highlighted the status of the town and functioned as the hub for the center of the town's economy, connecting rail and ferry transportation. This architecture, and other historic architecture associated with the harbor and railway, while no longer extant, may help give a vision of the character of the town historically and how future development and planning can honor or reference that history. The terminal building is also visible in images 1, 4, and 5.

VIRGINIA LEE
AT P. R. R. DOCK, CAPE CHARLES, VA.



Image 8: Cape Charles harbor and terminal building, 1930.



Image 9: Cape Charles harbor activity, 1885. This early photo of the harbor area shows the integration of town, commercial architecture, and harbor area in the foreground.



Image 10: Cape Charles Passenger Station, 1885. As with the Harbor Terminal building, the Passenger Station was central to the primary economy of the Town. This building was located east of the harbor terminal building, slightly inland along the tracks from the harbor.



Image 11: Cape Charles steam locomotive, 1885. The railway was integral to the founding and development of Cape Charles, and the town has a rich heritage connected with both commercial and passenger transportation. How can this help inform the Master Plan and future development directions?



Image 12: Cape Charles Harbor and Railway, 1927. This view, looking east from the harbor, shows more of the Master Plan area, with Mason Avenue, green space, railways, and the harbor are all visible

Photos sourced from the Library of Congress, eshoreiath.virginia.edu, theclio.com, capecharles.org, and digital.hagley.org.

