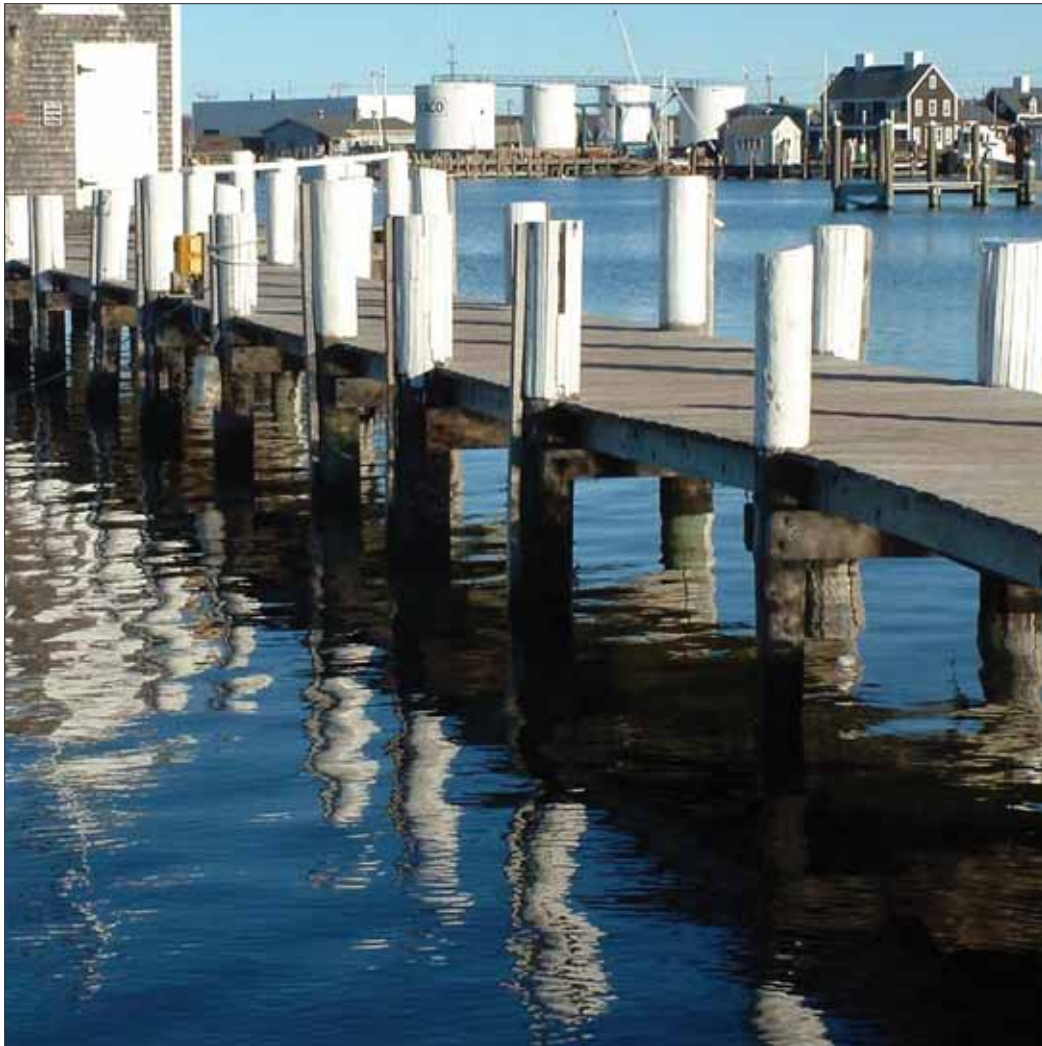




# TISBURY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN



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# Tisbury Community Development Plan

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Community Profile
- 1.2 Constraints on Development
- 1.3 Planning Context
- 1.4 Community Development Planning Process
- 1.5 Methodology for Determining Suitability
- 1.6 Maps of Existing Conditions

### **2. Vision**

### **3. Open Space and Natural Resources**

- 3.1 Profile
- 3.2 Suitability Analysis
- 3.3 Orientations

### **4 Housing**

- 4.1 Profile
- 4.2 Suitability Analysis
- 4.3 Orientations

### **5 Economic Development**

- 5.1 Profile
- 5.2 Suitability Analysis
- 5.3 Orientations

### **6 Synthesis - Putting it All Together**

- 6.1 Development
- 6.2 Development versus Conservation
- 6.3 Zoning and Implementation Policies
- 6.4 Next Steps

### **APPENDIX**

#### **APPENDIX 1 – WATER RESOURCES**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE

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### 1.1.1 Martha's Vineyard

Tisbury is one of six towns forming the Island of Martha's Vineyard, a 100-square-mile island – located about three miles off the coast of Cape Cod. The Island is a terminal moraine, marking the southern progression of the last Ice Age. Home to the Wampanoag Native Americans, it was settled by Europeans in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Today, year-round residents, seasonal residents – many of whom own second homes – and hundreds of thousands of short-term visitors live on or come to the Island, attracted by the unique natural, historical, and cultural values that define the beauty and character of Martha's Vineyard.

As a coastal island, Martha's Vineyard's climate is influenced by warm Gulf Stream waters that moderate the Island's seasons. Summers are a bit cooler than the mainland, providing refuge from nearby hot and humid metropolitan areas such as Boston and New York. Winters are milder and autumn generally lasts longer than on the mainland, providing a more favorable climate for vacationers year-round.

Each of the Island's towns reflects its origins: Edgartown as the historical home of master seamen during the whaling era and still the seat of County government; Tisbury as the Island's year round gateway and market town, Oak Bluffs as the Island's first summer resort and continued concentration of summer activity, West Tisbury and Chilmark as agricultural villages, Aquinnah (formerly called Gay Head) as the Island's remaining Wampanoag Indian settlement and the site of perhaps the Island's most recognizable feature and only National Natural Landmark – Gay Head Cliffs. Three-quarters of the Island's population is distributed equally among the three "Down-Island" towns: Tisbury, Oak Bluffs and Edgartown, each with a busy commercial town center. Vineyard Haven in Tisbury serves as the Island's main port, seconded by Oak Bluffs in the summertime. The three "Up-Island" towns, West Tisbury, Chilmark and Aquinnah are more rural in character.

From 1900 to 1960, the year-round population of the Vineyard increased a bit more than 30%. The population doubled in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, increasing 30% each decade. By comparison, in the 1990s, the year-round population increased only 6% in all of Massachusetts.

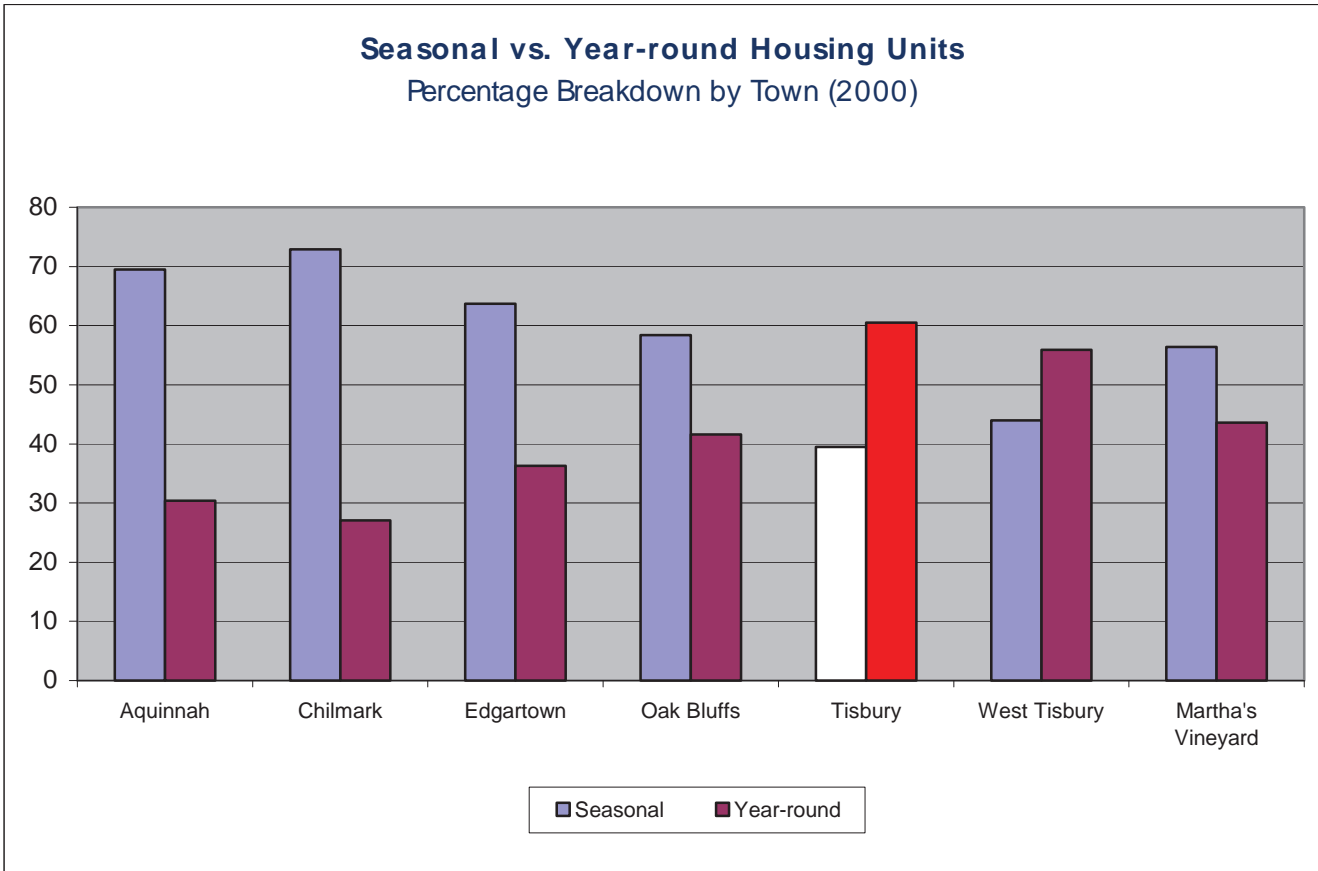
As a seasonal vacation area, the number of people on the Island changes dramatically from one season to the next. The Martha's Vineyard Commission estimates that the nearly 15,000 year-round Vineyard population in 2000 swelled to about 75,000 during the peak summer months of July and August. This summer population is made up of several distinct groups, each with its own influences and needs.

## Estimated Average Summer Population – 2000

	Aquinnah	Chilmark	Edgartown	Oak Bluffs	Tisbury	West Tisbury	Total
Year 'round	344	843	3,779	3,713	3,755	2,467	14,901
Guests of Year 'round	141	382	1,582	1,590	1,646	1,034	6,375
Seasonal / Vacationers	1,536	4,894	13,251	10,637	5,123	3,888	39,329
Transients							
lodging rooms	42	158	1,944	1,192	860	190	4,386
on boats			408	504	600		1,512
camping					432		432
Day Trippers			500	5,000	2,500		8,000
Cruise Passengers				1,000			1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,063</b>	<b>6,277</b>	<b>21,464</b>	<b>23,636</b>	<b>14,916</b>	<b>7,579</b>	<b>75,035</b>

- Year-round population as reported by 2000 US Census. Some people have estimated that there are as many as 1,000 additional year-round residents and a total of 3,000 additional summer residents who are undocumented aliens. In the absence of clear data, they are not included.
- Guests of Year-round residents estimated as an average of 1 person for each of the 6,375 year-round households
- Seasonal Residents / Vacationers include second-home owners and renters who visit for a week or more. They are estimated as an average of 4.77 people for each of the 8,246 seasonal housing units, based on the results of a survey carried out by the Oak Bluffs Planning Board. It is estimated that about two-thirds of these are seasonal residents.
- Transients stay on-island for less than a week. Estimations assume two people per room and 100% occupancy for July and August in the Island's 2,200 lodging rooms, hotels, inns and B&Bs. The Edgartown, Oak Bluffs and Tisbury Harbor Masters estimated 3 or 4 people per boat and occupancy rates between 80% and 100% for the 468 boats that can be accommodated on slips and moorings in these three harbors. Camping is based on an average of 3 people per tent and 80% summer occupancy for the Island's 180 campsites in the MV Family Campground.
- Day Trippers arrive and leave the Vineyard on the same day. Estimates assume two-thirds of the peak passenger ferry ridership of 12,000 on peak summer days are day-trippers and the others stay for a longer period. Allocation among towns is based upon port of entry.
- Cruise Passengers are day trippers. Assumes one cruise ship with a capacity of 1,000 people in harbor on a peak day; in 2002, most cruise ships came in the spring and fall. Allocation among towns is based upon port of entry.

Source: MVC, 2003



Source: U.S. Census

It is easy to understand why the cornerstone of the Island's economy is providing services to seasonal residents and visitors. Island-wide, there are more seasonal homes – houses not occupied in the winter – than year-round homes. Only Tisbury and West Tisbury have more year-round homes than seasonal ones. The service, retail trade, construction, and finance, insurance and real estate sectors – mainly seasonal industries – account for more than half of Island jobs. The tourism and service industry is highly image-conscious, seasonal and labor intensive. Nevertheless, a large majority of the businesses on the Island employ four or fewer workers each. As the year-round population continues to expand, more businesses are needed and supported throughout the year.

Martha's Vineyard is marked by relative seclusion from the mainland, by its highly variable seasonal populations, by its lifestyles and landscapes dominated by the ocean and salt ponds, and by economic constraints unique to island communities.

### 1.1.2 Tisbury

Tisbury has the highest population density of the Island towns and is the second smallest in land area. Tisbury is the major port of entry to and from the Island and, historically, the principal center of year-round business activity. Known for its sheltered harbor and 'working waterfront,' the Tisbury waterfront

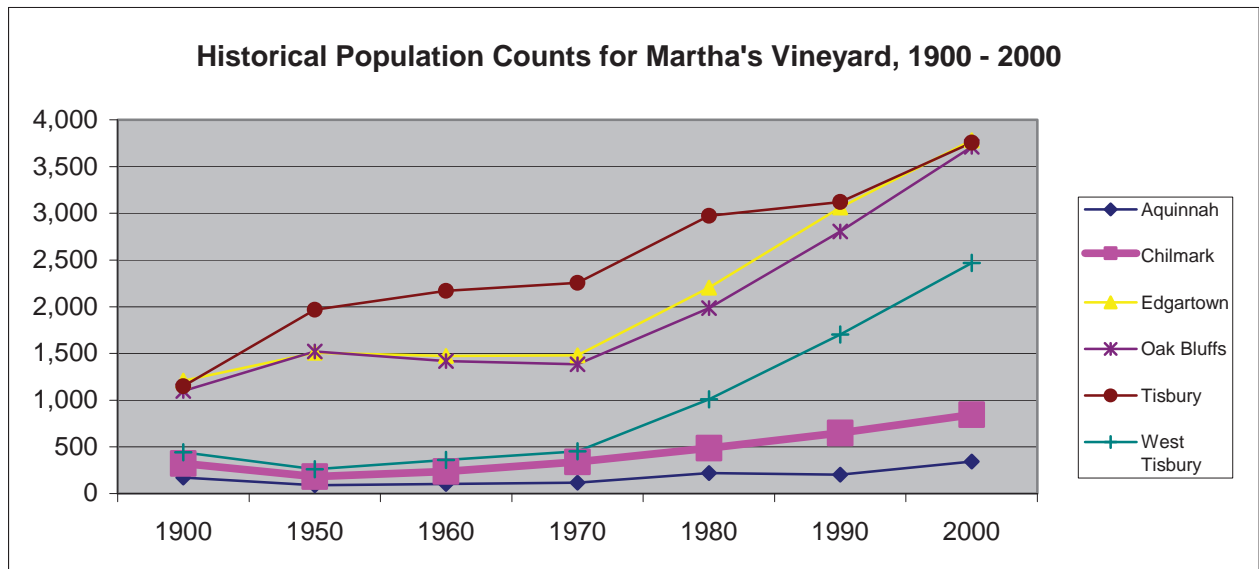
is the least tourism-oriented of the down-Island towns. Geographically, West Chop peninsula is the northern end of the Island's Western Moraine that creates gently rolling terrain. Oak Bluffs shares an odd, triangular-shaped boundary on the southern side of Tisbury. Oak Bluffs also borders Tisbury to the east, across Lagoon Pond. Tisbury's southwest border with West Tisbury runs perpendicular to the Island's shoreline at Vineyard Sound.

### 1.1.3 Population and Income

Since 1970, the year-round population growth of Tisbury as well as Martha's Vineyard has been significant. Between 1970 and 1980, the year-round population in Tisbury went from 2,257 to 2,972, which is a population growth of 24%. In 1990 there were 3,120 year-round residents so between 1980 and 1990 there was a population growth of 5% and in the year 2000, there were 3,755, which resulted in a population growth of 17% between 1990 and 2000.

According to the US Census 2000, the median age for Tisbury was 42. The median age for the State was 36.5 while for Dukes County the median age was 40.7. Forty percent of the population is between the age of 35 and 59. Twenty-two percent of Tisbury's population is 60 or older and fifteen percent of the population is between the ages of 20 and 34. Twelve percent is between the ages of 5 and 14 and five percent of the population is younger than 5 years old.

Source: U.S. Census



According to the US Census 2000, the median household income (is based on non-related individuals living in the same household) in Tisbury was \$37,041 and the median family income was \$53,051. The area median income as reported by HUD for a family of four in FY 2000 in Dukes County was \$53,200. Approximately twenty-three percent of owner-occupied housing units in Tisbury pay over 35% of their gross income for housing, while thirty-one percent of renters pay more than 35% of gross income for rent. Twelve percent of Tisbury's population lives in poverty, according to the 2000 US Census, more than the 7.3% rate for Dukes County and the 9.3% rate for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

### Median Incomes For Dukes County, 2000

	Median Household	Median Family
Aquinnah	\$45,208	\$45,458
Chilmark	\$41,917	\$63,750
Edgartown	\$50,407	\$55,153
Gosnold	\$22,344	\$27,500
Oak Bluffs	\$42,044	\$53,841
<b>Tisbury</b>	<b>\$37,041</b>	<b>\$53,051</b>
West Tisbury	\$54,077	\$59,514
Dukes County	\$45,559	\$55,018

Source: U.S. Census

#### 1.1.4 Zoning and Land Use

The Town of Tisbury has five residential districts, two business districts, and a waterfront commercial district. The residential district requirements are as follows: 10,000 square feet minimum lot size, 20,000 square feet minimum lot size, 25,000 square feet minimum lot size, 50,000 square feet minimum lot size, and 132,000 square feet minimum lot size. There are two business districts and a waterfront commercial district that allow residential mixed-uses. Tisbury housing characteristics and zoning are more similar to its down-Island counterparts of Edgartown and Oak Bluffs, as opposed to the up-Island counterparts of Aquinnah, Chilmark, and West Tisbury.

Tisbury Land Cover/Use (Acres)	1,971	1,986	1,999
Agriculture	119	187	189
Open Undeveloped Land	111	132	122
Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation	2,852	2,296	1,994
Commercial	54	66	66
Industrial/Transportation/Mining	29	43	61
Urban Open/Institutional/Recreation	156	157	168
High Density Residential	2	12	12
Medium Density Residential	461	551	581
Low Density Residential	407	744	996

Using the interpretation of aerial photography, the University of Massachusetts has tracked land cover or land use data (MacConnell Land Use). The data show that low-density residential acreage in Tisbury more than doubled between 1971 and 1999, and that medium-density residential acreage increased substantially, with a concomitant decline in undisturbed land. Agricultural acreage increased. Increases were noted in commercial and urban open land. Striking and steady increases were noted in the category "industrial, transportation, mining", although this category remains a small portion of the total acreage. Overall, the data show developed land to have been increased by 12% Island-wide during the twenty-eight year period shown. During that time, developed land in Tisbury was increased by 18.5%, with considerably more of that development having occurred between 1971 and 1985.



Development Island-wide 1971-1999						
Town	Change from Undeveloped To Developed Land (acres)			Change as Percent of Total Area		
	1971 - 1985	1985 - 1999	1971 - 1999	1971-1985	1985-1999	1971-1999
Aquinnah	56	218	274	1.5%	5.9%	7.4%
Chilmark	371	502	873	2.8%	3.8%	6.7%
Edgartown	1,133	979	2,111	6.2%	5.3%	11.5%
Oak Bluffs	525	555	1,080	11.0%	11.7%	22.7%
<b>Tisbury</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>
West Tisbury	820	1,431	2,251	4.9%	8.5%	13.4%
<b>Vineyard</b>	<b>3,371</b>	<b>3,998</b>	<b>7,369</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>

Source: MacConnell Land Use, UMass

The Massachusetts' Executive Office of Environmental Affairs published its Buildout and Land Use Study in 2001. The total land acreage of Tisbury is 4,142 acres. Tisbury has the least amount of land of all the Island towns. From the State's build out analysis, 821 acres, or 18% of land in Tisbury is permanently protected as open space and not available for housing development. The study also reported that 51% of Tisbury is already developed and the remaining 29% of the Town - 1,214 acres- potentially available for development in the future.

2000 Estimated Protected, Developed and Available Land							
Town	AQ	CH	ED	OB	TI	WT	Island
Total (acres)	3,690	13,553	18,184	4,680	<b>4,142</b>	16,878	<b>61,127</b>
Protected Open Space* (%)	15%	29%	39%	30%	<b>20%</b>	42%	<b>34%</b>
Developed/Built** (%)	53%	36%	35%	48%	<b>51%</b>	30%	<b>37%</b>
"Available" *** (%)	32%	35%	26%	22%	<b>29%</b>	27%	<b>29%</b>
"Available" (acres)	1,177	4,792	4,664	1,014	<b>1,214</b>	4,609	<b>17,470</b>

\*Protected Open Space includes municipally owned land not necessarily used for open space.

\*\* Developed/Built includes lands that are prevented from being developed, such as wetland buffers.

\*\*\* Available is defined as land that is neither Protected Open Space nor Developed/Built.

Source: EOEa Buildout Study, 2002

Within the context of the preparation of this Community Development Plan, the Martha's Vineyard Commission revised and updated the analysis of protected, developed and available land. The following table gives the resulting figures.

- 'Protected' areas are lands that, according to the Island's conservation groups, are either under fee ownership or indicated as having a CR or APR. The wetlands displayed are only those that are not currently 'protected'.
- 'Developed' areas were determined by MAPC during the Buildout Study in 2000 and only those 'developed' areas that do not coincide with 'protected' or 'wetland' areas are displayed.

- 'Available' land is any remaining land.

2003 Estimated Protected, Developed and Available Land							
Town	<i>AQ</i>	<i>CH</i>	<i>ED</i>	<i>OB</i>	<i>TI</i>	<i>WT</i>	<i>Island</i>
Total (acres)	3,510	12,442	17,762	4,735	4,300	16,195	58,963
Protected Open Space (%)	22%	20%	40%	30%	20%	40%	32%
Developed/Built (%)	33%	40%	32%	40%	47%	35%	36%
Wetland (%)	13%	6%	7%	3%	5%	2%	5%
"Available" (%)	31%	33%	22%	33%	29%	22%	26%
"Available" (acres)	1,094	4,079	3,827	1,557	1,245	3,632	15,435

Source: Martha's Vineyard Commission and Conservation Partnership, 2004

## 1.2 CONSTRAINTS ON DEVELOPMENT

### 1.2.1 Availability of Land

Many factors contribute to determine the supply of land available to be developed and the demand for land. The combination of these two produces a market price for land. The rising cost of land has been primarily due to the tourist and seasonal nature of the Vineyard. Second-home buyers are able to outbid many year-round residents causing a sharp increase in real estate values. Successful land conservation during the 1980's and 1990's – while helping to preserve natural and cultural community character and values -- has also reduced the supply of land that might be developed.

### 1.2.2 Drinking Water

Three out of four homes in Tisbury are connected to the Town water system. The remainder of the homes obtain drinking water from on-site wells. Access to town water is not a limiting constraint for development since the public wells are sufficiently sized to accommodate estimated growth. According to the MVC-EOEA buildout data (2002), there were 2,720 residences in Tisbury in 2000 and 3,721 projected at buildout.

According to Martha's Vineyard Source Water Protection Project (MVC, 2003), 2,075 residences, or 76%, were served by the municipal supply in 2000, consuming 1.436 million gallons per day (gpd) during the peak week. MVC projected at buildout a low estimate peak consumption of 1.957 mgd during the peak week, assuming that water service remained at 75% throughout buildout, or a high estimate peak consumption of 2.111 mgd during the peak week, assuming that water service would be provided to 82% of the residences at buildout. At the time of the report, the Tisbury system was authorized to withdraw 3.26 million gallons per day (MGD), apparently adequate to meet the demand projected at buildout. It is important to note, however, that some redundancy in the system is essential for ensuring adequately meeting consumption and fire protection needs. It is important to "rest" a well, rather than pumping non-stop. Occasionally, a well must be taken off-line for repairs,

contamination incidents, etc. The redundancy must also be functional, rather than just on paper. The report recommended planning and installation of infrastructure for that redundancy.

Regarding water quality issues, the report notes specific land use issues for each Zone II. A single Zone II was used for all three wells in the Town of Tisbury, including 2,521.2 acres. Potential hazards within the Zone II are mostly of an agricultural nature, including: Nip'n'Tuck Farm, Heather Gardens, Daylily Farm, part of Chicama vineyard, Tashmoo Farm, and the abandoned septage lagoons. Much of the landfill is within the Zone II, with the exception of a small area between the large lobes. Several commercial uses are located on 36.25 acres in the Zone II, including Carroll's Trucking, Wooden Tent Photo, and Jasny veterinarian. These hazards are illustrated on map A-8 and listed in table form in Appendix B. According to the land use base, there are 1,146 houses in the Zone II.

Sanborn Way Well: This well is situated just to the east of the Town landfill. The landfill has been capped. A Park'n'Ride facility is presently located there. Land use intensity near the well is high, although the portion of the Zone II within the Town of Oak Bluffs and the area to the west within Tisbury are less intensely used. Its approved capacity is 826,560 gpd.

West Spring Street Well: This well is sited just to the west of the intensive business district along State Road. The majority of land in the vicinity is vacant or low density residential, with a significant portion held in conservation or by the Town. Its approved capacity is 708,480 gpd.

Manter Well: The Manter Well, with an approved capacity of 1.728 mgd, is located to the west of the other wells, farther from the most land intense uses, but closer to the septage lagoons abandoned in 1999. The well is not currently in service.

In 2003, the Town of Tisbury installed a sewer system in the downtown commercial district.

For future growth and development within Tisbury, access to town water may not be deemed a limiting constraint. However, nitrogen loading is a serious concern particularly within some of the watershed districts and nitrogen sensitive areas of the town.

### 1.2.3 Wastewater and Water Quality

Tisbury's community sewer system, serving the downtown commercial and harbor front area, began operation in May, 2004. The system was designed for modest growth of the businesses and residential properties in the service area but not intended to accommodate additional connections.

Future development of land is limited by the lack of access to town sewer services within those parts of Tisbury not served by town sewer. All new homes, and all existing homes when they are sold to a new owner, have to adhere to the State's Title 5 regulations, which for individual septic systems are enforced by the Town Board of Health. This restricts many developable lots to a density of one bedroom per 10,000 square feet of lot area. If developable lots are located within wetlands or nitrogen sensitive areas, there are further limits to the development's size and density. In addition to stricter regulations that could require advanced de-nitrification systems, the installation cost and maintenance of these systems can be a financial constraint to the development of affordable housing.

Should the Town consider allowing increased density of development – for the purposes of affordable housing, for example – nitrogen loading will be a development constraint.

Beyond strictly human health concerns, effluent from septic systems – specifically, excessive nitrogen that promotes vegetative growth – poses a serious concern to the vitality of the Island’s coastal ponds. A number of these ponds are already at their nitrogen-loading limit, yet contain land for additional home lots. Much of Tisbury lies with the watersheds of Lake Tashmoo and Lagoon Pond. Both of these ponds are categorized as nitrogen sensitive. The Buildout Study identified 64% of Tisbury’s potentially developable land lying within these two watersheds, where nearly 600 additional homes theoretically could be built.

Potential Development in Watersheds of Nitrogen-Sensitive Great Ponds						
Pond	Percentage of Entire Watershed “Available” for Development	Percentage of Watershed’s “Available” Land Within Town	Percentage of Town’s “Available” Land Within Watershed	Proportion of Town’s Potential Additional Lots Within Watershed		
				Number	%	
Lagoon Pond	25%	23%	18%	207	21%	
Lake Tashmoo	37%	70%	46%	385	39%	
Tisbury Total			64%	592	59%	
Tisbury Non-Pond			36%	409	41%	

Source: 2002 EOEa Buildout Study; MVC

### 1.3 PLANNING CONTEXT

#### 1.3.1 The Island Plan - Martha's Vineyard Regional Plan

In 1991, the MVC published the Regional Island Plan, the result of several years of concerted community effort. It sets out a series of policies for growth management. Following the publication of the Island Plan, the MVC published a series of action plans outlining specific policies and a series of actions for implementing them. These plans are:

- Open Space Action Plan – 1991
- Economic Base Study – 1994
- Martha’s Vineyard Housing Report – 1994
- Island Transportation Plan – 2003

The goals and strategies of the Island Plan have continued to guide the MVC, both in pursuing planning activities and in deciding on development proposals.

#### 1.3.2 The Tisbury Master Plan

Tisbury does not have an adopted master plan. Such a plan was started in 1988 and produced draft policy statements on a wide range of issues pertaining to the Town’s future. In preparation for creating a master plan for the Town, the Tisbury Planning Board conducted an extensive opinion survey of landowners in 2003. The Planning Board was identified by the Board of Selectmen to serve as the

Town's Steering Committee on this Community Development Plan. Over the winter of 2004, the Planning Board has also been crafting conceptual plans for areas of most concern, impact or opportunity.

### 1.3.3 The Tisbury Open Space and Recreation Plan

First created in 1973, Tisbury's original open space plan has been updated in 1979, 1986 and 1997. Managing and coping with the changes brought by growth has been a constant focus of these plans.

### 1.3.4 The Buildout Study

In 2002, the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Environmental Affairs released its studies of each town's potential capacity to accommodate additional growth and development. The 'Buildout' study categorized all of each town's land as developed, permanently protected open space, or developable – potentially available for development. EOEA relied on the MacConnell Land Use identification of land cover from aerial photography to determine developed areas and used the Division of Conservation Services records of permanently conserved lands. Land neither developed nor conserved was considered potentially 'developable.' From the Town's existing land use zoning codes underlying the developable lands, and considering the lot density of properties subdivided over the 1990s, EOEA calculated the number of additional homes that could theoretically be built on the remaining developable land in the Town. The Town's zoning bylaws were also used to identify areas that had partial constraints on the development of lands, such as buffers to wetlands. Once the number of new residential units was estimated, projections of the increases in year round and seasonal populations – and their impacts upon schools, roads and solid waste – were also calculated.

The purpose of the Buildout study was to prompt each of the Commonwealth's municipalities into re-evaluating whether its current zoning controls give the kind of direction to it's pattern of development and to assess whether the town wishes to take steps to better directing future development and conservation of open space. While there may be questions about some of the

<b>Buildout Study Projections</b>							
Town	AQ	CH	ED	OB	TI	WT	Island
<b>Households (seasonal &amp; year-round)</b>							
1990	82	953	3,053	3,172	2,387	1,320	10,967
2000	141	1,409	4,360	3,820	2,720	1,849	14,299
Additional Projected	265	1,341	2,316	820	1,001	1,289	7,032
Buildout Total	406	2,750	6,676	4,640	3,721	3,138	21,331
<b>Population (year-round)</b>							
1990	201	650	3,062	2,804	3,120	1,704	11,541
2000	344	843	3,779	3,713	3,755	2,467	14,901
Additional Projected	194	889	1,937	768	1,370	1,692	6,850
Buildout Total	538	1,732	5,716	4,481	5,125	4,159	21,751
<b>Students</b>							

1990	37	53	473	422	440	432	1,857
2000	48	120	569	664	571	483	2,455
Additional Projected	27	126	292	172	475	331	1,423
Buildout Total	75	246	861	836	1,046	814	3,878

**Water Use (thousands of gallons/day)**

2000	25,800	63,225	789,000	857,000	609,000	185,025	2,529,050
Additional Projected	25,835	117,846	821,960	86,137	780,805	385,759	2,218,342
Buildout Total	51,635	181,071	1,610,960	943,137	780,805	570,784	4,138,392

Source: EOEa Buildout Studies, 2002, adjusted for corrected calculations by MVC, 2004

specific assumptions and methodology of the Buildout studies, the premise of the community taking stock of the lands that remain open to either development or conservation and to determine what are the best uses of those lands from a community standpoint, is sound. This was the impetus to conduct this Community Development Plan.

#### 1.4 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS

In April 2003, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts awarded grants – under Executive Order 418, the Community Development Planning Program – to each of the six towns of Martha's Vineyard. The grants allowed the towns to prepare Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping to aid in the evaluation of land suitability that will help to plan for appropriate growth management within each town. The Martha's Vineyard Commission worked with the towns to obtain these grants and was selected by each town as its consultant to conduct the planning work and assist in completing its Community Development Plan. Working with all six Island towns simultaneously, the MVC was able to develop a single methodology for determining land suitability, thereby facilitating comparable analysis on lands adjacent to another town's boundaries as well as coordination of future Island-wide planning efforts.

In evaluating the best or most appropriate uses of the Town's remaining land that is not yet either developed or protected as open space, the Community Development Plan was required to address three areas:

1. Open Space and Natural Resource Protection,
2. Housing, and
3. Economic Development.

The housing and economic development elements were required to specifically address improving the conditions and opportunities of low, moderate and middle-income families and individuals. A fourth required area, transportation, was waived for all Island towns due to the MVC's 2003 updating of the Regional Transportation Plan for Martha's Vineyard.

The breadth of issues addressed in developing the Community Development Plan also provides materials the Town can apply to other planning efforts such as the Town's Affordable Housing Strategy and the update of the Town's Open Space & Recreation Plan and the Town's Master Plan as well as the Martha's Vineyard Commission's Regional Island Plan. Towns with approved CD plans receive bonus points for competitive State grant programs, including the popular self-help grants. Also,

updating of town records and the provision of digital maps and a database available to all town departments.

At the beginning of 2004, the Tisbury Board of Selectmen charged the Tisbury Planning Board to act as the Town's Steering Committee to work with the MVC on the Community Development Plan. At the initial meeting of the MVC staff and the Steering Committee, responses to the Planning Board's 2003 survey were reviewed and found to generally be consistent with earlier findings upon which were based land use goals and policies from existing town plans. The Committee and MVC staff met at least monthly throughout the first half of 2004. The Steering Committee helped in the identification of goals and objectives, assumptions and suitability criteria. The Tisbury Housing Committee also worked on the housing profile and affordable housing portions of the plan.

In addition, the planning effort benefited from a series of meetings of All-Island Planning Boards at which various aspects of the plans were discussed. On May 4, 2004, a public meeting was held as part of a Board of Selectmen's meeting, at which the preliminary results of the Community Development Planning effort were outlined and feedback was received. The results of these efforts have been incorporated in the final version of this plan.

## 1.5 METHODOLOGY FOR DETERMINING SUITABILITY

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The basis of the Community Development Planning effort is organizing and, in some cases, updating pre-existing information for the town in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) format, that is, as computerized maps reflecting information that is easily manipulated and updated. Existing maps were compiled and reformatted. They were also checked for accuracy as much as possible. In addition, a limited amount of data gathering was carried out, notably the preparation of a Scenic Value layer for each town.

A major focus of the effort was a series of suitability analyses, i.e. the preparation of a series of maps that indicate the suitability of various areas for each of the three functions – open space and natural resource conservation, housing, and economic development – based on a number of criteria chosen by the steering committees and at several joint meetings of the Island's planning boards. All the steering committees agreed to use the same set of criteria for all Island towns in order to facilitate getting an Island-wide analysis and perspective. Thus, some criteria do not apply or are of less importance to some towns (e.g. "served by Town sewer" in Aquinnah or "working farm" in Oak Bluffs) but are retained for all towns to maintain consistency.

Each of the criteria was given a point value between 2 and 20, based on how significant it was in determining the suitability of a given piece of land for the land use function under consideration. For example, a working farm was given a value of 20 for open space preservation whereas being within 1000' from year-round shopping was given a value of 8 for housing development.

The next step was to prepare a map for each land use function that compiled the overall rating, combining all the criteria that applied to that function. The result was the overall suitability of using land for that function, based on those criteria and weightings. The specific criteria and weightings are described in their respective chapters.

Subsequently, the housing and economic development maps were combined to give an overall “development” map and then this map was combined with the open space preservation map to indicate which parts of the Island were most suitable for preservation, for development, or for both. This synthesis is described in more detail in section 6.

It is important to note that each of the suitability maps does not take into consideration the present zoning, the present ownership, or how the land rates for other types of suitability. For example, an area may be indicated as “suitable for economic development” merely because it is close to an existing commercial area, even though it is not presently zoned for business and it might also be very highly suitable for open space preservation. This does not suggest that the Town should change its policy to allow for commercial development in this area.

Note that the suitability maps and the plan itself are not zoning maps, nor do they impose any restriction on either landowners or Town decision makers. The plan and maps are one assessment of the suitability of land for different uses based upon certain assumptions and goals. As any of these assumptions or goals change, likely so would the conclusions. Indeed, as the Island communities continue to work with the mapped data and increase their understanding of the implications and potential limitations of the information, the weighting of individual data layers is expected to change. It is even likely that, over time, whole data layers may be dropped or added to the suitability analysis.

With that said, it is also important to underline the limits of this kind of planning effort.

- On Martha's Vineyard, available land is so scarce and property values are so high that decisions on acquisition, such as for open space preservation or the creation of affordable housing, will probably depend more on opportunity than on suitability. That is, if a piece of land is available, it might well make sense for a town or another entity to use it for open space or for affordable housing, even if it does not rate in the highest category in the suitability analysis.
- This large-scale analysis is very useful to give an overview for the town and the Island for planning purposes; however, it is not accurate enough to provide specific information about a particular parcel of land.

Notwithstanding the limitations of the methodology for evaluating the suitability of land on Martha's Vineyard for different land activities, the suitability maps provide an additional tool available to citizens and decision makers when evaluating existing circumstances and potential development in their community.

## 1.6 MAPS of EXISTING CONDITIONS

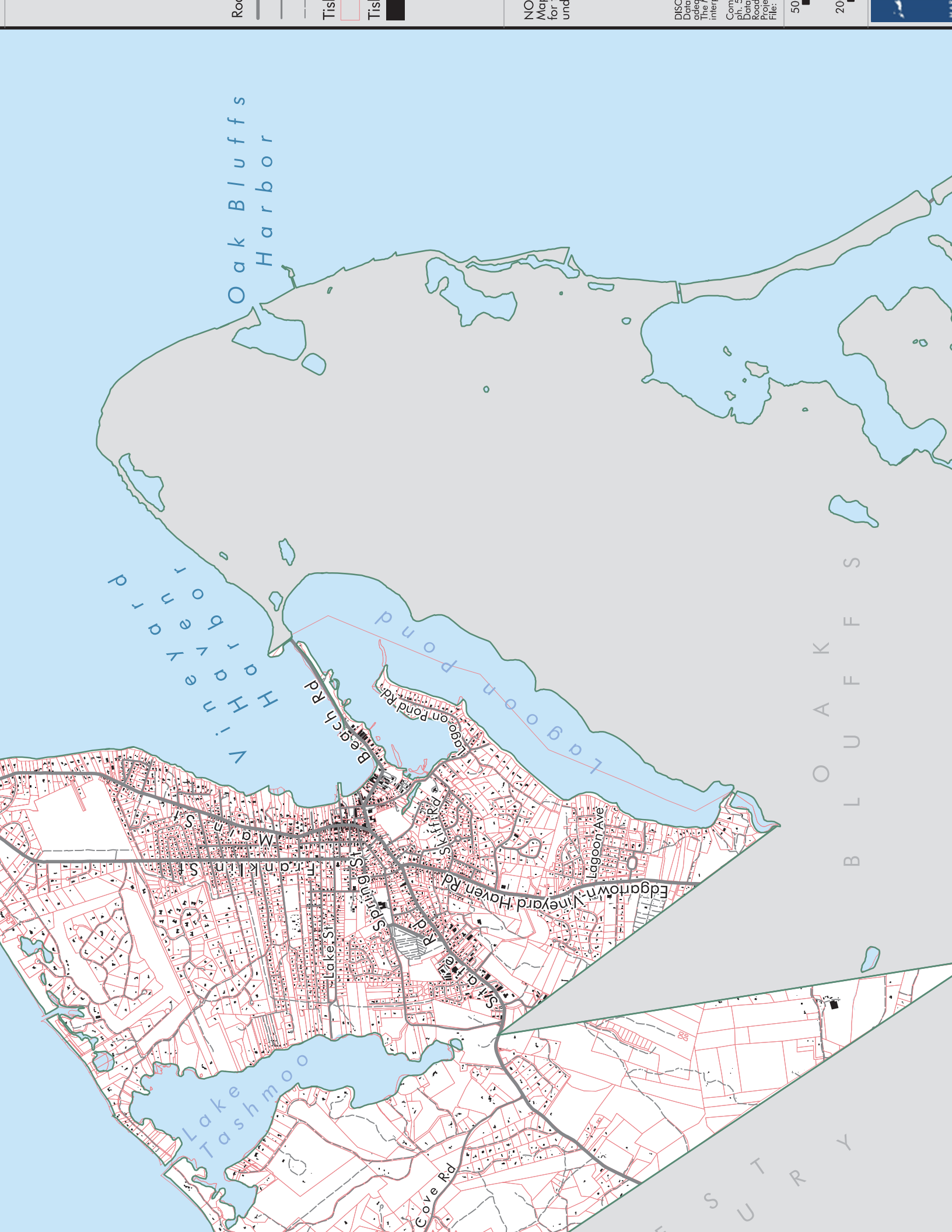
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This section is completed with a series of maps of existing conditions in Aquinnah, namely:

- Existing Settlement
- Land Use Cover
- Water Resources
- Wetlands
- Habitat



- Soils
- Slopes
- Cultural Resources
- Developed, Protected and Available Land



Oak Bluffs  
Harbor

Vineyard  
Pond

Lagoon Pond

Lake  
Tashmoor

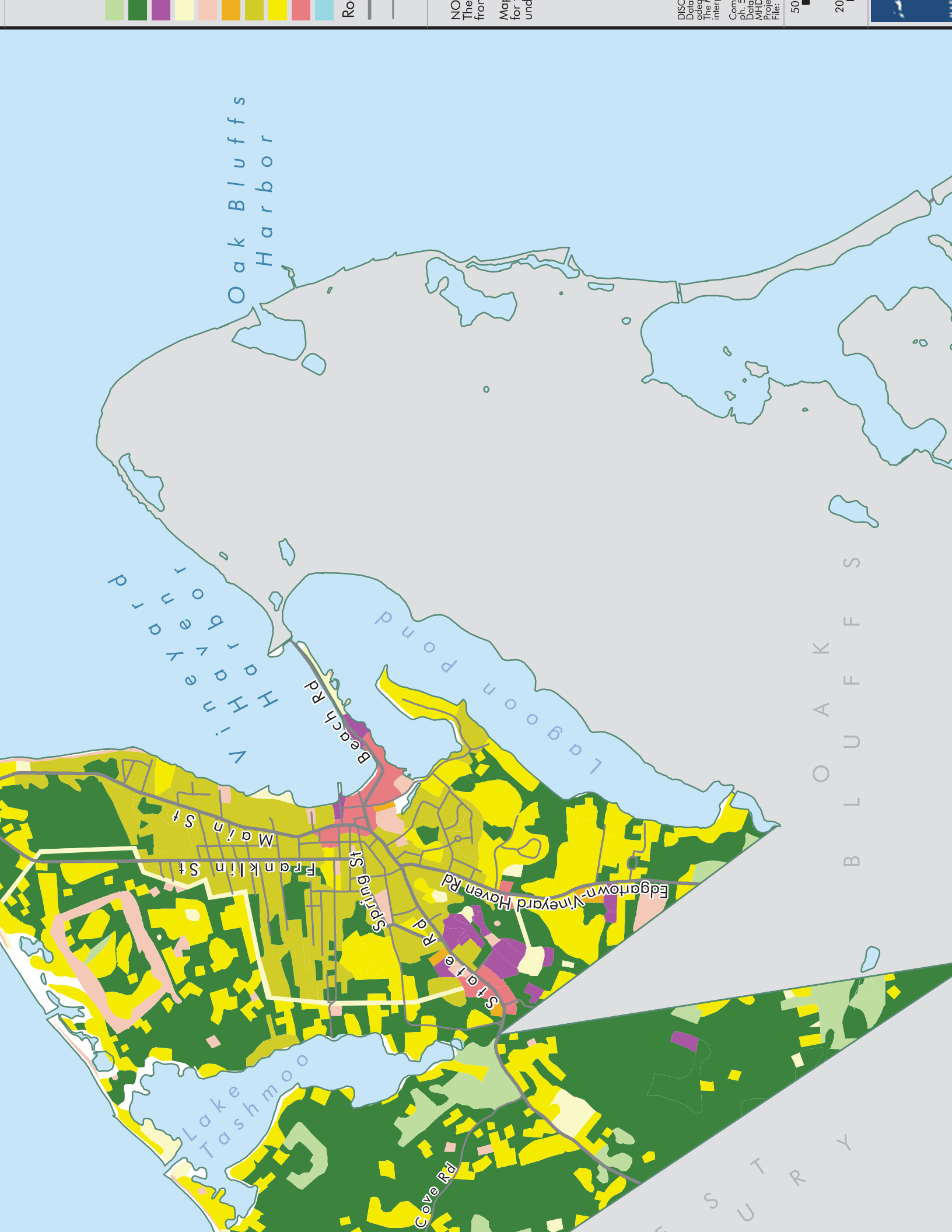
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Vineyard Pond

Oak Bluffs Harbor

Lagoon Pond

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Cove Rd

State Rd

Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Rd

Beach Rd

Lake Tashmoo

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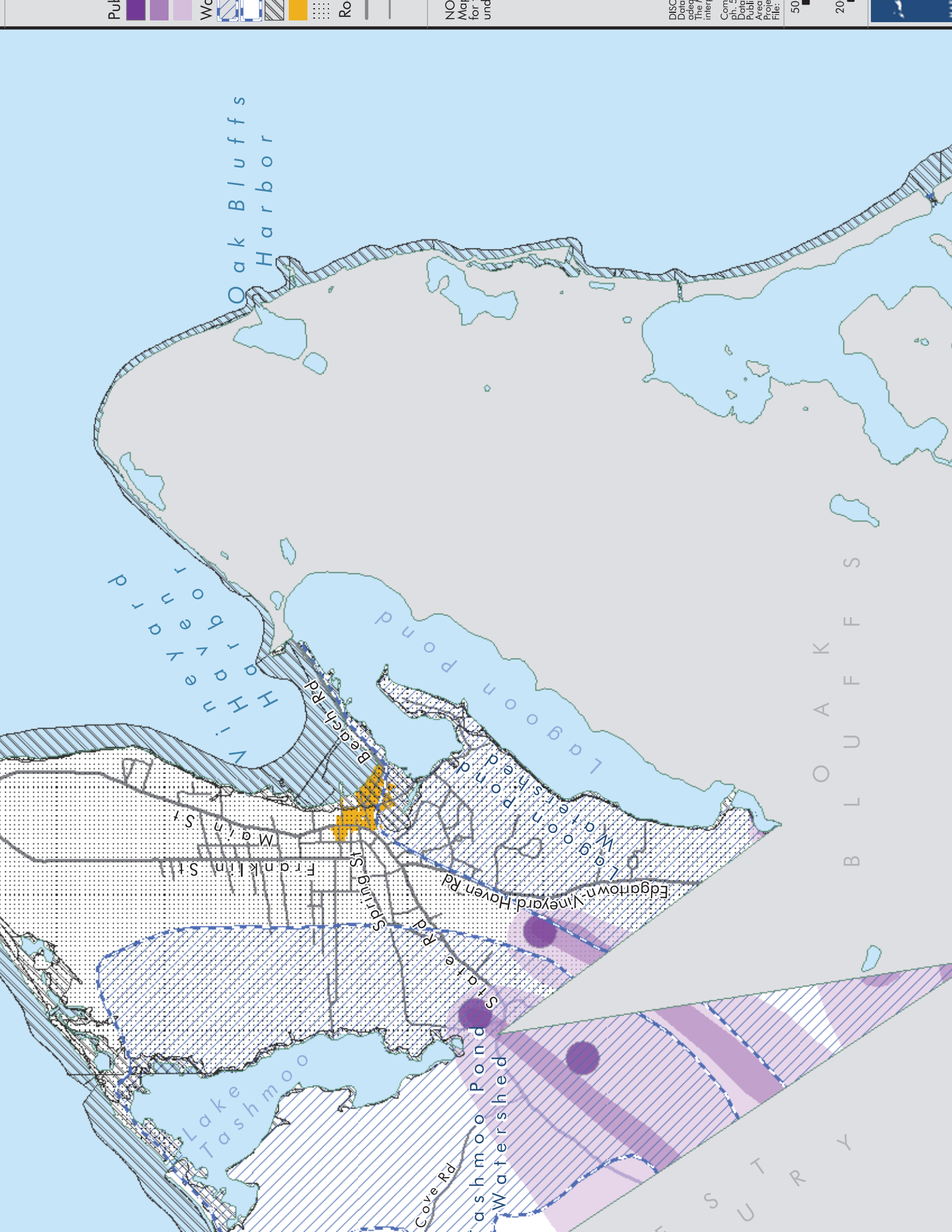
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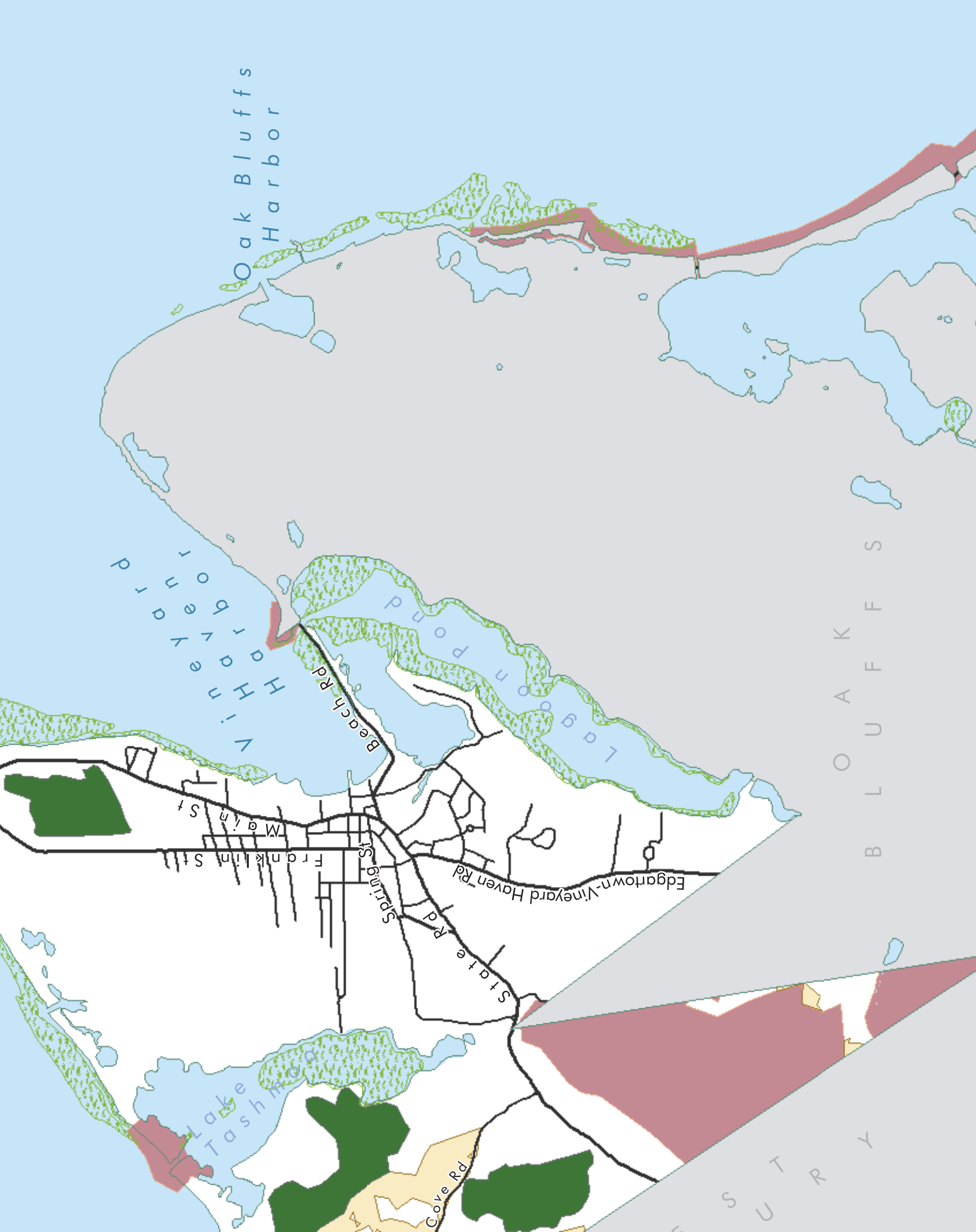
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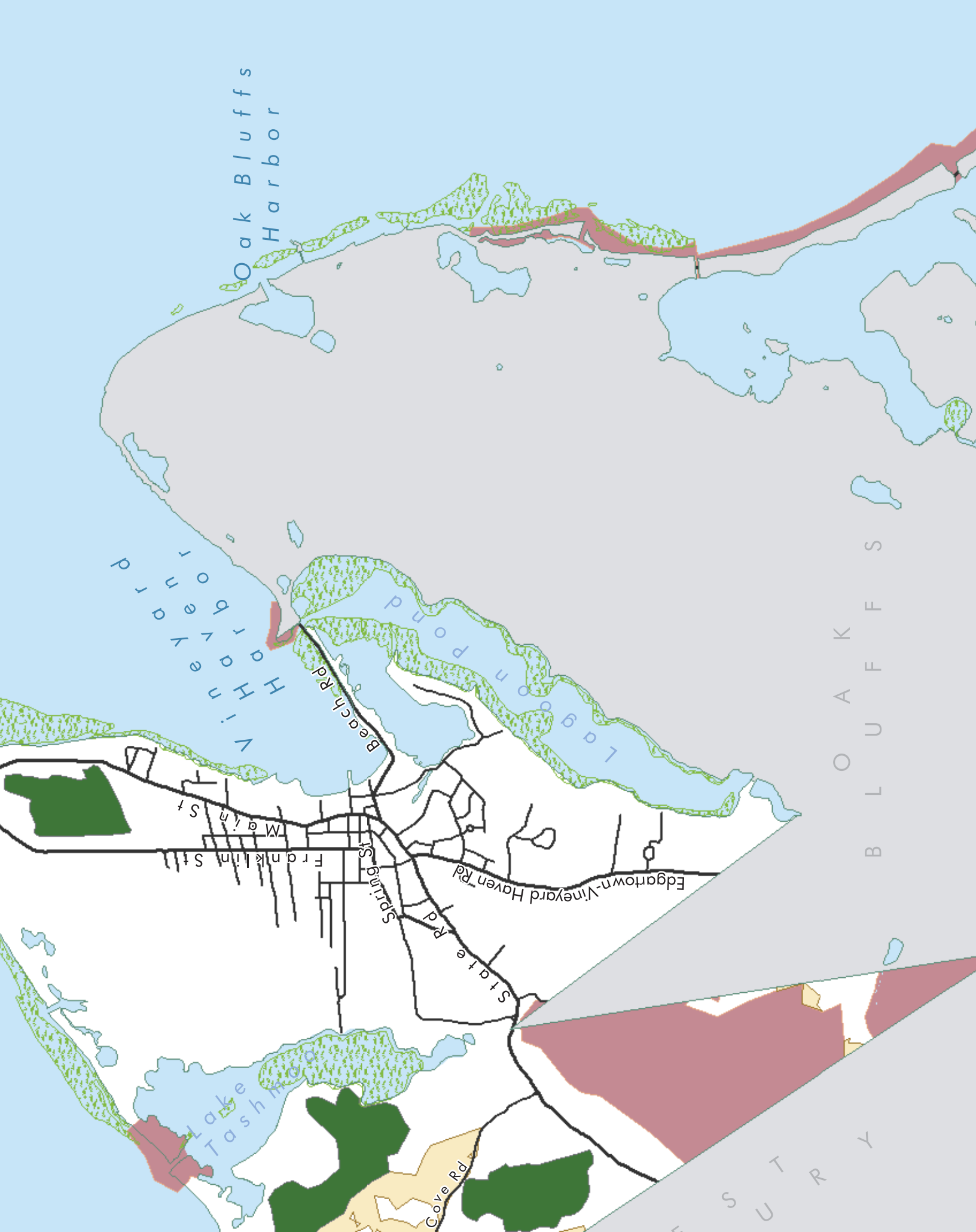
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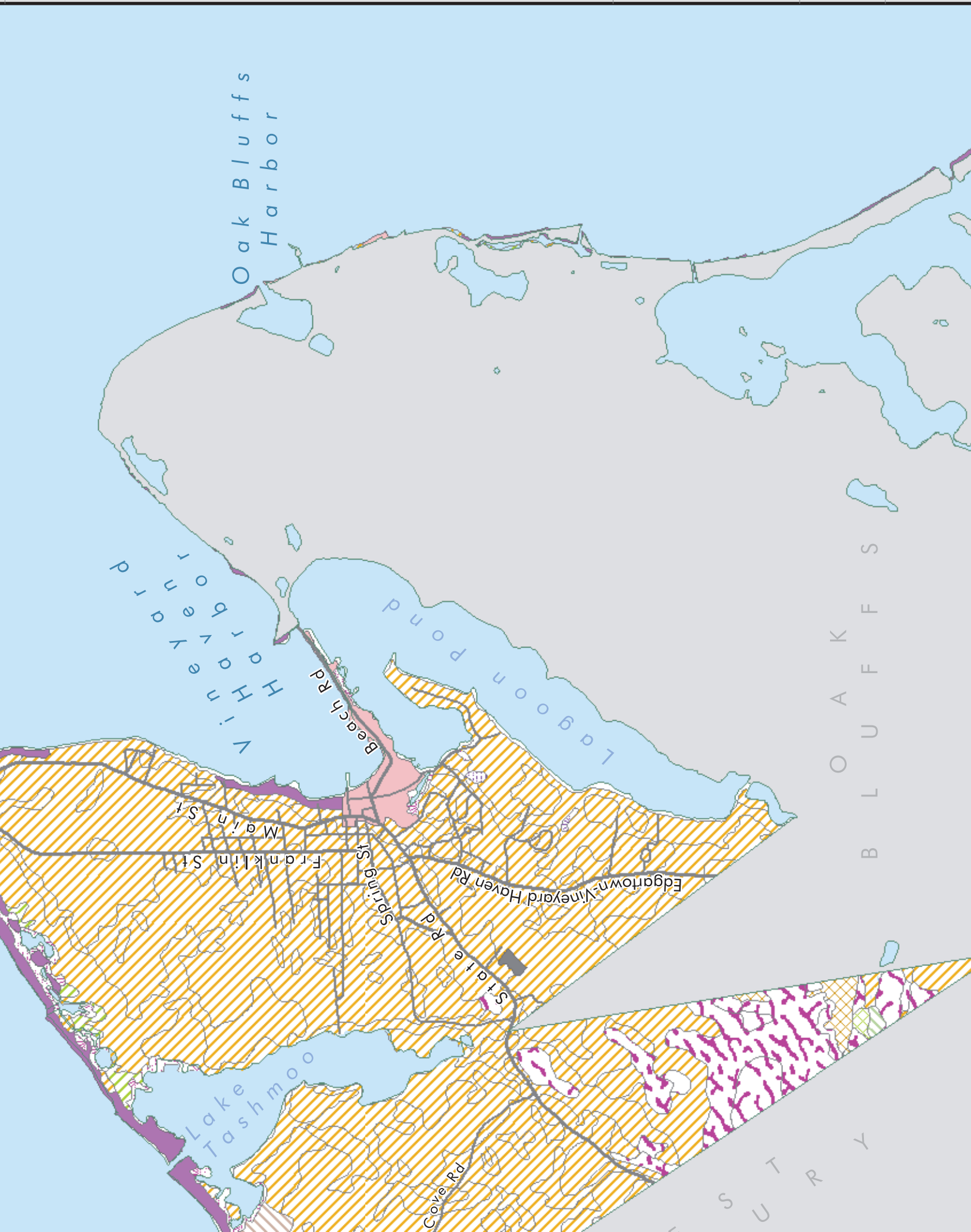
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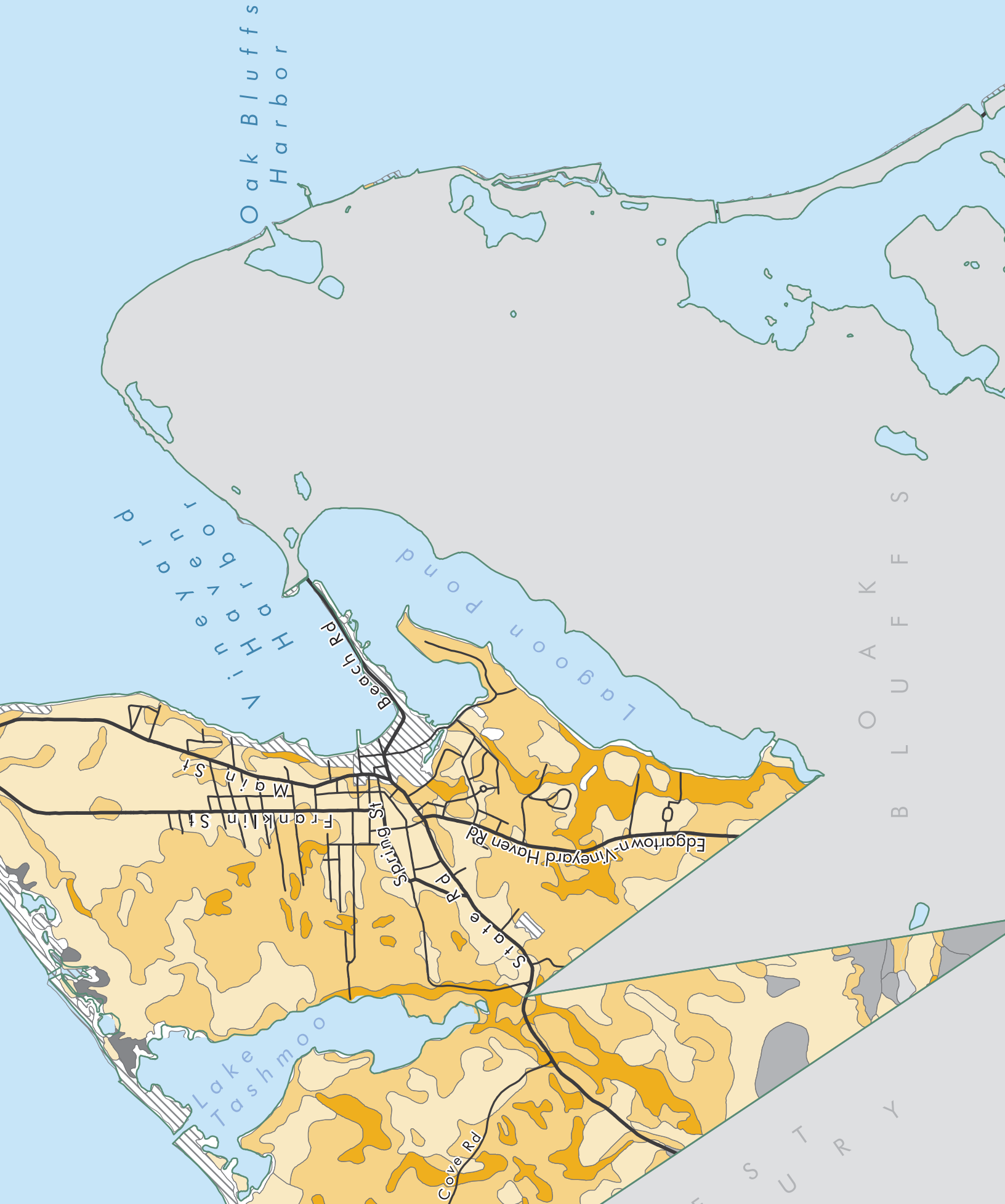


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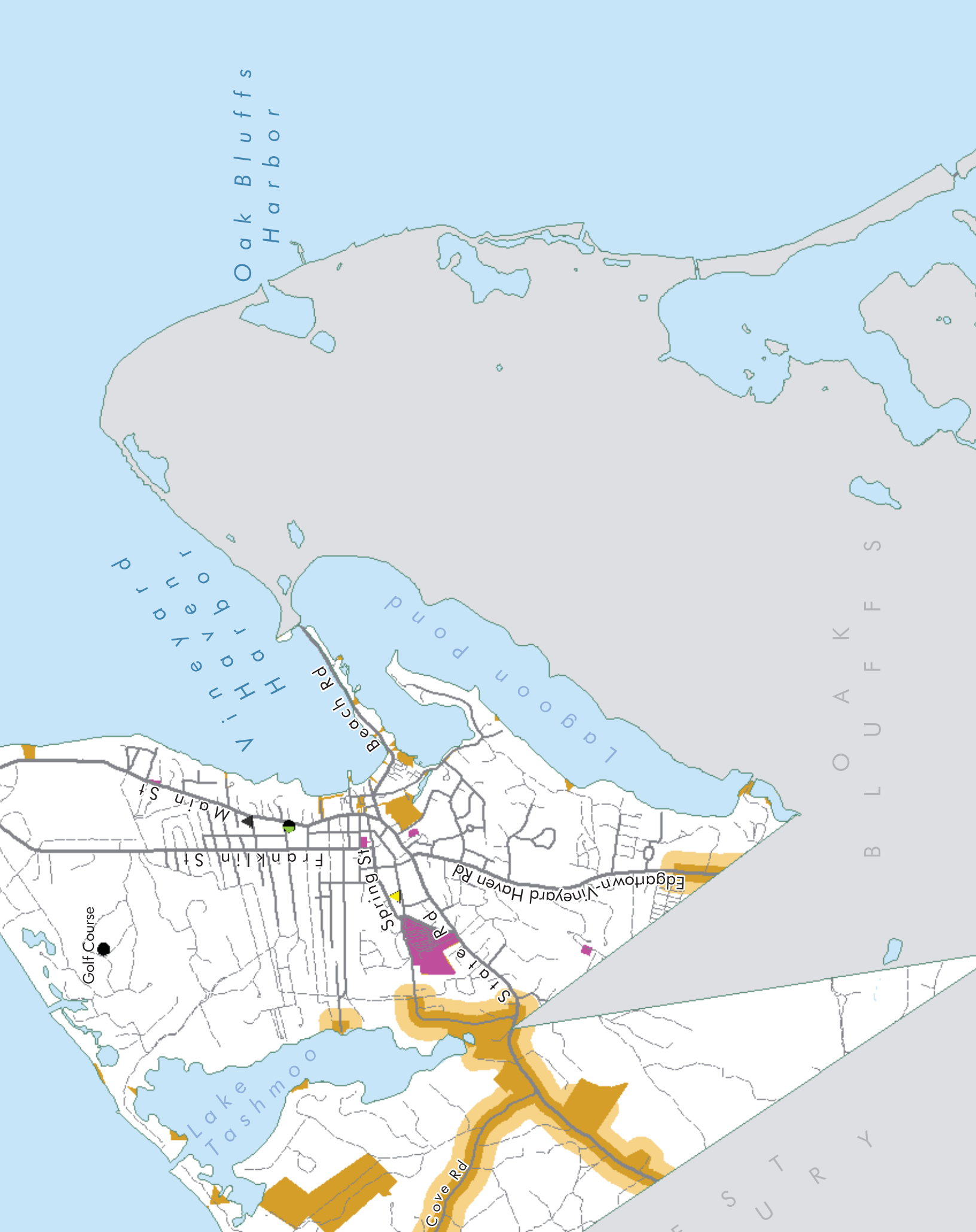


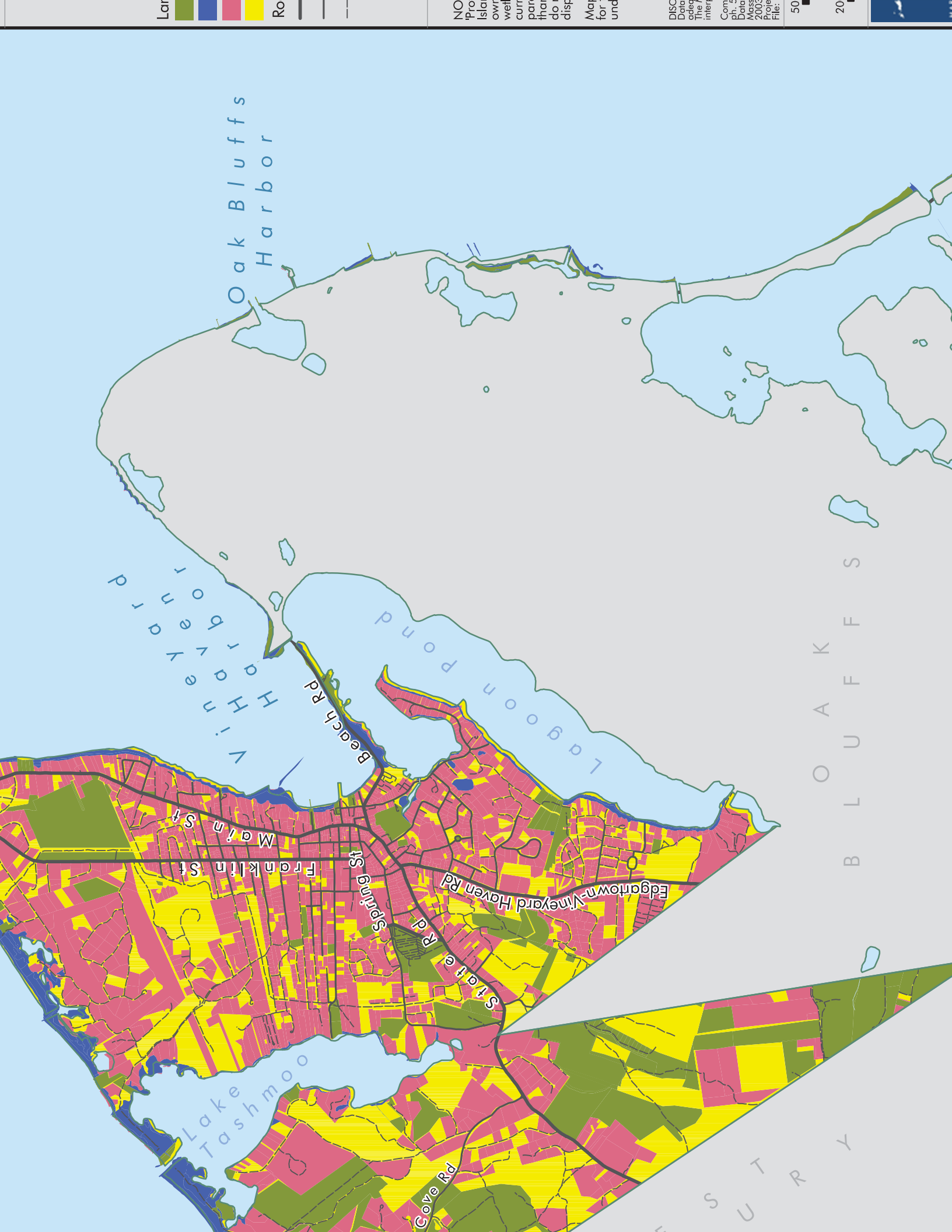




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## 2. VISION

A community visioning effort carried out in 1997 identified a host of “good” and “bad” characteristics of Tisbury. Those related to land use are cited below, along with the groups (retirees, seasonal, recent folk or newcomers, long-timers, and business people/other professionals) that expressed that opinion.

### Good Things

Small community (r)  
Center of yr-round business activity (r,n,l,b)  
Beaches (r,s,n)  
Lagoon, Tashmoo (r,n,b)  
Harbor/waterfront (r,s,n,l,b)  
Proximity to goods and services (r,n)  
Walk/bike to town/boat (r,s,b)  
Conservation lands/roadside vistas (r,l,b)  
Parks (n)  
Rural feel (s,n)  
Small scale, traditional downtown (n,l,b)  
Diversity of neighborhoods (l)  
Close access to beaches and woods (b)

### Bad Things

Lack of Tisbury beaches (r,l,b)  
Stores emphasis on tourism rather than residents (r,l)  
Traffic and parking (r,s,n,b)  
Traffic patterns (n)  
Lack of downtown sewerage (s)  
Appearance of downtown (n)

Conclusions from the visioning specifically related to land use issues were:

- Need to improve year-round economic development
- Preserve natural and historic resources
- Our environment is our economy
- Provide affordable housing opportunities
- Preserve maritime character and uses of waterfront
- Need for quality urban infrastructure
- Preserve and expand pedestrian access, particularly a harborfront walk
- Unify governmental services

More than 700 Tisbury landowners responded to the Planning Board’s 2003 opinion survey. In the intervening years since the Town visioning effort, these assets and liabilities had remained the same among respondents. The most notable distinction was the increased concern about affordable housing – reflective of the incredible rise in housing costs across the Vineyard.

Tisbury is proud to be the year-round, working town of Martha’s Vineyard, providing opportunities for housing and jobs to a diverse population while retaining its small town, rural character, balancing the demands of the seasonal economy with the needs of year-round residents in order to preserve this character.

**The Tisbury Planning Board has prepared the following preliminary list of objectives for the town's Master Plan, based on a questionnaire distributed to residents as well as other reports and studies)**

1. Natural Resources

Make protection and restoration of our natural environment our number one priority. Avoid sprawl and destruction of open spaces.

2. Cultural Resources

Maintain Tisbury's New England Village character by preserving its history and emphasizing its pedestrian scale, mixed uses and easy walking access to businesses and institutions.

3. Municipal Services

- Protect the traditional, functional and symbolic heart of the town by retaining non-emergency municipal functions in downtown Vineyard Haven.
- Relocate emergency services to a site or sites out of the congested downtown area

4. Circulation

- Promote alternate means of transportation - pedestrian, bus, bike, and water transit with a special emphasis on pedestrian movements.
- Improve the road system by creating supplementary small-scale access ways to relieve pressure on main roads. Avoid street widening.
- Promote the connectivity of streets. Avoid dead-ends and restricted access neighborhoods.

5. Housing

- Encourage more housing variety in all parts of the town.
- Allow greater densities and more mixed uses in the business districts.
- Look for affordable housing opportunities.

6. Energy

- Promote energy conservation and renewable technologies both for the benefit of the environment and for the economic benefit to the town.
- See that municipal buildings and operations are as energy efficient as possible.

7. Economic Development

Promote business development that is compatible with the overall values and goals of the town. Look for year-round activities. Include agriculture and aquaculture in the analysis. Look at the economic potential of new technologies.

8. Land Use

- Using the above guidelines, develop a series of detailed plans beginning with the town's main business areas:
- Downtown and the Waterfront,
- Upper State Road and the Landfill area

## 3. OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

### 3.1 Profile

The following is a summary of the inventory of Tisbury's open spaces from the 1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan including those properties larger than 5 acres.

Town of Tisbury – Aquifer Protection: 6 properties including:

- Tashmoo Springs and Overlook (24.9 acres)
- Spring Street Well Site (43.5 acres)
- Manter Well Environs (34 acres)
- Athearn Woodlot (12.7 acres)
- Sandborn Way (7 acres)
- William Norton Road (7 acres)

Town of Tisbury – Parks and Recreation: 6 properties including:

- War Veterans Memorial Park (10.6 acres)

Town of Tisbury – Rights of Way to Shore: 8 properties.

Cemeteries: 6 properties including:

- Oak Grove Cemetery (22.5 acres)

Martha's Vineyard Land Bank: 5 properties including:

- Ripley's Field (55.9 acres)
- Tisbury Meadows (83.5 acres)
- Ramble Trail Inoue (7.3 acres)
- Carpenter Woods (8.7 acres)

Other Publicly Owned Open Spaces: 6 properties owned by the Town or the US Government including:

- State Forest (12.7 acres)

Sheriffs Meadow Foundation: 8 properties including:

- West Chop Woods (86.4 acres)
- Brightwood Park (8.9 acres)
- Phillips Northern Pines Road (68.8 acres)

Conservation Restrictions: 5 properties including:

- Cranberry Acres (Vineyard Open Land Foundation – 22.8 acres)
- Tashmoo Holdings (Town – 26.2 acres)
- Pilot Hill Farm (Town – 62.8 acres)

Other Open Spaces Not Permanently Protected: 7 properties including:

- Mink Meadows Golf Course (108.5 acres)
- West Chop Trust (158.4 acres)

Land Enrolled in Chapter 61 (Agricultural) Programs: 10 properties including:

- Bayes, Norton Farm (22.9 acres)
- Mink Meadows (109.7 acres)
- Matthiesen (22.2 acres)
- Craig Kingsbury (10.1 acres)
- John R. Packer (42 acres)
- Marsteers (5.9 acres)

West Chop Trust (158.4 acres)

### 3.2 SUITABILITY ANALYSIS

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The following are the criteria used in the Open Space and Natural Resources suitability analysis using the methodology described in section 1.3.

1. **Agricultural Land:** Working Farm, Prime Agricultural Soil
2. **Water Resources – Coastal and Surface Water:** Proximity to Wetlands and Flood Hazard Area; Coastal District; Surface Water Bodies
3. **Water Resources – Groundwater:** Zones of Protection Around Public Wells; Nitrogen-Sensitive Watersheds
4. **Habitat and Woodlands:** Core and Supporting Habitat; Other Large, Unfragmented Woodlands;
5. **Scenic and Cultural:** Viewsheds and Vistas from Island Roads; Cultural Landscapes
6. **Recreation and Access:** Beaches



On the following pages, each of these criteria is mapped for the Town as well as the entire Island, accompanied by an explanation of the criteria and how they were used in the suitability analysis.

The results of the analysis are in section 3.2.7.

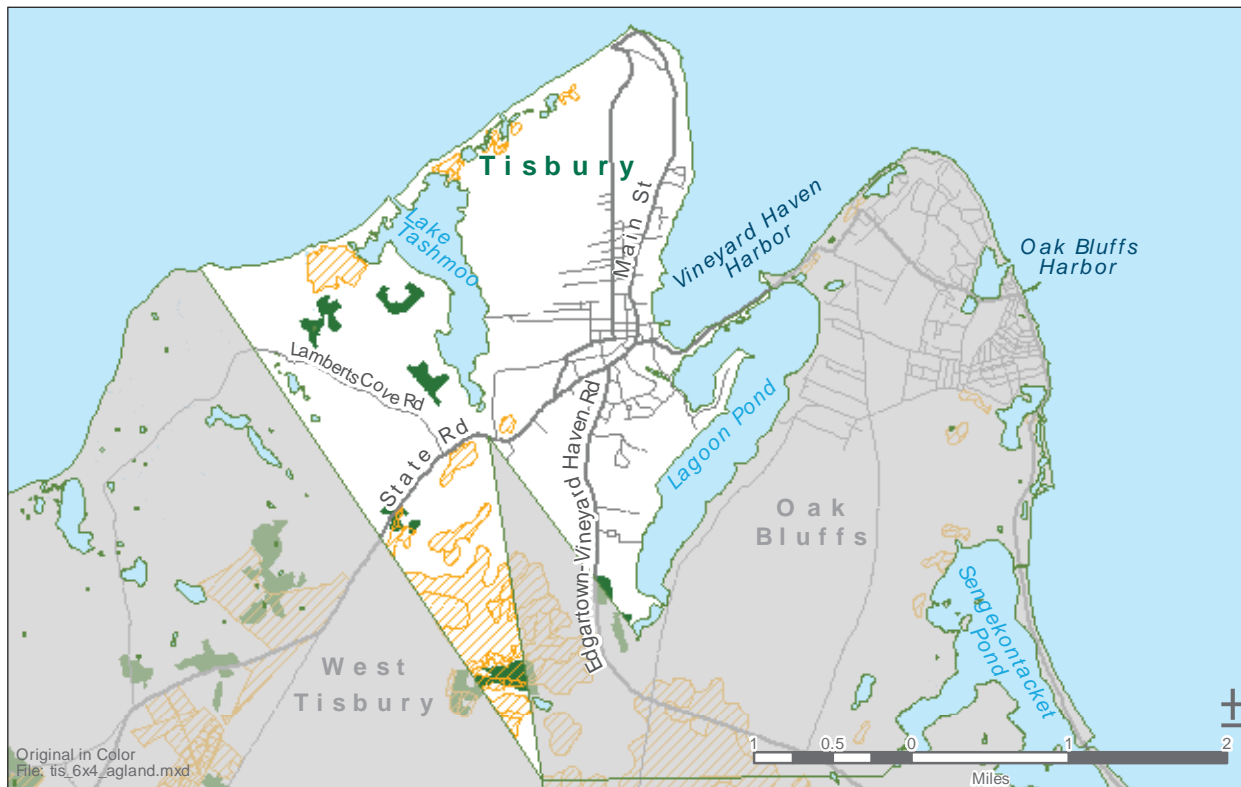
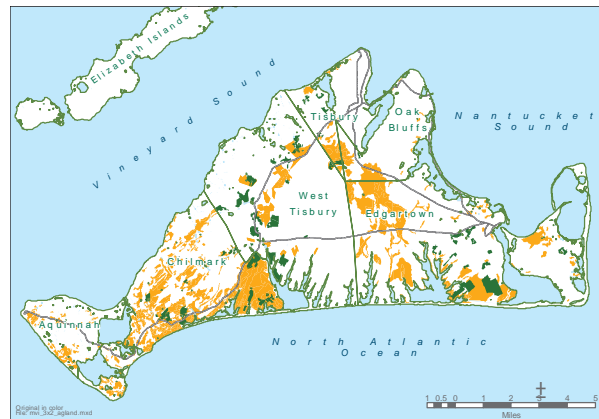


### 3.2.1. Agricultural Land

Although representing just a fraction of the land from previous generations, many areas of the Vineyard are still strongly associated with farming. Farming represents scenic and economic cultural sensibilities. The selection of these criteria reflects the desire to preserve the remaining working farms and to provide for the possibility for prime agricultural land to be returned to farming.

Criteria for Open Space Suitability Agricultural Land in Tisbury		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
 Working Farm	20	101
 Prime Agricultural Soils	6	386

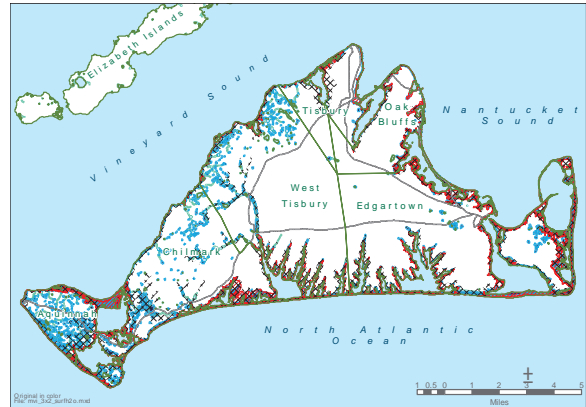
Source: Farms - MassGIS (1999 ground cover) and MVC 2004;  
Natural Resources Conservation Service / Mass-GIS 2003  
and West Tisbury Steering Committee



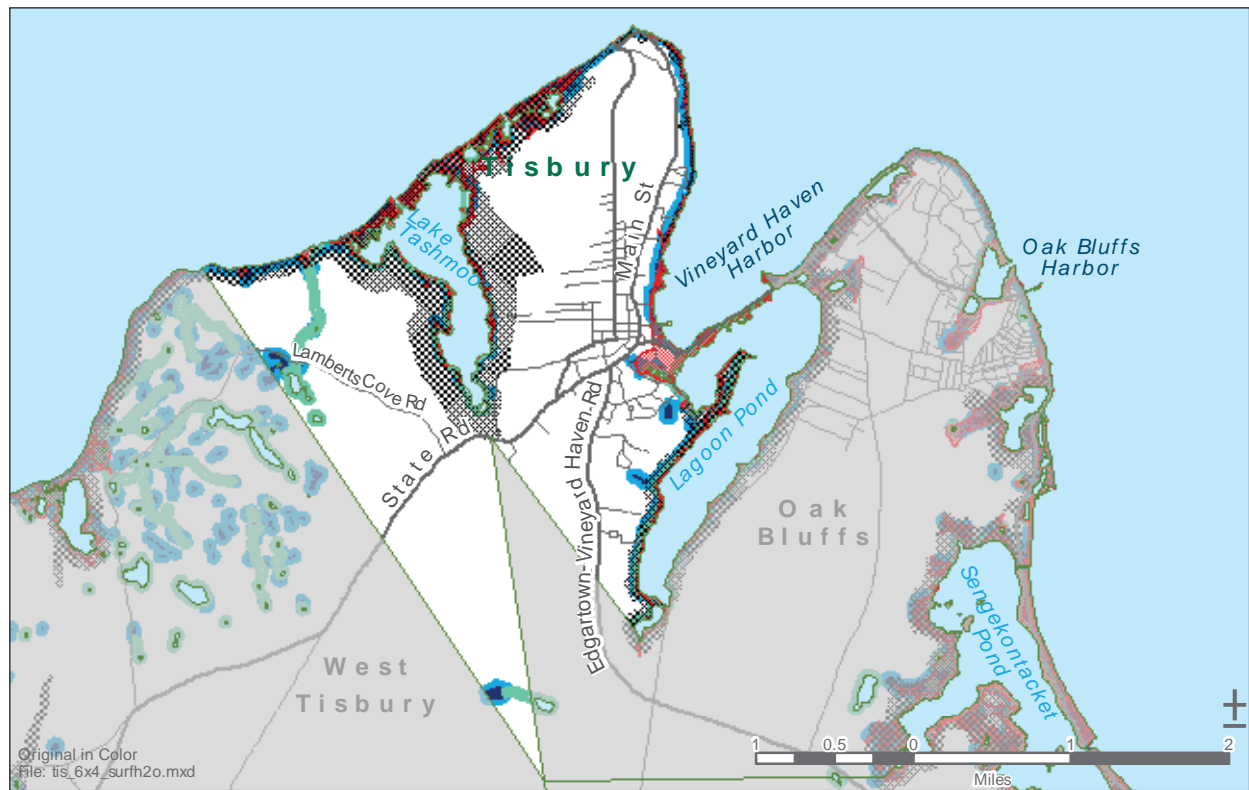
### 3.2.2. Water Resources – Coastal and Surface Water

The presence of the ocean, ponds or streams makes land more desirable for preservation as open space, both from ecological (water quality, habitat) and cultural (scenic, recreational) perspectives. Wetlands may not be built on but they and the adjacent areas offer resources of interest for preservation of open space or natural resources. Similar considerations apply to ponds and streams and their adjacent areas. The Coastal District of Critical Planning Concern identifies the natural areas along the sea's edge, great ponds and their tributaries. Higher weighting was given to the criteria that were most restrictive to development.

Criteria for Open Space Suitability Coastal and Surface Water Resources in Tisbury			
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)	
Wetlands	20	197	
Within 200' of wetlands	6	982	
Flood Hazard Area	10	256	
Coastal DCPC	8	791	
Surface water	20	555	
Within 200' of surface water	6	361	








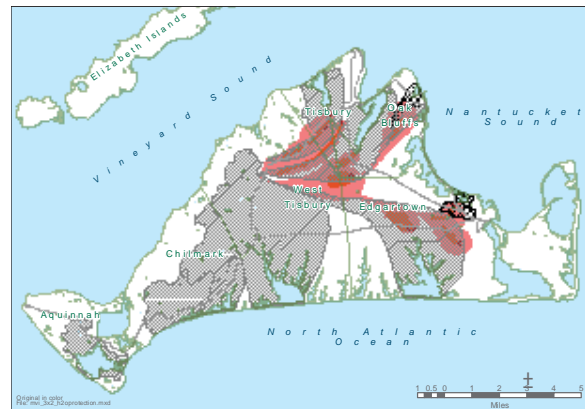
Source: DEP/MassGIS 2003; FEMA/MassGIS 1997; MAPC 2000; MassGIS 2003



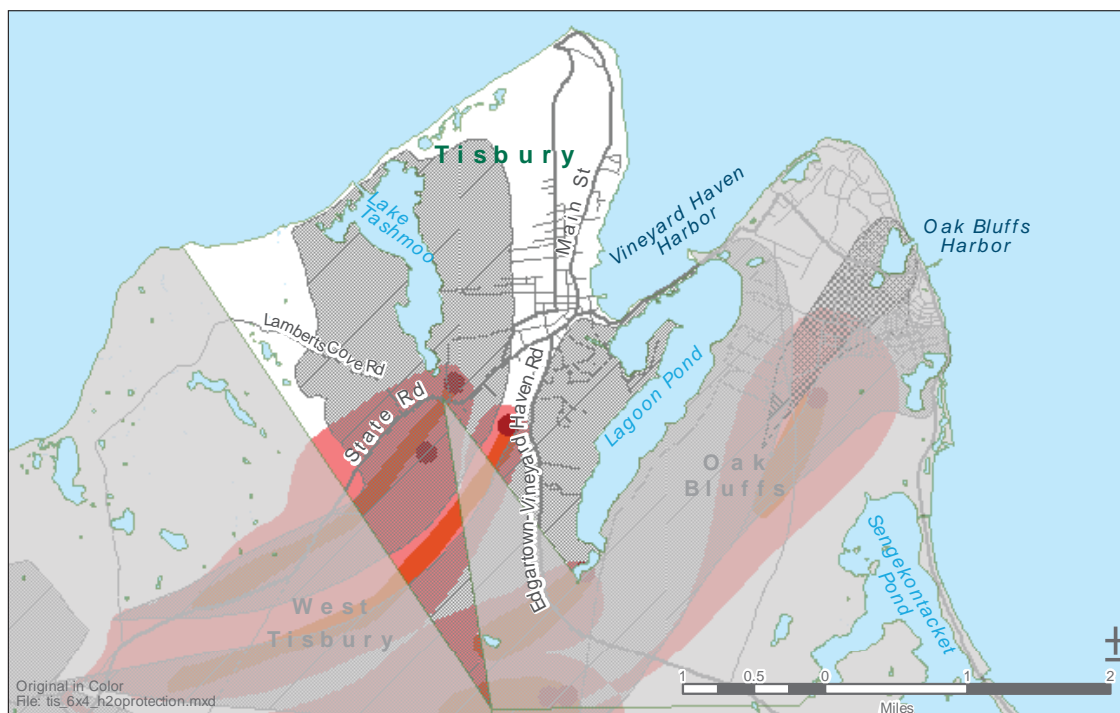
### 3.2.3. Water Resources – Areas of Protection

Development places stress on groundwater resources and ideally, would be located outside areas highly sensitive to ground water contamination. Preserving lands within the areas of protection of public wells – Zone I, operational zone of influence, and Zone II – protects public health as well as public investment in infrastructure. The operational zones of influence were determined by the MVC as areas more likely to infiltrate to groundwater than the rest of Zone II. The vitality of the Island’s great ponds also affects human health, but also involves habitat, cultural, scenic and recreational values. Identified are the pond watersheds that are already at or beyond nitrogen limits, or are projected to reach those limits.

Criteria for Open Space Suitability Groundwater Resource Protection in Tisbury			
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)	
 Public well – Zone I	20	40	
 Public well – operational zone of influence	6	161	
 Public well – Zone II	4	672	
 Pond watershed at or beyond nitrogen limit	6	2,440	
 Pond watershed projected to reach nitrogen limit	4	0	



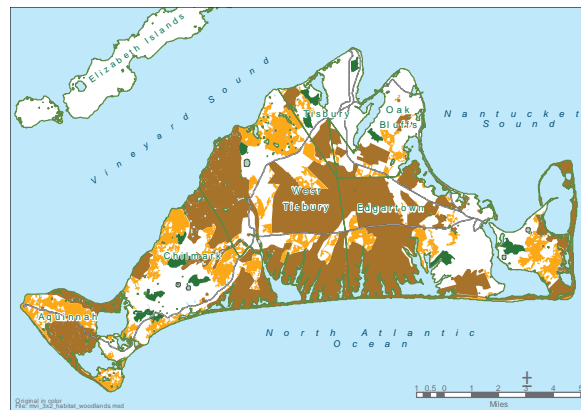
Source: DEP/MassGIS 2003; MVC 2003



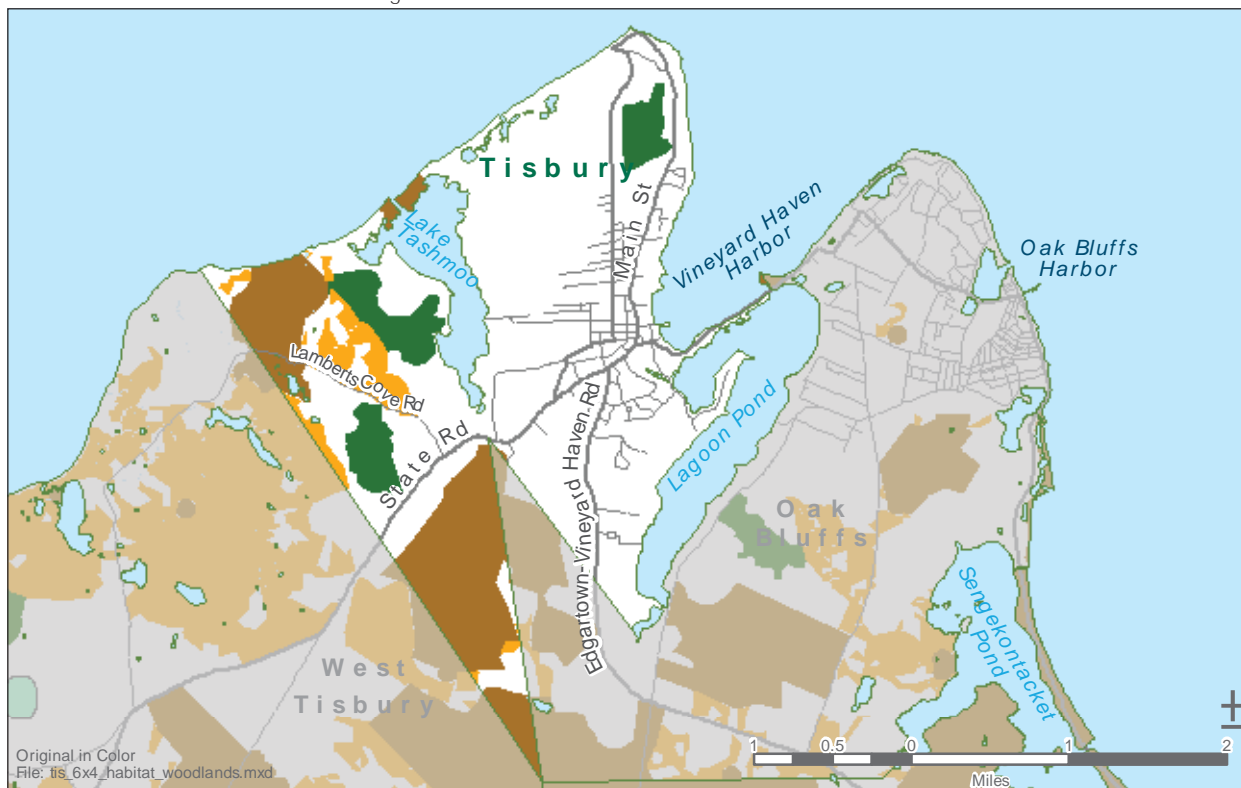
### 3.2.4. Habitat and Woodlands

Martha's Vineyard is the site of some globally important habitats such as the distinctive sandplains. Core and Supporting Habitat are areas identified by the Commonwealth that provide habitat for several species that are Endangered, Threatened, or are of Special Concern, including the Harrier Hawk and various types of moths. This is evident from the extent of significant "core" and supporting habitat. In addition, large unfragmented woodlands not already included in the habitat criteria are identified because they may still be potentially important open spaces from a scenic or recreational standpoint.

Criteria for Open Space Suitability Habitat and Woodlands in Tisbury		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
Core Habitat	10	677
Supporting Habitat	6	163
Additional Unfragmented Woodland (50+ acres)	8	286
Additional Unfragmented Woodland (10-50 acres)	4	0



Sources: Habitat - Natural Heritage/MassGIS 2002  
Woodland - MacConnell 1999 ground cover







### 3.2.5. Scenic/Cultural

The character of the Island is derived to a great extent by how it looks from public spaces, including major roads and the water. A preliminary identification of views from the main Island roads includes:

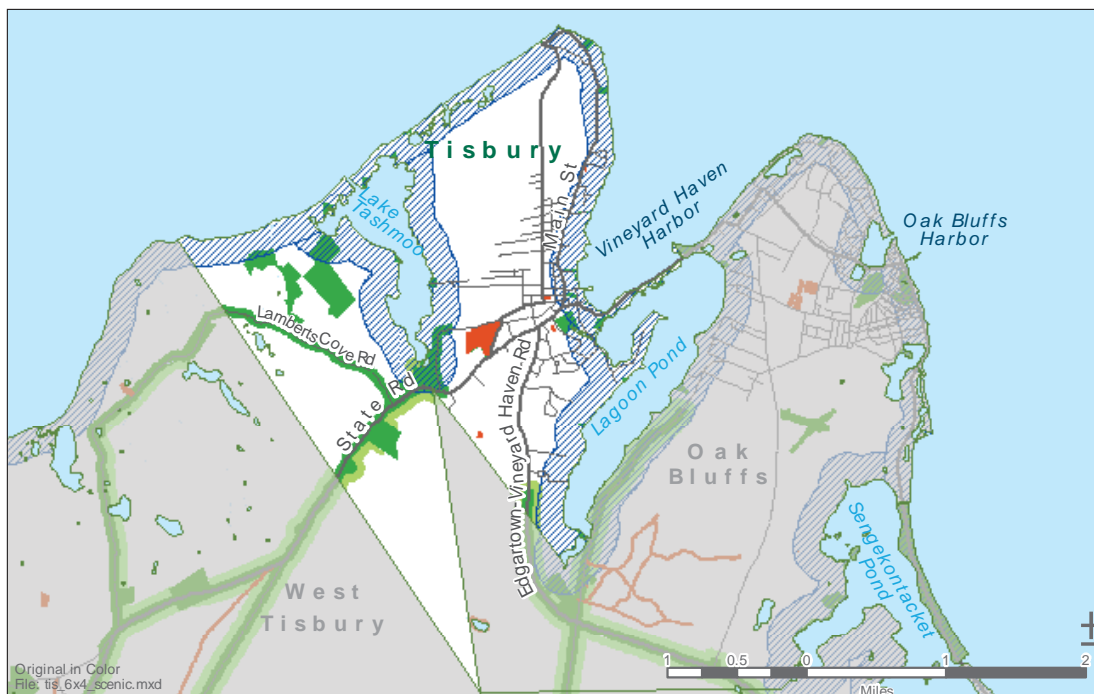
- wooded areas within 200' from roads as well as adjacent fields and ponds,
- larger vistas from public overlooks and particularly scenic roads and,
- the axis of view corridors at the ends of certain roads.

A secondary buffer area, generally an additional 300' from roads, was also identified as was the coastal viewshed made up of land within 1000' from the coast and of other navigable waters. Also included are cultural landscapes that towns have previously designated as Special Places. This analysis in particular will likely be subject to future refinement by the towns and MVC.

Criteria for Open Space Suitability Scenic/Cultural in Tisbury			
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)	
 Primary Vista/Viewshed	20	373	
 Secondary Vista/Viewshed	4	230	
 Cultural Landscape	20	28	
 1000' from Coast/Great Pond	6	1,314	




Sources: Viewsheds - MVC/Steering Committees 2004  
Cultural landscapes - Town DCPCs/MVC 2004

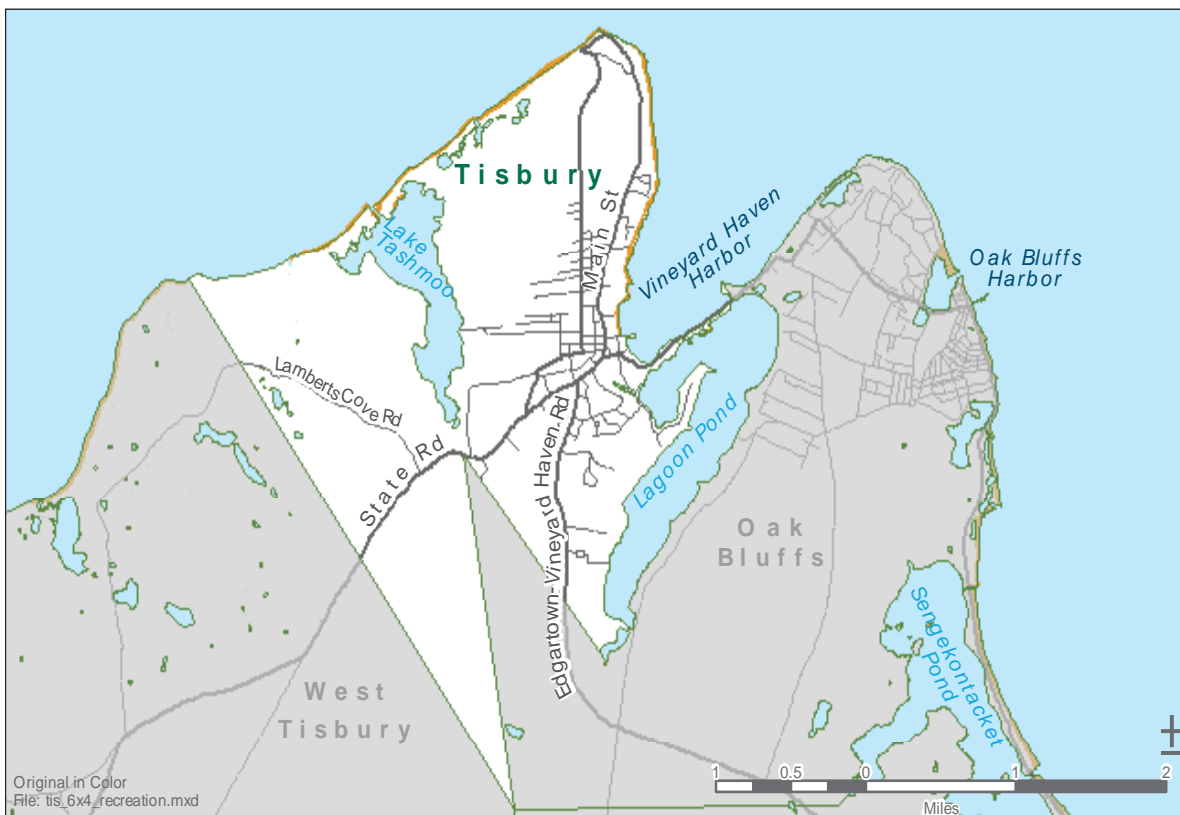
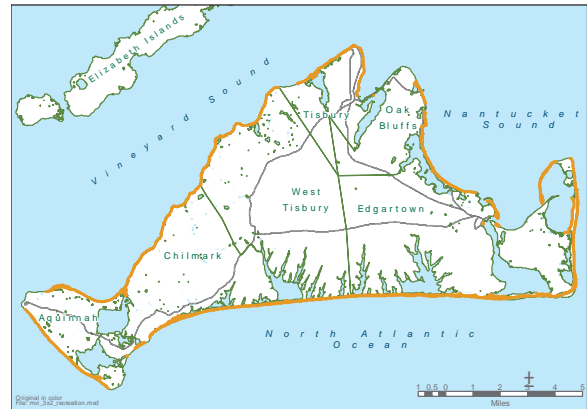


### 3.2.6. Recreation and Access

In addition to their indispensable role of buffering the Island (and Great Ponds) from the sea, beaches are, understandably, the most used recreational spaces on the Vineyard. Public access to beaches varies greatly among towns but is generally less available to the public up-Island (where there are also fewer people). Other existing recreational areas such as golf courses and ball fields should be mapped in the future. Mapping the bike paths and walking trails would help identify gaps in the town and Island-wide network of trails and paths.

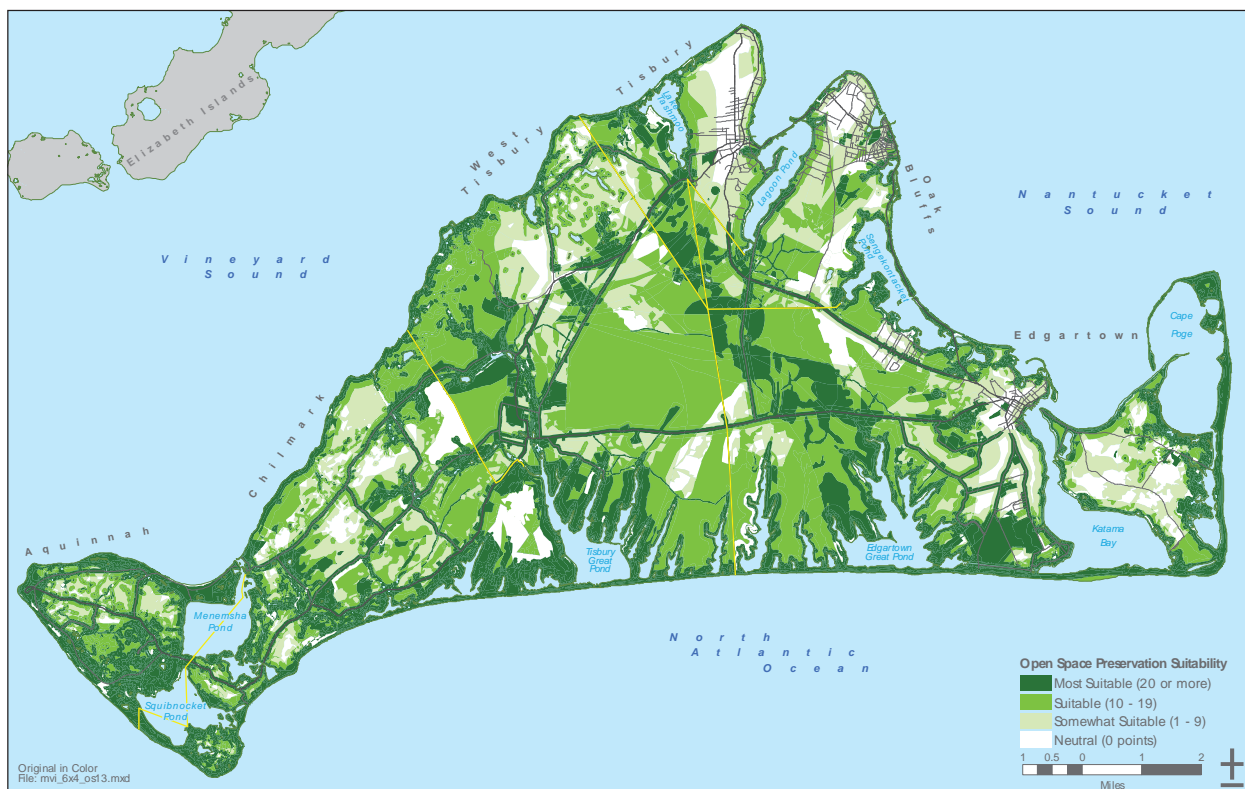
Criteria for Open Space Suitability Recreation and Access in Tisbury		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
 Beach	20	44

Sources: MacConnell 1999 ground cover



### 3.2.7 Open Space and Natural Resources Suitability Map

The maps below and opposite show the overall suitability of land for preservation of open space and natural resources based on a combination of the criteria described in this section. Land across the Island was divided into four categories based on the total 'points' accumulated from all the mapped features. In illustration, the higher intensity of color or shading reflects a higher degree of suitability, according to the criteria measured and the weighting of values. Lands that are already preserved or developed are overlaid with a diagonal crosshatch.



On Martha's Vineyard as a whole, the map indicates that lands close to the ocean are particularly important to preserve as open space. In general, there is a narrow beach or bluff that serves as storm damage prevention for the interior wetlands and built areas, as recreation, scenic vistas, and in some cases, habitat. Serving a variety of functions, these areas tend to score highly when points are summed. On the map below, these areas tend to appear as colored the darkest green, the equivalent of a high score. These shore areas form a relatively narrow fringe, extensive in total area only because they surround the entire Island. The scenic vistas afforded by the rural roads constitute another narrowly focused resource, extensive in total area only because of the extensive length of this grid network. Working farms and prime agricultural soils constitute very little of the total area of the Island. Much more extensive in area are the habitat and water resource areas. Core habitat, primarily in the form of the globally rare sandplain grassland, covers much of the total area of the

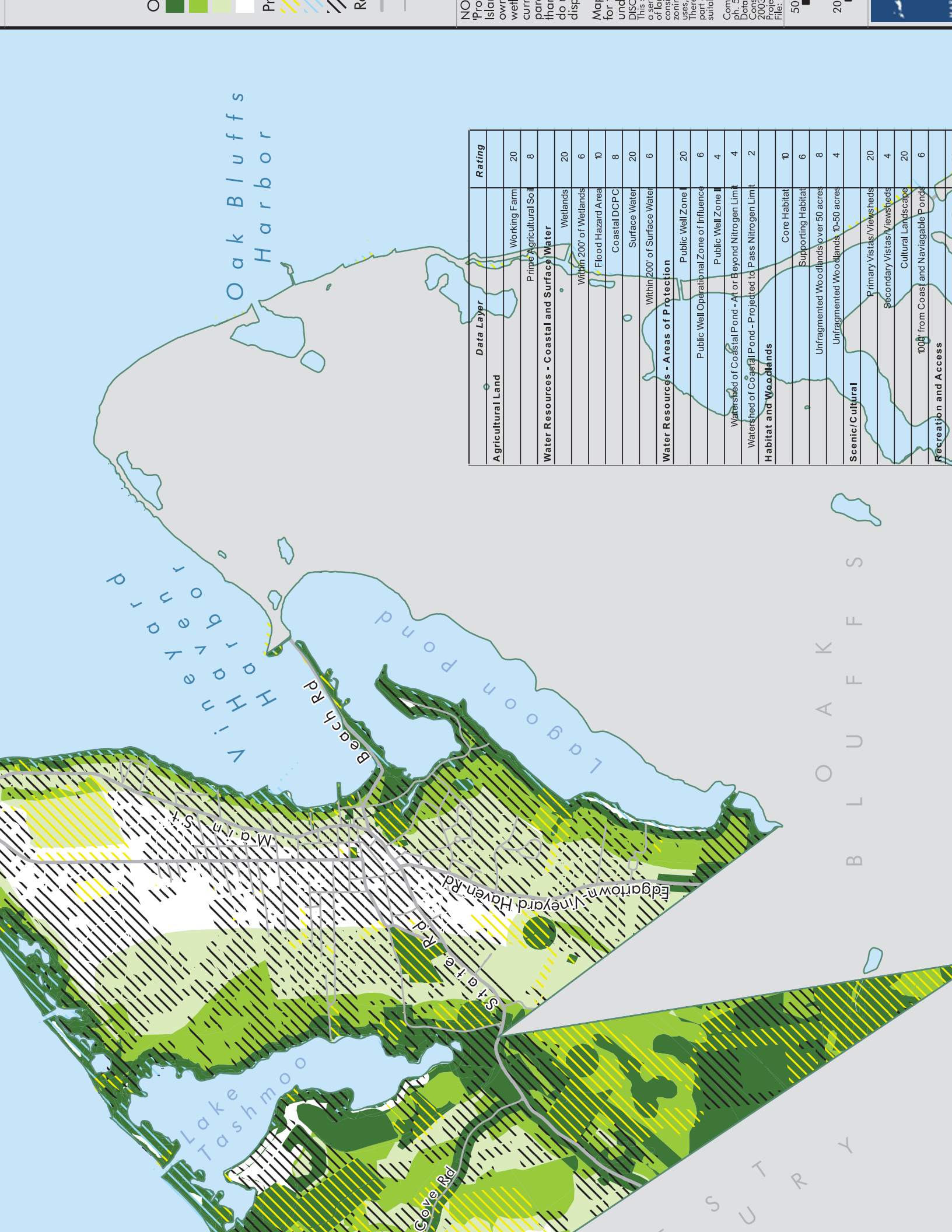
Island. The watersheds of the great ponds cover large land areas. Many of the great ponds are projected at or near their nitrogen loading limits, and lands within those watersheds are targeted for open space protection. Zones of contribution for public water supplies cover large areas of lands in the down-Island towns and also in West Tisbury, although that town does not pump for its own municipal water service.

In Tisbury, except for the coastlines and some wetlands, most of West Chop has less importance for open space and resource conservation than elsewhere in the town. This reflects the comparatively dense development there but also less concern about ground water quality since most of West Chop does not drain to any public well site or coastal pond. Land east of State Road and up-Island of Tashmoor overlook has both of these water quality concerns. Also adding to much of this area being classified as Most Suitable is its contiguous undeveloped state – contributing to its identification by the Commonwealth as important habitat.

<b>Open Space and Natural Resource Protection Suitability</b>		
	Martha's Vineyard (% of Island)	Tisbury (% of Town)
Most Suitable	23,722 acres (40.4%)	1,394 acres (32.8%)
Somewhat Suitable	9,500 acres (16.1%)	1,143 acres (26.9%)
Suitable	20,266 acres (34.5%)	976 acres (23%)
Neutral	5,205 acres (40.4%)	730 acres (32.8%)

It bears repeating that, in Tisbury as in all of Martha's Vineyard, virtually all land has some degree of suitability for open space preservation – whether for environmental, health, economic or cultural reasons. Due to the scarcity and extraordinary cost of land on the Vineyard, the decision to preserve a particular piece of land will likely be based far more on opportunity than on suitability; in other words, if a parcel of land becomes available, it might well be worth preserving as open space, even if it was not rated highly in this suitability analysis.





Data Layer	Rating
<b>Agricultural Land</b>	
Working Farm	20
Prime Agricultural Soil	8
<b>Water Resources - Coastal and Surface Water</b>	
Wetlands	20
Within 200' of Wetlands	6
Flood Hazard Area	10
Coastal DCP	8
Surface Water	20
Within 200' of Surface Water	6
<b>Water Resources - Areas of Protection</b>	
Public Well Zone	20
Public Well Operational Zone of Influence	6
Public Well Zone II	4
Watershed of Coastal Pond - At or Beyond Nitrogen Limit	4
Watershed of Coastal Pond - Projected to Pass Nitrogen Limit	2
<b>Habitat and Woodlands</b>	
Core Habitat	10
Supporting Habitat	6
Unfragmented Woodlands over 50 acres	8
Unfragmented Woodlands 10-50 acres	4
<b>Scenic/Cultural</b>	
Primary Vistas/Viewsheds	20
Secondary Vistas/Viewsheds	4
Cultural Landscape	20
100ft from Coasts and Navigable Ponds	6
<b>Recreation and Access</b>	

### 3.3 ORIENTATIONS

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These goals and objectives are excerpted from the 1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

#### **Overall Goal**

Ensure the protection and preservation of the natural resources and special qualities of Tisbury.

#### **Goal 1: Protect Land and Natural Resources**

##### Objectives

1. Protect buffer areas to well sites and recharge zones.
2. Expand Tisbury's inventory of permanently protected open space.
3. Manage natural habitat areas responsibly.
4. Defend dedicated open space resources against encroachment from competing land uses.
5. Create tax and other incentives for conserving open space.
6. Preserve lands containing prime agricultural soils.
7. Safeguard vernal pool habitats.
8. Protect old public rights-of-way and byways for recreational and greenbelt connectors.
9. Curtail use of exotic plant species and planting of non-native grass lawns.
10. Develop markets for non-toxic household cleaning alternatives.
11. Conserve drinking water supplies.
12. Curtail road runoff.
13. Limit nitrogen pollution of town water bodies.
14. Reduce downtown air pollution from automobiles.
15. Mitigate groundwater pollution sources.
16. Discourage inappropriate development in areas subject to flooding and storm impact.
17. Improve visual accessibility to vistas and the water.
18. Promote alternative modes of transport for public access to the ponds and shorelines.
19. Curtail light pollution of the night sky.

#### **Goal 2: Control Growth and Development**

##### Objectives

1. Secure opportunities for public access and maritime uses of the waterfront.
2. Develop sustainable approaches to addressing wastewater treatment.
3. Reduce traffic congestion and dependence on the automobile.
4. Promote the safe use of bicycles and pursue an expanded bicycle path system.
5. Address housing affordability and availability needs.

## 4. HOUSING

The seasonal and tourist-based economy of the Vineyard has greatly affected the home rental and ownership market in Tisbury. Rapidly escalating property values have made affordable housing a critical issue for all of Martha's Vineyard. Even though the average home sales price in Tisbury is below that of the Island's, the cost of housing is a pressing need for the Town. This section of the Tisbury Community Development Plan deals with the issue of housing development and especially the provision of affordable housing.

### 4.1. HOUSING PROFILE

#### 4.1.1 Existing Housing Stock

According to the 2000 US Census, the Town of Tisbury had a total of 2,720 housing units, of which 2,261 (83%) were single-family homes. The make up of the remaining seventeen percent of Tisbury's housing stock includes accessory apartments, duplex or multi-family homes, or apartment complexes, e.g., Hillside Village. Statistically the Town of Tisbury has the greatest housing diversity on the Island. In 1980, there were a total of 2,089 housing units in Tisbury, and in 1990 there were 2,387. Between 1980 and 2000, there was a 23% increase in the number of housing units in Tisbury. Tisbury's 23% percent housing unit increase is the smallest percentage compared to the other Island towns over the same time period. This could be explained by the fact that Tisbury year-round housing occupancy of housing units has out numbered the seasonally occupied units for the past three decades

Housing Characteristics - Tisbury			
	1980	1990	2000
Total Households	1,304	1,382	1,646
Total Housing Units	2,089	2,387	2,720
Owner Occupied	858	882	1,061
Renter Occupied	446	500	585
Seasonal Units	647	724	965
Vacant Year-Round	138	281	109
Vacancy Rate for Year-Round Housing Units: Ownership	n/a	3.5	2.0
Vacancy Rate for Year-Round Housing Units: Rental	n/a	8.1	2.5
Total Units	2,089	2,387	2,720

Source: U.S. Census

Housing Characteristics - Martha's Vineyard			
	1980	1990	2000

Total Households	3,963	4,955	6,375
Total Housing Units	8,700	11,439	14,621
Owner Occupied	2,708	3,541	4,560
Renter Occupied	1,135	1,414	1,815
Seasonal Units	4,084	5,278	7,829
Vacant Year-Round	773	1,206	417
Dukes County Vacancy Rate for Year-Round Housing Units: Ownership	n/a	3.6	1.3
Dukes County Vacancy Rate for Year-Round Housing Units: Rental	n/a	8.7	3.6
Total Units	8,700	11,439	14,621

Source: U.S. Census

Seasonality: According to the US Census the year-round to seasonal housing occupancy ratio has been consistent for the past three decades: 62% year-round occupancy in 1980, 58% in 1990, and 61% in 2000. For seasonal and tourist based communities such as Tisbury, housing occupancy is an important factor to consider when projecting future growth scenarios – particularly population projections – should the year-round occupancy ratio shift sizably in either direction.

Building Permits: The Town granted 169 residential building permits from 1999 to 2003. Despite an economic recession in 2000, the construction industry continues to be a strong element of the economy due in large part to the remodeling and renovation of existing homes.

Residential Building Permits Issued for New Construction							
	Aquinnah	Chilmark	Edgartown	Oak Bluffs	Tisbury	West Tisbury	Total
1999	13	43	139	66	60	59	380
2000	5	20	95	30	33	53	236
2001	7	19	74	31	23	31	185
2002	4	16	93	29	26	33	201
2003	9	16	88	46	27	48	234
Total	38	114	489	202	169	224	1236

Source: Town Reports; Building Inspectors

Rental Registration: The Town of Tisbury does not regulate the rental of housing units. There is growing concern Island – wide for the health and safety of tenants particularly in overcrowded housing situations. The Town has not created a bylaw that would require homeowners who rent their properties to register with the Town Clerk. Should they do so, the Board of Health would then determine the maximum occupancy of the property to ensure that overcrowding of a home is prevented.

#### 4.1.2 Impact of the Real Estate Market on Housing

From 1997 to 2003, the real estate market in Tisbury has seen the median price for a home increase from \$220,000 to \$432,000. Between 1997 and 2003, there were a total of 754 homes sold in Tisbury. In 2002, there were 106 homes sold but only twenty-two houses were sold for less than \$250,000. In 2003, there were a total of 99 home sales of which, eleven homes sold below \$250,000 in Tisbury. According to a 2001 housing needs assessment study for Martha's Vineyard, between 2000 and 2001 the number of homes across the Island selling for less than \$200,000 dropped from 35 sales to just 9 sales. The number of homes selling for under \$250,000 dropped from 82 to 39 within the same time period.

The current market indicates that there is a serious gap between what the market rate home costs and what families can afford. The median household income for Tisbury was \$37,041 as reported by the US Census. According to Housing and Urban Development's income limits the median family income for a family of four was \$61,100 in FY 2003. Individuals or families earning \$61,100 could not afford a home that costs more than \$230,000 dollars or should not pay more than \$1,530 per month on rent. According to HUD guidelines individuals or families who either own a home or rent should not pay more than 30% of their gross income(s) for housing cost, which includes taxes, principal, interest, insurance, and /or utilities if renting. The 2003 median sales price of a home in Tisbury was \$432,000. That amounts to an affordability gap of \$202,000 for a family or individual earning \$61,100.

Median Home Sale Prices, 1997 - 2003							
Year	Aquinnah	Chilmark	Edgartown	Oak Bluffs	Tisbury	West Tisbury	Martha's Vineyard
1997	\$380,000	\$505,000	\$192,372	\$170,000	\$220,000	\$282,250	\$205,000
1998	\$457,500	\$764,250	\$225,000	\$186,170	\$220,000	\$279,000	\$231,750
1999	\$520,000	\$955,000	\$275,000	\$200,000	\$236,750	\$339,000	\$260,000
2000	\$900,000	\$1,300,000	\$379,000	\$275,000	\$292,500	\$425,000	\$369,500
2001	\$962,500	\$885,000	\$467,500	\$279,000	\$350,000	\$549,000	\$395,000
2002	\$1,027,000	\$1,237,500	\$517,500	\$325,000	\$357,100	\$500,000	\$400,000
2003	\$1,200,000	\$1,487,500	\$547,500	\$419,125	\$432,000	\$670,000	\$506,013

Source: Martha's Vineyard LINK

One aspect of the housing dynamic on the Vineyard is that year-round residents, especially first time homebuyers, are competing with second-home buyers who, due to higher incomes, are often in the position to outbid them. The same also holds true for those renting housing units. As a seasonal community, year-round residents renting oftentimes do not have stable year-round housing. The seasonal rental market on the Vineyard provides a lucrative opportunity for landlords to rent their home(s) on a weekly or monthly basis during the summer months. As a result, year-round residents renting that housing unit are given a short-term lease and are then forced to compete with vacationers and seasonal workers for summer housing at sharply higher rents. This results in the all too common "island shuffle" of having to move two or more times each year, which has physical and sociological impacts in addition to economic effects.

Another aspect of the strong seasonal demand for rental housing is that year round owners can also benefit from renting out space for vacationers or summer workers. In fact, the prospect of this income stream from rentals is such that lending institutions will take it into account in determining a mortgage limit. Island towns, Chilmark included, provide for guest-houses or detached bedrooms that can not only be used to accommodate guests, but can help Islanders to supplement their incomes. One downside to this practice, however, is that the income-generating potential of this housing is one more factor pushing up the value of property.

### 4.1.3 Affordable Housing Needs

The rising cost of housing on a Statewide level has posed serious challenges to State and local governments to address the issue of affordable housing more aggressively, particularly as it threatens the stability of local and State economies to retain an adequate workforce. Since 1999, there has been a grassroots effort on the part of town governments, non-profit, religious / ecumenical organizations, private businesses and residents to address the issue of affordable housing on the Vineyard.

In 2001, the Island Affordable Housing Fund hired consultant John Ryan to conduct a housing needs assessment. *"Preserving Community: An Island-wide Housing Needs Assessment"*, highlighted options for the towns when addressing the issue of affordable housing. One of the prominent conclusions of the study was the need for additional rental housing. Other aspects of the study included the rising affordability gap between what an individual can afford and the actual cost of a home on the Vineyard. The decline of homes sales below \$250,000 was also a key element of the study. The report recommended the number of housing units each town would need to produce within the next five years to have a solid affordable housing base.

Recommended Affordable Housing Targets – Ryan Study				
	Below-Market Rental	Market Rental	Ownership (for Qualified 10- Year Residents)	Total
Aquinnah	6	0	24	30
Chilmark	12	2	45	59
Edgartown	48	14	47	109
Oak Bluffs	48	12	40	100
<b>Tisbury</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>127</b>
West Tisbury	20	2	20	42
<b>Total Vineyard</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>467</b>

Source: Preserving Community: An Island-wide Needs Assessments by John Ryan, 2001

The Town of Tisbury has worked toward addressing its affordable housing needs primarily through its Resident Homesite Program. The Town has designated several Town-owned lots to the Resident Homesite Program, which does not qualify for the state's Chapter 40B subsidized affordable housing

inventory, since the early 1980's. The Town allows and encourages mix-used development within commercial areas, as well as accessory apartments and multi-family housing within residential zones. The housing units created from these zoning initiatives may not be part of a subsidized affordable housing program but do provide housing options for town residents. Tisbury has 3.48% of its year-round housing stock that qualifies for the state's Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory. In 2002 and 2003, the Town of Tisbury participated in the Small Cities Program through the Department of Housing and Community Development grant program.

Projecting the number of units created over the next five years that meet the Executive Order 418 Housing Certification criteria is difficult. Despite development constraints, the Town of Tisbury does not regulate free market units; therefore, the target for newly created units for the next five years was set at the number fifteen.

## 4.2 HOUSING SUITABILITY ANALYSIS

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The preparation of this Community Development Plan has allowed for the preparation of a Housing Suitability Analysis, identifying which parts of the Town are most suitable for the development of housing and especially affordable housing. The criteria were based largely on Smart Growth principles of favoring development that uses existing infrastructure and consolidates existing neighborhoods rather than sprawling into environmentally sensitive and other rural areas. As much of Martha's Vineyard is rural – indeed, much of the Island has a minimum lot size of two or three acres -- the identification of suitability criteria was difficult. Some of the Smart Growth principals, such as proximity to public transit, when applied as suitability criteria on the Vineyard, produced distinctly un-Smart Growth results. A half dozen potential suitability criteria in addition to those listed below were tried in more than a dozen trial models of the analysis and were ultimately discarded as being inappropriate for evaluating housing suitability on Martha's Vineyard.

The following are the criteria used in the housing suitability analysis.

- 1. Existing Neighborhoods:** In or Near Existing Neighborhoods
- 2. Access to Services:** In or Near Village Center; Close to a Grocery
- 3. Municipal Services:** Served by Town Water; Served by Town Sewer; Close to School
- 4. Water Resources:** Not in Nitrogen-Sensitive Watershed

These are explained in more detail in the following tables, followed by the resulting housing suitability map.

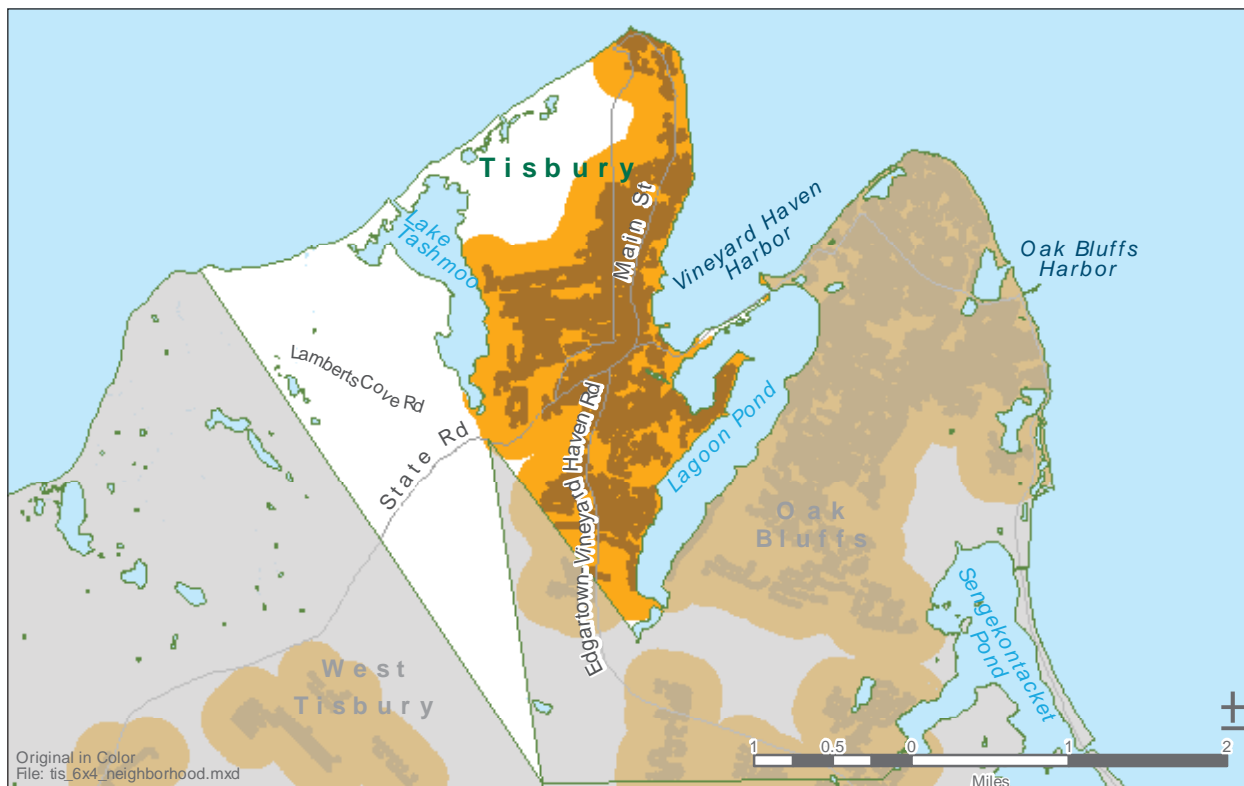
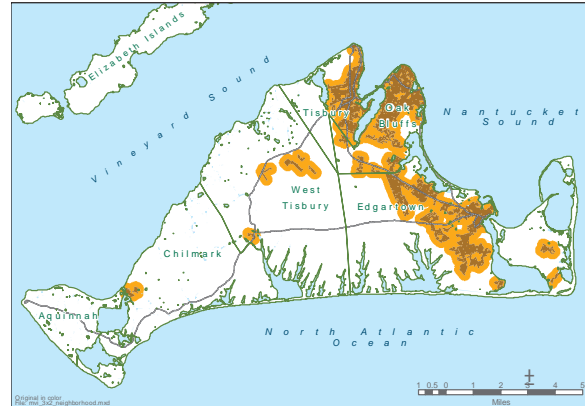


### 4.2.1. Existing Neighborhoods

The principles of smart growth suggest the desirability of building new housing in or near already existing neighborhoods where the physical and social infrastructure already exist, rather than sprawling into rural areas. An existing 'neighborhood' for this analysis is defined as an area of ten or more adjoining properties (with houses) of less than 1.5-acre parcel size. The effect of this definition removed most residences up-Island, where minimum lots sizes generally start at 1.5 acres, from being classified as 'neighborhoods.'

Criteria for Housing Suitability Existing Neighborhoods in Tisbury		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
Infill within Existing Neighborhood	20	1,051
Within 1000' of Existing Neighborhood	10	915

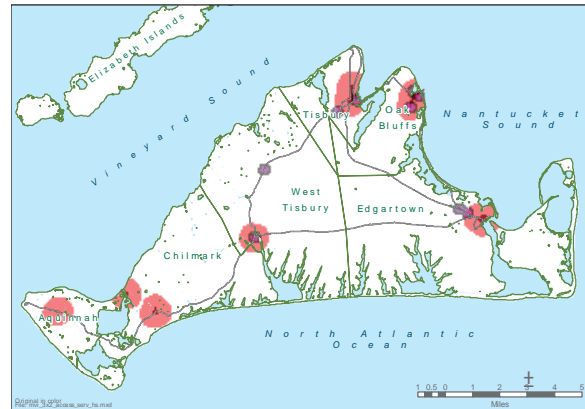
Source: Towns' Assessor s/Cartographic Assoc. 2003;  
MV Conservation Partnership 1999



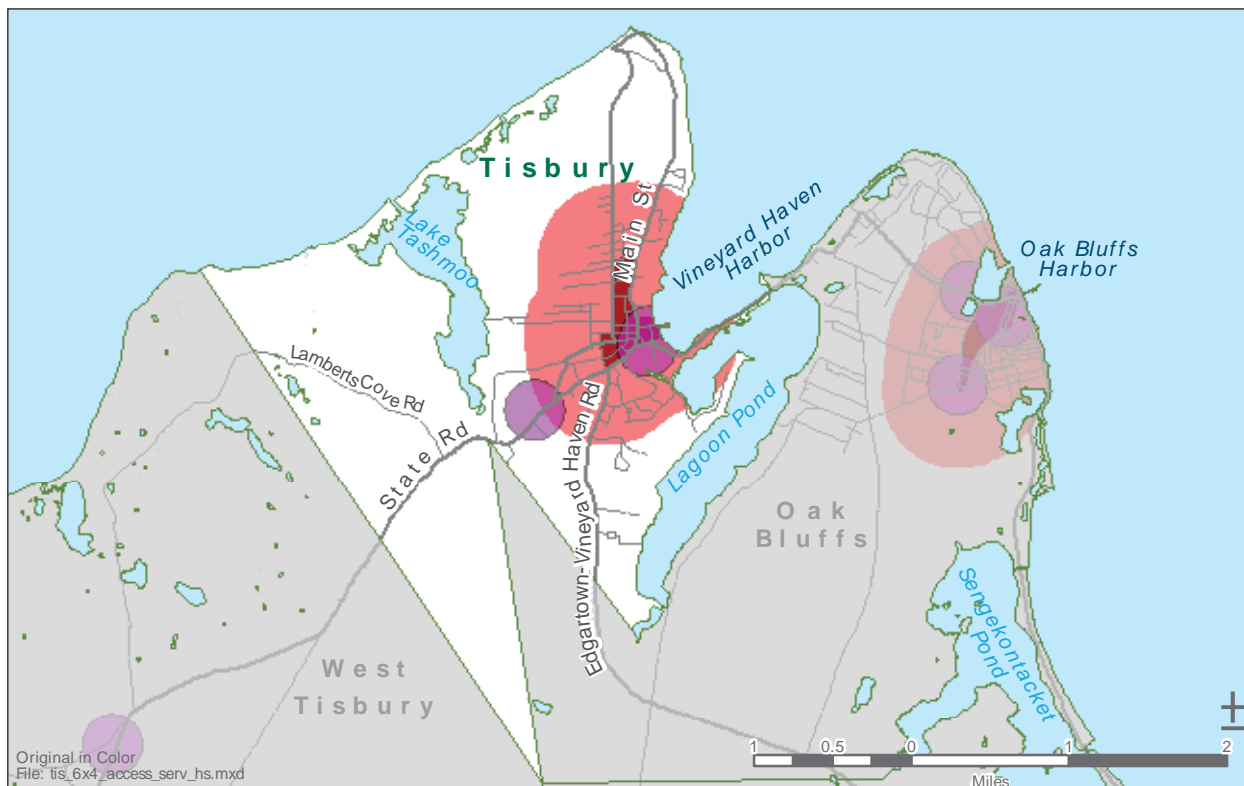
#### 4.2.2. Access to Services

Locating new housing close to village centers -- defined here as the areas where Town Hall, libraries and post offices are typically clustered -- or close to service shopping -- identified here by the existence of a grocery store -- means that residents have easy access to services, reducing the amount of driving for errands or employment. This also helps create lively mixed-use neighborhoods.

Criteria for Housing Suitability Access to Services in Tisbury		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
Within 2500' of village center	10	860
Within 1000' of grocery	10	143






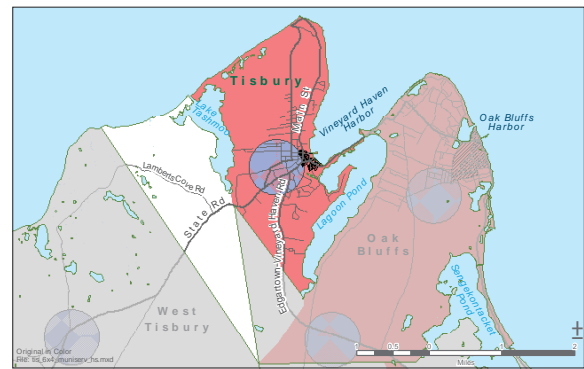
Source: Towns' Assessors/Cartographic Assoc. 2003;  
MV Conservation Partnership 1999; MVC 2004



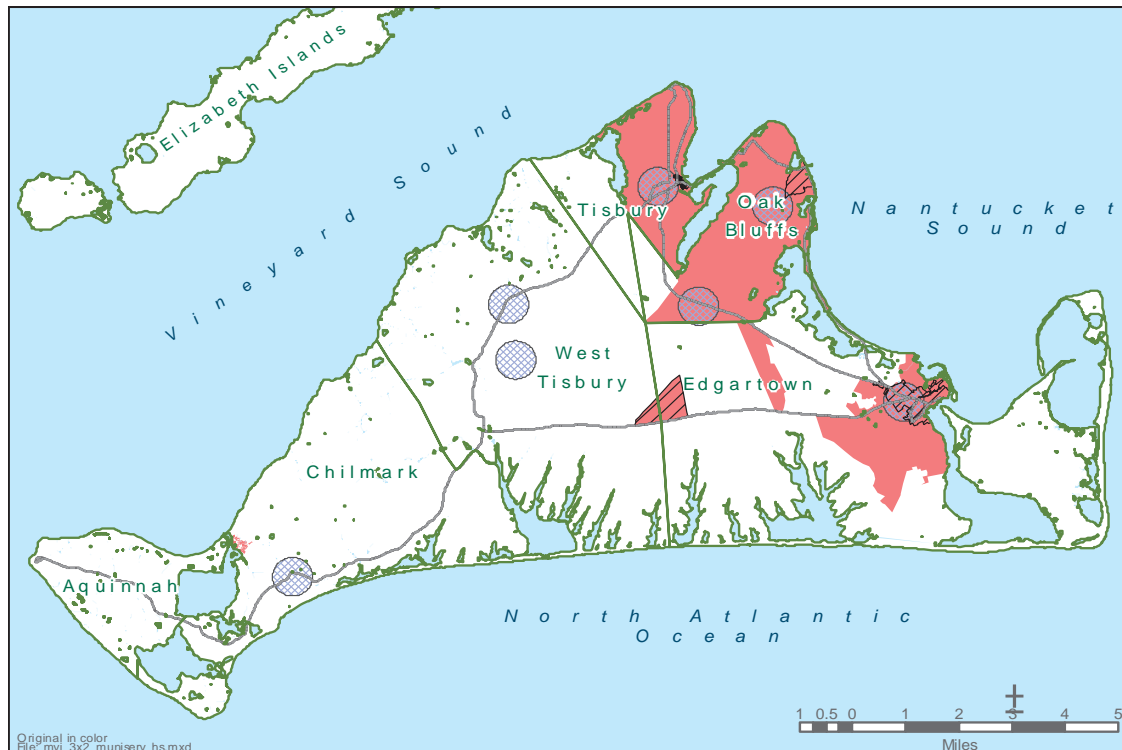
### 4.2.3. Municipal Services

From a public health perspective as well as from an environmental standpoint, it is preferable to locate housing where it can be served by community water and sewer services. Routine but necessary maintenance of homeowners' individual wells and septic systems frequently goes undone, leading to problems. Putting new housing in areas already close to schools facilitates access without necessarily having to drive. These access issues are especially appropriate in consideration of the needs of low, moderate and middle-income individuals and families who may have less access to private automobiles. (Note that an attempt to use public transit as a criterion resulted in a land use pattern of strip development, contrary to other objectives for directing future development and, thus was discarded as a criterion for this analysis.) Future refinements of this suitability analysis may reintroduce transit as a criterion, as well as additional criteria such as proximity to recreational open space.

Criteria for Housing Suitability Municipal Services in Tisbury		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
 Served by Town Sewer	6	24
 Served by Town Water	6	2,463
 Within 2000' of school	6	288



Source: Towns' Assessors/Cartographic Assoc. 2003;  
MV Conservation Partnership 1999; MVC 2004

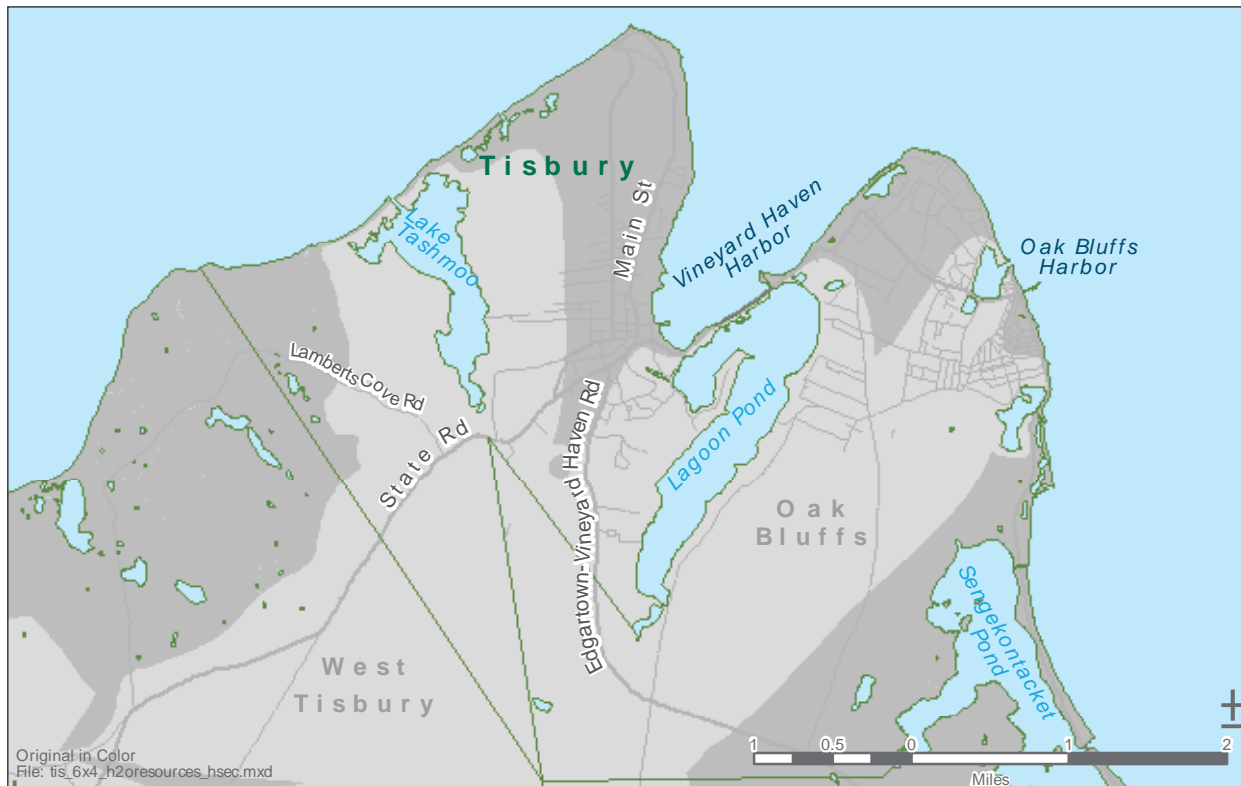
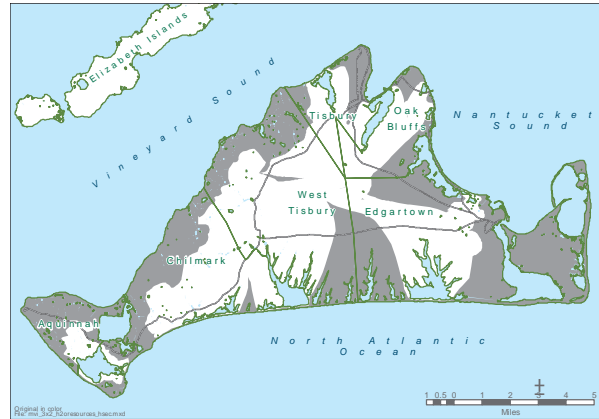


#### 4.2.4. Water Resources

In order to limit the impact of development on precious water resources, it is preferable to limit development in water-sensitive areas. This criterion identifies those locations that are not in the areas of protection of public wellheads (Zone I, Operational Areas of Contribution, and Zone II) as well as outside the watersheds of coastal ponds at or beyond their nitrogen limits. Despite the potential impact to water quality, not a great number of points were given to this criterion because there are a variety of options to mitigate the potential impacts of development in these areas.

Criteria for Housing Suitability Water Resources in Tisbury		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
Lower sensitivity watershed	4	1,577

Source: DEP/MassGIS 2003; MVC 2003



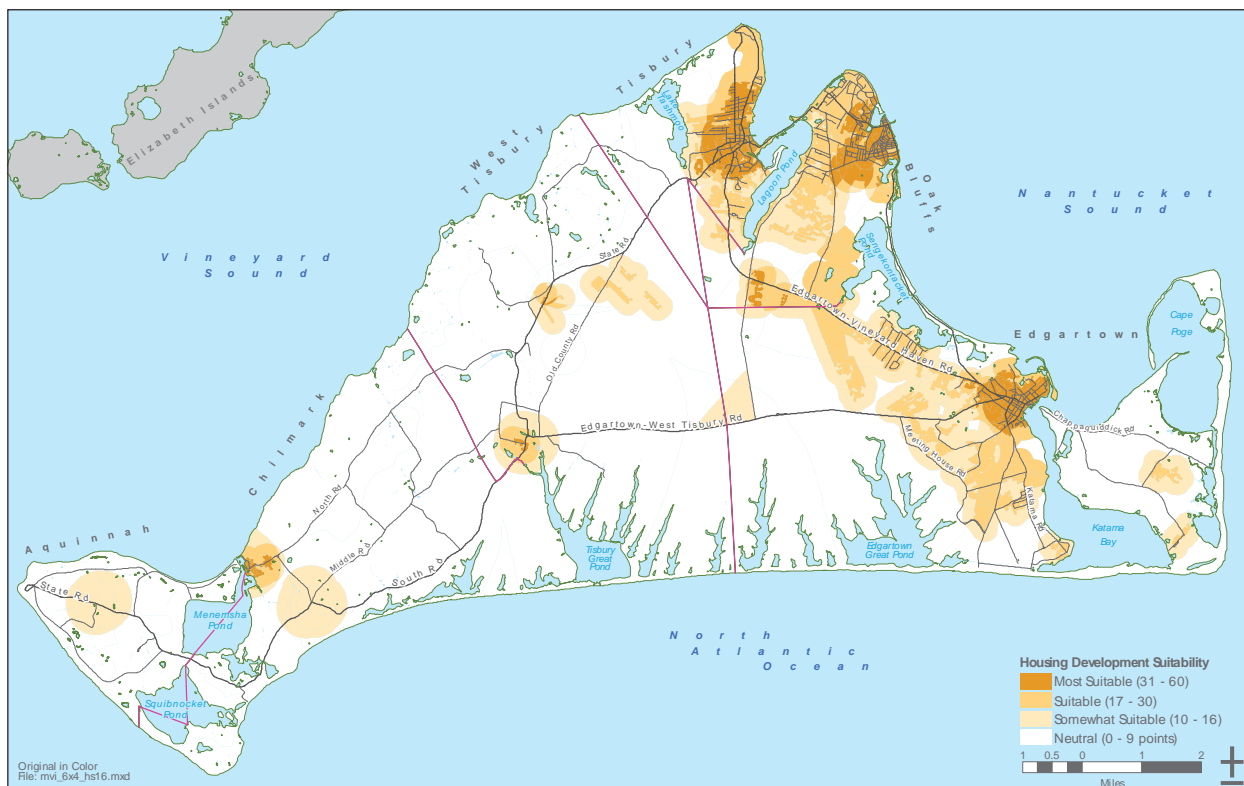
### 4.2.5 Housing Suitability Map

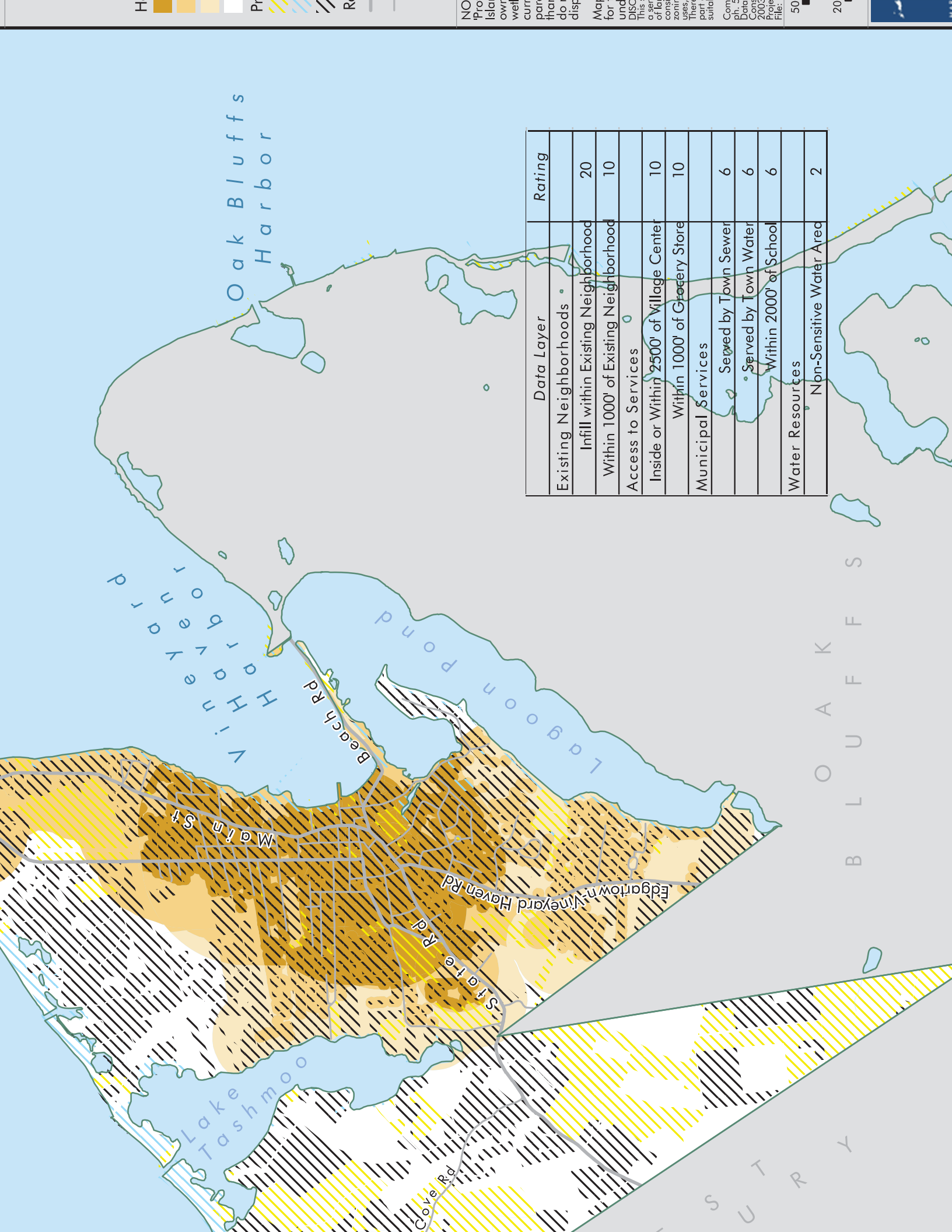
These maps show the overall suitability of land for the creation of housing, based on a combination of all the criteria described in this section, with the intensity of the color reflecting the degree of suitability. Lands that are already preserved or developed are overlaid with a diagonal crosshatch.

On Martha's Vineyard as a whole, the map indicates that the most suitable areas for housing development, and particularly for affordable housing that is likely to be higher-density, are in and close to the centers of the three down-Island towns as well as infill areas within and near existing subdivisions. The provision of community water and sewer and access to services are the reasons these areas rank highly. In areas where the suitability criteria was not present, for example, up-Island, this area would be considered Neutral.

Based on the suitability criteria selected, is it no surprise that the traditional town center that is densely built ranks highly. The absence of utilities and large-lot zoning cause the area up-Island of Tashmoo to appear as Neutral.

Housing Suitability		
	Martha's Vineyard	Tisbury
Most Suitable	1,984 acres (3.5%)	701 acres (16.4%)
Suitable	5,627 acres (9.8%)	831 acres (19.4%)
Somewhat Suitable	7,373 acres (12.9%)	433 acres (10.1%)
Neutral	42,190 acres (73.8%)	2,317 acres (54.1%)





Data Layer	Rating
Existing Neighborhoods	
Infill within Existing Neighborhood	20
Within 1000' of Existing Neighborhood	10
Access to Services	
Inside or Within 2500' of Village Center	10
Within 1000' of Grocery Store	10
Municipal Services	
Served by Town Sewer	6
Served by Town Water	6
Within 2000' of School	6
Water Resources	
Non-Sensitive Water Area	2

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## 4.3 HOUSING ORIENTATIONS

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### 4.3.1 Goals

The Town of Tisbury recognizes that the issue of affordable housing is a regional issue that must be addressed. The Town of Tisbury is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing in the hopes of allowing current and future residents the opportunity to continue to reside within the community. It further recognizes the need to have a diverse housing stock in order to have a healthy and economically diverse community because the escalating rise in property values will continue to challenge affordable housing initiatives.

The Town of Tisbury hopes to produce an average of 3 affordable housing units annually for the next five years. Tisbury has participated in workshops and housing forums regarding innovative ways of addressing affordable housing. The town will continue to work with the other Island towns, the Dukes County Regional Housing Authority, and the Martha's Vineyard Commission, as well as other affordable housing groups to address the need for affordable housing.

### 4.3.2 Objectives

- A. The Town will work toward the State's goal of designating 10% of its year-round housing stock for affordable housing, as defined by DHCD, towards the state's Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory.
- B. The Town will identify and designate developable vacant Town-owned land that is appropriate for purposes of affordable housing
- C. The Town will support housing for both rental and home-ownership for households across a broad range of incomes.
- D. The Town will continue to seek monetary funding from the State, local, or private resources for the development or rehabilitation of homes for the purposes of affordable housing initiatives for both individuals and families earning at or below 80% of the area median income or earning up to 140% of the area median income.
- E. The Town will continue to refine its zoning bylaws for the purposes of encouraging affordable housing.
- F. The Town will encourage public or private development of affordable housing at increased density that is not currently allowed by zoning within certain areas of the Town.
- G. The Town will continue to support its Resident Homesite Program and will continue to refine the program to ensure that these lots remain affordable in perpetuity by deed restriction or other mechanism as deemed reasonable by the Town.

### 4.3.3 Ongoing Affordable Housing Efforts

The Town of Tisbury is active in several fronts listed above:

1. In 2001, the Town awarded 2 resident homesite lots.
2. In 2002, 2003, and 2004, the Town participated in a regional housing rehabilitation program funded by DHCD's Small Cities Program.

3. In 2002 and 2003, the Town participated in HUD's Section 202 affordable housing program for Island Elderly Housing.
4. In 2003 and 2004, the Town's ZBA approve 2 comprehensive permits projects resulting in the creation of 8 affordable housing units.
5. In 2003, the Town adopted a zoning bylaw to allow accessory apartments and substandard lots to be used for affordable housing.
6. The Town participated in HUD's Section 202 affordable housing program for Island Elderly Housing.
7. In 2003, the Town has participated in the Dukes County Regional Housing Authority's Rental Assistance Program.
8. In 2003, the Town reinstated a 7-member Affordable Housing Committee, which meets twice a month and is currently working on the development of 3 town-owned parcels for affordable housing.
9. In 2004, the Board of Selectmen dedicated operating funds to the Affordable Housing Committee.
10. In 2003, the Town voted to fund administrative costs for the Dukes County Regional Housing Authority.
11. In 2004, the Town voted to fund administrative costs for the Dukes County Regional Housing Authority.
12. The Town is represented on the Dukes County Regional Housing Authority Board of Directors.
13. The Town and the Affordable Housing Committee are actively working to create more resident homesite lots.



## 5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

The economies of all the towns of the Island are intimately interconnected. Many of the commercial services – shopping, offices, and other commercial and industrial activities – provided to citizens of Tisbury are located in other towns. Therefore, this section gives an overview of the Island’s economy as a whole and then calls out the specifics related to Tisbury within this overall context.

#### 5.1.1 The Seasonal Nature of Martha's Vineyard's Economy

For decades Martha’s Vineyard has been a classic seasonal economy. With the exception of some remaining commercial fishing, which employs only a very small number of people, there are no significant exports of Island goods. People come to the Vineyard for the sun, sand and natural beauty and to get away from the mainland’s hustle and bustle. The Martha’s Vineyard Commission estimates the number of people on the Vineyard in the peak summer months swells to five times the number of year-round residents. Aside from the economic boon these visitors bring by way of purchasing goods and services during their stay, the real estate taxes from second homes across the Island, and the philanthropy of the seasonal residents, allow for a much higher level of services on the Vineyard – both government and private – while also keeping tax levels low.

**Population, Jobs (Workforce), Labor Force and Number of Employers by Location**

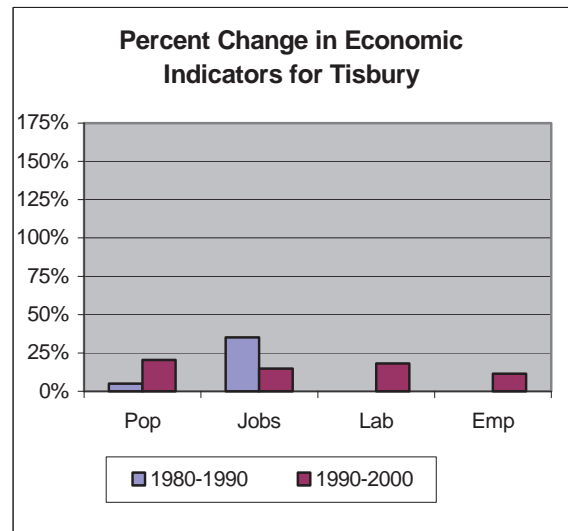
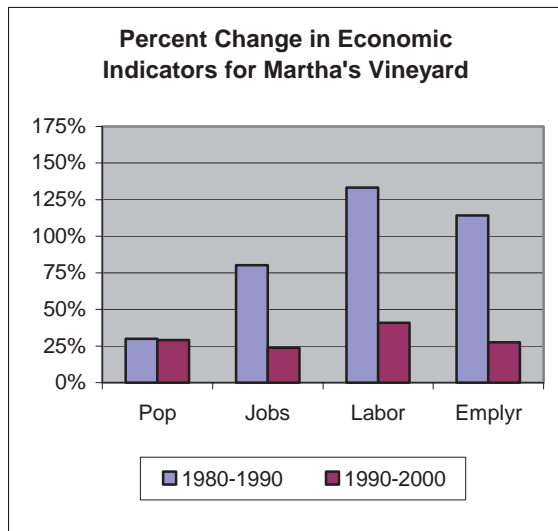
	1980				1990				2000			
	Pop	Jobs	Labor	Emplry	Pop	Jobs	Labor	Emplry	Pop	Jobs	Labor	Emplry
AQ	220	85	na	na	201	85	59	12	344	102	77	14
CH	489	228	na	na	650	359	152	35	843	448	303	59
ED	2,204	1,011	na	na	3,062	2,039	1,451	226	3,779	2,581	2,004	308
OB	1,984	764	na	na	2,804	1,700	1,210	173	3,713	2,027	1,849	193
TI	<b>2,972</b>	<b>1,383</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>na</b>	<b>3,120</b>	<b>1,870</b>	<b>1,971</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>3,755</b>	<b>2,145</b>	<b>2,327</b>	<b>361</b>
WT	1,010	509	na	na	1,704	1,124	221	48	2,467	1,584	578	109
<b>MV</b>	<b>8,879</b>	<b>3,980</b>	<b>2,172</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>11,541</b>	<b>7,177</b>	<b>5,064</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>14,901</b>	<b>8,887</b>	<b>7,138</b>	<b>1,044</b>

Source: U.S. Census; MA Dept. of Employment and Training

There are many layers to the economic structure of any tourist and seasonal community. Identifying the makeup of the seasonal population is essential to understanding the overall complexities of the Vineyard economy. The ratio between year-round and seasonal housing occupancy is a vital component of the dynamics of the Island economy. The driving force of the island’s economic base is the second homeowner. Vineyard towns are financially dependent on seasonal residents and second homeowners because they pay property taxes, and they do not require the most costly of public services – education of children. However, visitors do require higher levels of some town services, emergency services in particular. The extreme fluctuations from peak season to the winter season place severe strains on town infrastructure for water, sewer, solid waste, and especially the Island’s road network. The tourist and seasonal nature of the Vineyard poses significant challenges to the Island

towns to be able to balance the needs of a growing year-round population while accommodating the seasonal population.

Looking at the changes in a few selected economic indicators over the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the large increases in jobs, labor force and employers from 1980 to 1990 reflect the national economy and Island building boom of the mid-80s. In all categories, the Island-wide growth ranged from 30% (population) to 133% (labor force). Between 1990 and 2000, the same categories grew at a markedly slower, and much more uniform, pace. Not all of the comparable 1980 data exists for Tisbury, but for these four indicators over the 1990s, it can generally be said that the Town grew at roughly half the rate as the Vineyard as a whole.



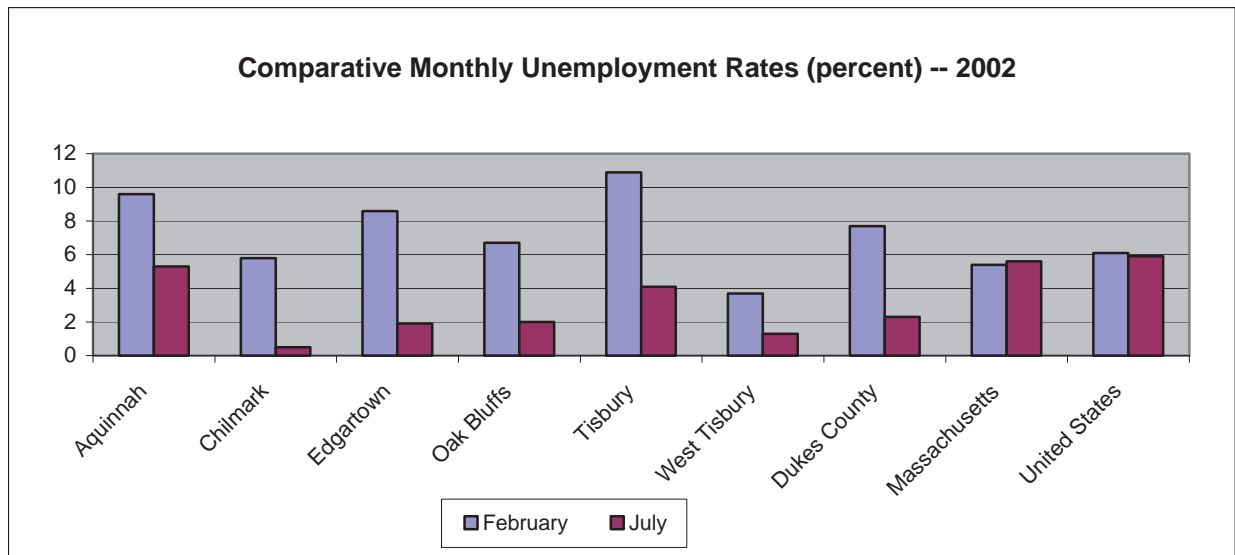
Source: U.S. Census; MA Dept. of Employment and Training

The consumer spending of the seasonal population, whether by a year-round resident, seasonal resident, vacationer, or day-tripper, is an essential part of the economy and can vary widely among the sub-groups. The popularity of the Vineyard within the past twenty years has allowed seasonal retail and service businesses to extend their operations to broader and broader shoulder seasons.

As mentioned in the section on housing, perhaps the most significant challenge posed by the seasonal nature of the Vineyard has been the adverse impact on the housing availability and affordability for both year-round residents and seasonal workers. One key to a stable economy is the community's ability to maintain an adequate workforce by providing housing opportunities, particularly for low and moderate-income residents who perform many of the jobs necessary for businesses, government and organizations to operate. In addition to having a majority of their dwellings occupied seasonally (except for Tisbury and West Tisbury, which have more year-round dwellings than seasonal ones), the additional demand for housing by temporary workers filling the approximately 5,000 additional summer jobs creates a sellers' market and escalates the cost for all housing.

The difference in demand for seasonal workers is evident in the employment fluctuations during the months of July and August. Balancing the needs such as housing for workers, parking, transportation,

and the market demands of the year-round and seasonal economies is a challenge to the Island communities.



Source: MA Dept. of Employment and Training

The seasonal effect on year-round residents is evident when looking at unemployment rates on a monthly basis rather than annual. While there is not much difference in the unemployment numbers in July and February for the mainland, on island they increase in the off-season from two to more than four times the July rate.

### 5.1.2 Geographic Structure of Economic Activity

The primary economic activities, both seasonally and year-round, on Martha’s Vineyard take place predominantly within the down-Island town centers of Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, and Tisbury. Each town center is located around its own harbor and waterfront areas that are surrounded by dense commercial, mixed-use, and residential development. In Edgartown and Oak Bluffs, these are comprised of primarily seasonal-oriented establishments that typically close in the off-season. Tisbury’s “working harbor” still has many marine dependent businesses and fewer seasonal endeavors. Even in Tisbury, however, most year-round retail and office activities have grown away from the historical commercial centers, most notably Upper Main Street in Edgartown and Upper State Road in Tisbury. Although seasonality is particularly pronounced in Oak Bluffs – historically the most tourist-oriented town – it has managed to contain its seasonal and year-round businesses in a relatively unified area.

The concentration of tourist-oriented commercial activities such as shops, restaurants and inns, is related to the location of ferry terminals. The only year-round port of entry to Martha’s Vineyard by ferry is the Steamship Authority (SSA) in Vineyard Haven. The SSA, the only ferry that carries vehicles, also operates seasonally in Oak Bluffs from May to October. Other seasonal passenger ferries operate predominately out of Oak Bluffs and Tisbury and to a much more limited extent in Edgartown. Within the past five years, cruise ships have been allowed to anchor just outside of Oak Bluffs Harbor (and occasionally, Tisbury’s) for the day, usually twice a week, that bring anywhere from 800 to 1,600

passengers for a single day. For most visitors, their first and last impressions of the Island usually will occur in either Tisbury or Oak Bluffs.

Other retail and office activities are located in smaller centers up-Island. The West Tisbury village center and the village centers of Chilmark -- Menemsha and Chilmark Center -- are small areas of limited commercial activity. A cluster of businesses at North Tisbury, along State Road north of North Road, while not a formal business district of West Tisbury, is an area of mostly seasonal activity.

Traditionally, Tisbury was the main commercial center of the Island with a concentration of year-round facilities, stores and offices. Although the absolute number of commercial establishments in Tisbury continues to grow, the town's relative commercial strength has declined for many years with commercial development taking place in other towns including locations such as the Airport Business Park and North Tisbury.

Over the past twenty years, the retail activity on Main Street has evolved. Once made up almost exclusively of year-round service retail (ex. grocery store, barber shop), there is now a considerable number of shops and restaurants that appeal largely to visitors. However, it would appear that many visitors shun Vineyard Haven, heading instead to Oak Bluffs and Edgartown. There are many underused lots, the pedestrian environment is not as safe and attractive as it could be and one of the town's greatest assets, the waterfront, is largely inaccessible.

The newest and largest of the up-Island business areas (and most down-Island) is West Tisbury's business district. The attraction for locating in the Business District may, in part, be due to the less available land down-Island, but the fact that one-quarter of the Island's year-round population now resides up-Island provides a greater potential market businesses at a location more convenient for up-Islanders. Adding to the convenience factor is the absence of traffic congestion relative to the traditional down-Island business centers.

Industrial activities are found in various in-town and rural locations scattered in different parts of the Island, notably in the Airport Business Park. The park, which was specifically designed in the 1980's to be used for warehousing and other industrial uses, is nearing its capacity.

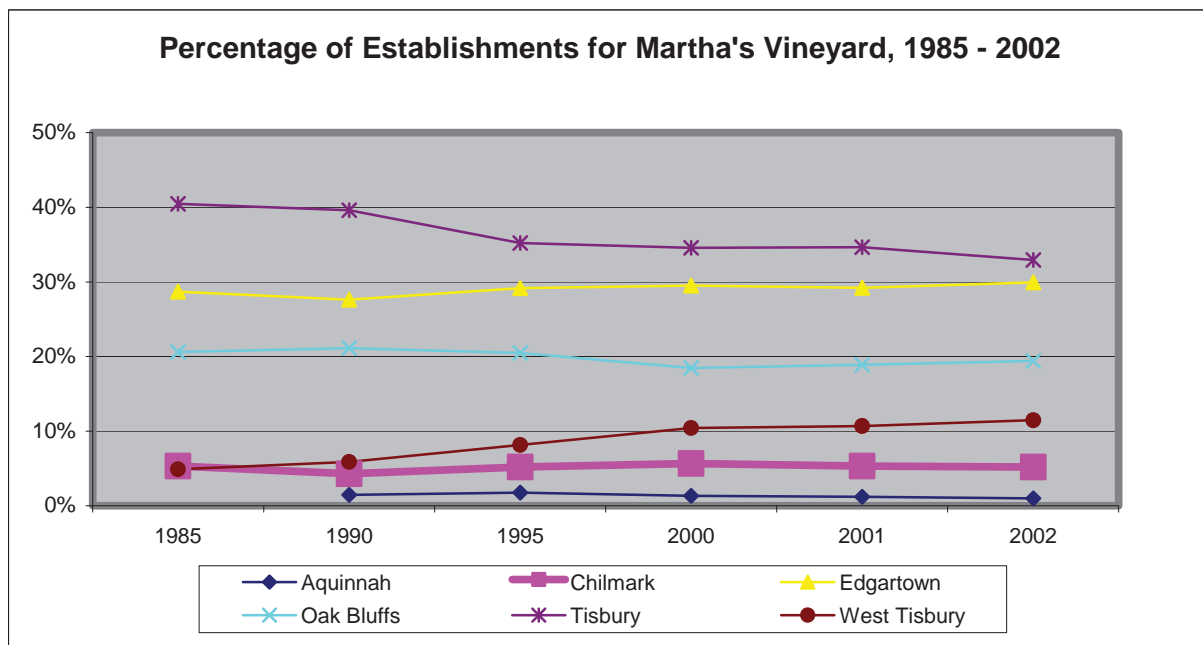
Martha's Vineyard has a considerable number of home businesses throughout the Island. Dispersed in residential neighborhoods are businesses such in construction, renovation, maintenance and landscaping. Combined, such home-based businesses likely represent a greater share of businesses than those in business zones. This is especially true for the Up-Island towns. As the population increases and home-based businesses become more successful and larger, conflicts with residents have also increased in the down-Island towns and in West Tisbury

### **5.1.3 Business Establishments**

The Island of Martha's Vineyard has seen continued growth in the total number of business establishments (employers reporting payroll withholding taxes) between 1985 and 2002. The percentages of establishments in the up-Island towns of Aquinnah and Chilmark have remained constant. The number of establishments in West Tisbury has grown at an accelerated rate since 1990

and represents an increasing percentage of the Island's businesses. As for the down-Island communities of Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, and Tisbury, the total number of establishments has increased within each town. On the basis of percentage of establishments Island-wide, Tisbury and, to a much lesser extent, Oak Bluffs have lost their proportional share of the Island's business establishments to West Tisbury.

Approximately two-thirds of the establishments on Martha's Vineyard employ between one to four individuals, according to the US Census County-to-County Business Patterns. The 2003 Business Survey conducted jointly by the MVC and the MV Chamber of Commerce indicated a somewhat larger size (possibly because there was an under-representation of home businesses) with an average of five to six full-time employees in retail businesses and eight to ten full-time workers in not retail businesses. The survey figures did not include part-time workers or seasonal workers.



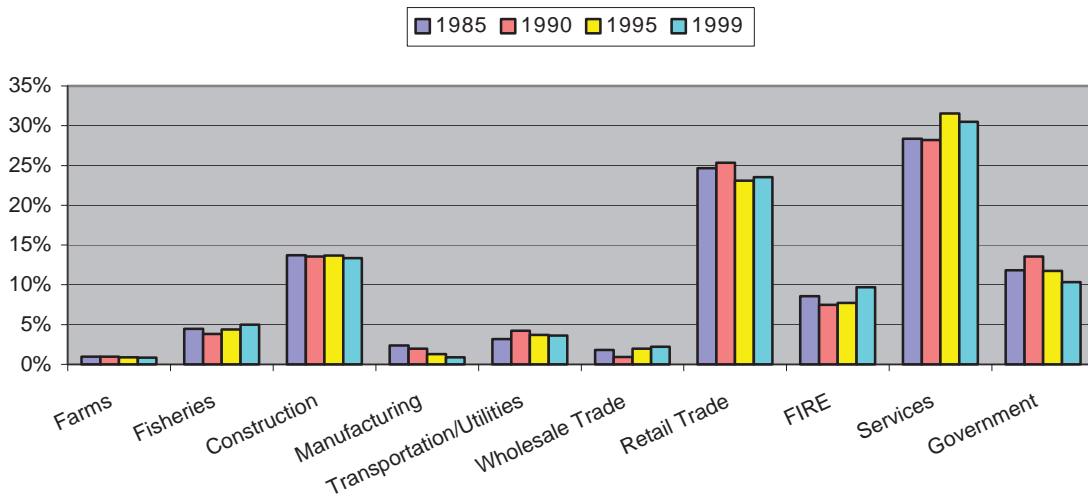
Source: MA Dept. of Employment and Training

#### 5.1.4 Types of Jobs and Wages

Island-wide, retail and services (health care, landscapers, lodging, etc.) jobs have, combined, consistently accounted for more than half of all reported employment. (Note: 'Reported' employment is an important distinction to make in evaluating employment figures. Most employment numbers from federal sources come only from employers required to file withholding taxes for their employees. Sole proprietors, of whom there are many on the Island, are not counted in these employment numbers.) Construction and government jobs account for another quarter of total employment. Perhaps most surprisingly, construction jobs have consistently represented between 13 and 14% of total employment

for the five-year intervals measured between 1985 and 1999. Although seasonal tourism requires a lot of retail, service, and construction jobs, the magnitude of these numbers also reflect the growing and stabilizing year-round Island economy in response to the continued strong growth in year-round population.

**Percent Change in Employment Sectors  
Dukes County**



FIRE is Finance, Insurance and Real Estate  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

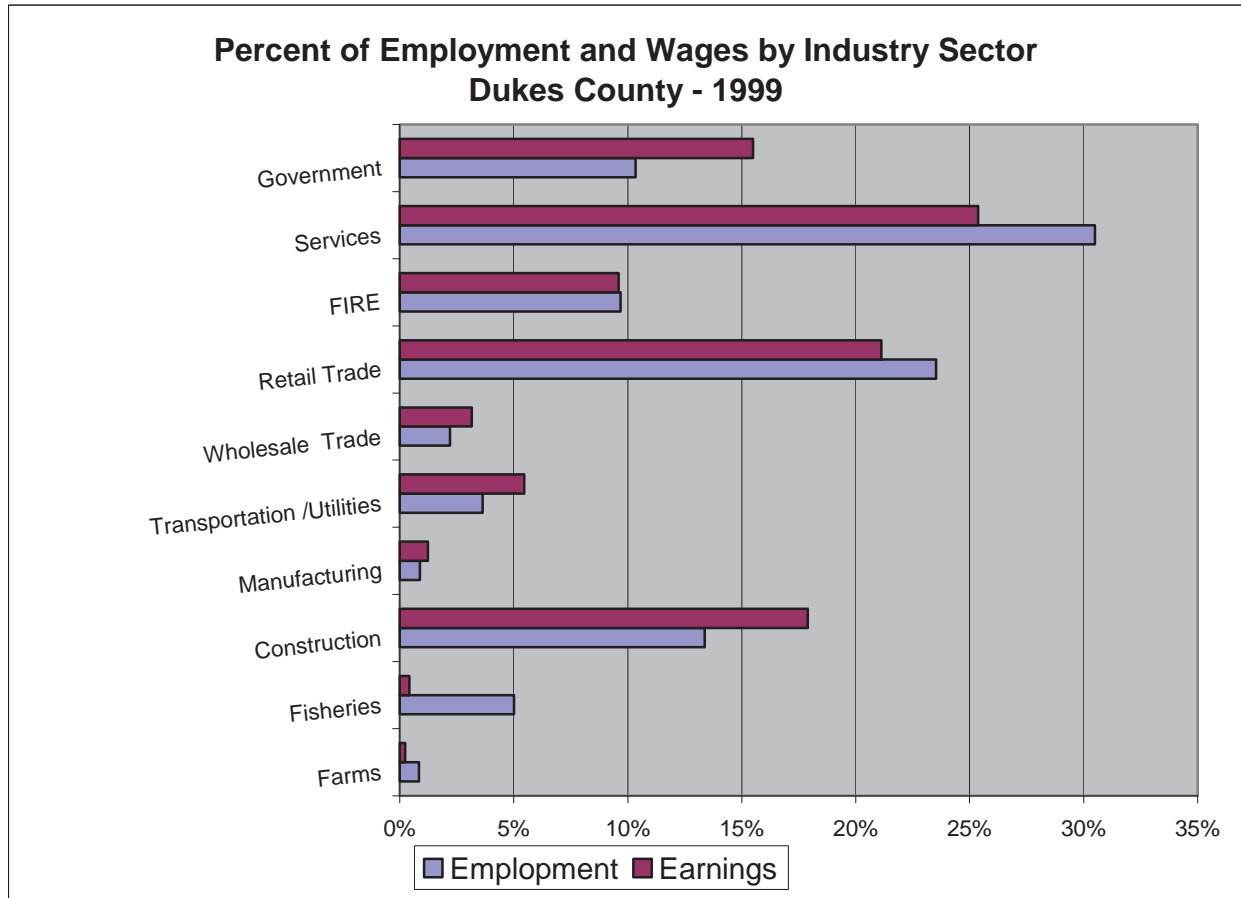
Because not all jobs pay comparable wages, examination of the total wages represented by each employment sector provides another perspective of the local economy. While retail and service jobs represented 54% of employment in 1999, they accounted for only 47% of the total Island wages. Conversely, the 24% of Island jobs in construction and government actually provided 33% of all wages.

### 5.1.5 Workforce

Reviewing the comparisons of workforce employment – the number of jobs in a town – for all of the towns on Martha’s Vineyard from 1985 to 2002, the workforce trends varied from the business establishment findings for the down-Island towns. From 1985 to 2002, there has been an increase in the number of workers working within each town except for Tisbury where there has been a decrease in the number of workers from 2001 to 2002. Nevertheless, Tisbury still had the largest number of workers, followed by Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, West Tisbury, Chilmark, and Aquinnah. The workforce differential among the three down-Island towns is equalizing – much like their year-round populations. Island-wide percentages of the workforce figures within four of the towns, particularly Tisbury and West Tisbury, were more similar with the percentage trends in the number of business establishments.

From 1985 to 2002, the Town of Tisbury had the highest workforce percentage, despite gradual declines in percentages Island-wide from 1990, when Tisbury peaked at 39%, to 33% in 2002. It

is clear that the Town of West Tisbury has picked up Tisbury's lost percentages. From 1985 to 2002, the Town of West Tisbury has increased from 4% to 10%. In 1985 Edgartown had 32% of the island workforce while Oak Bluffs had 23%. Over the over the next ten years there was a shift between the two towns, Edgartown experienced a 4% decline while Oak Bluffs experienced a 5% gain. Since 1995, Edgartown has led Oak Bluffs by a margin no greater than two percent. Chilmark and Aquinnah, combined, have totaled no more than 5% of the Island's workforce.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

### 5.1.6 Issues Related to Economic Activity

Some Island boards are in the process of re-evaluating various transportation, housing, and zoning issues while considering the current and future economic needs of the year-round community. Concerns being raised within this Community Development Planning process as well as in the context of preparing the Tisbury Master Plan include:

- the application of smart growth principles to encourage mixed-use development for commercial and housing,
- increasing density within already developed areas,

- creation of satellite parking to better serve commercial areas,
- dealing with concerns about un-regulated industries such as home businesses including conflicts with surrounding residential areas,
- the need to accommodate growth in commercial space,
- the possibility of designating areas for other types of service businesses and light industrial uses (the Airport Business Park, which was specifically designed in the 1980's to be used for warehousing and other industrial uses, is currently operating near full capacity).

Tisbury is particularly interested in keeping a good mix of seasonal and year-round businesses downtown while retaining the working water front. It is also looking at how to relieve traffic congestion along Upper State Road and assessing the appropriate use for the largely undeveloped area, sometimes called "the Wedge," owned predominantly by the Town.



## 5.2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUITABILITY ANALYSIS

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The economic development suitability analysis used the same methodology as previously described for open space and for housing. The criteria were based largely on Smart Growth principles of favoring development that uses existing infrastructure and consolidates development rather than sprawling into environmentally sensitive and other rural areas. As much of Martha's Vineyard is rural, with some towns unreceptive to any additional commercial activity, the identification of suitability criteria was difficult. Some of the Smart Growth principles, such as proximity to public transit, when applied as suitability criteria on the Vineyard, produced distinctly un-Smart Growth results, namely strip roadside development. A half dozen potential suitability criteria in addition to those listed below were tried in more than a dozen trial models of the analysis and were ultimately discarded as being inappropriate for evaluating economic development suitability on Martha's Vineyard.






The following were the criteria used for evaluating the suitability of land for economic development.

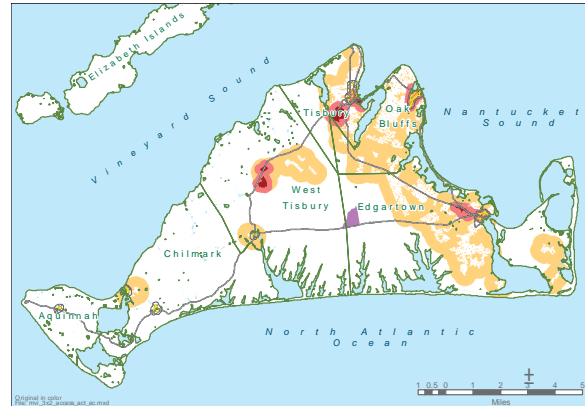
1. **Access to Activities:** In or Near Village Center; In or Near Existing Commercial Areas; In Airport Business Area, Near Existing Neighborhood
2. **Municipal Services:** Close to Major Road; Served by Town Water; Served by Town Sewer
3. **Water Resources:** Not in Nitrogen-Sensitive Watershed

These are explained in more detail in the following tables, followed by the resulting economic development suitability map.

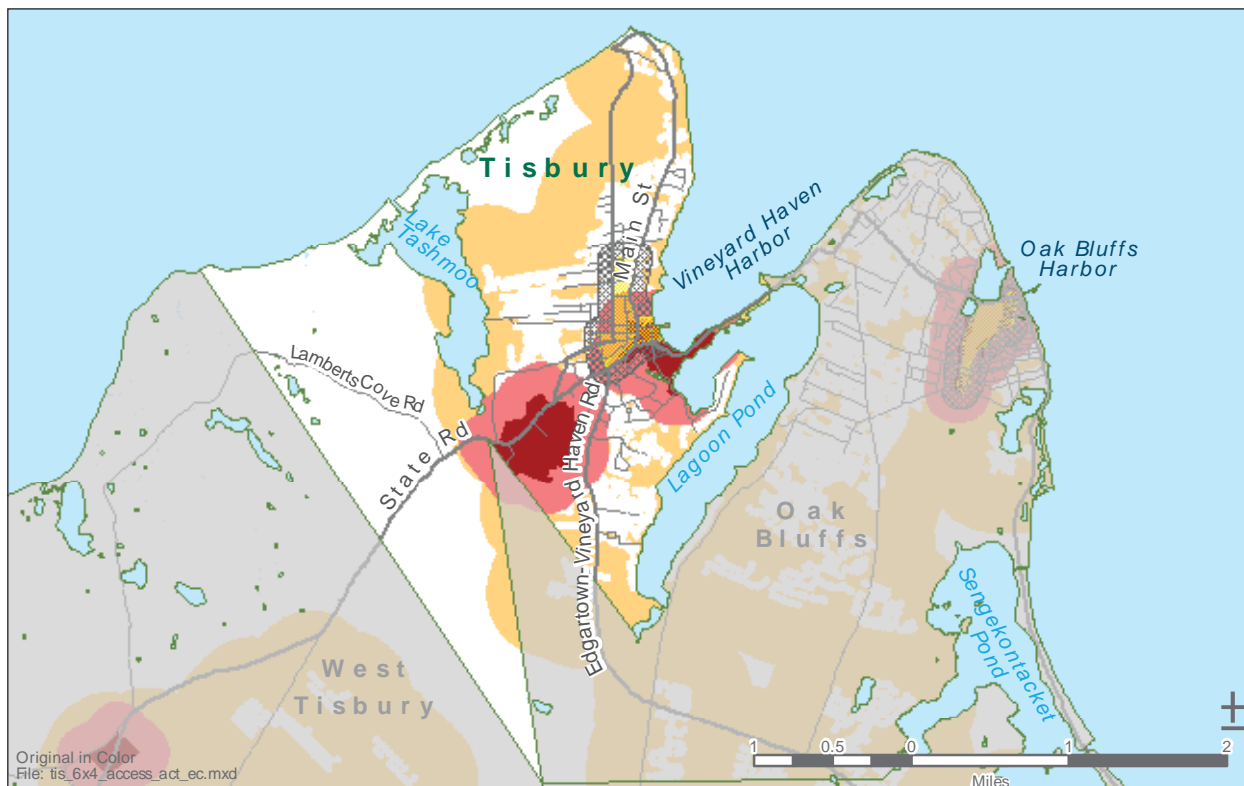
### 5.2.1. Access to Activities

Consolidating development in or near existing commercial areas allows for creating concentrated and vital commercial areas while limiting the negative impacts of commercial development on residential and rural areas. These are primarily down-Island. It is also desirable to reinforce existing village centers, which even down-Island may not be the same area as the principal commercial area, so these centers were given additional points. An additional criterion was given to lands proximate to existing neighborhoods in order to provide access for jobs and use of these services by residents.

Criteria for Economic Development Suitability Access to Activities in Tisbury		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
 Inside commercial area	20	188
 Within 1,000' of commercial area	10	438
 Inside village center	8	80
 Within 500' of village center	6	123
 Within 2000' of neighborhood	2	1,354



Source: Towns' Assessors/Cartographic Assoc. 2003;  
MV Conservation Partnership 1999; MVC 2004  
Note: the Airport Business Park was given 10 points



### 5.2.2. Municipal Services

These criteria were explained and mapped in section 4.2.2.

Criteria for Economic Development Suitability Municipal Services in Tisbury		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
Served by Town Sewer	6	24
Served by Town Water	6	2,463
Within 200' of major road	6	431

### 5.2.3 Water Resources

This criterion was also used in the housing suitability analysis and is explained in section 4.2.4.

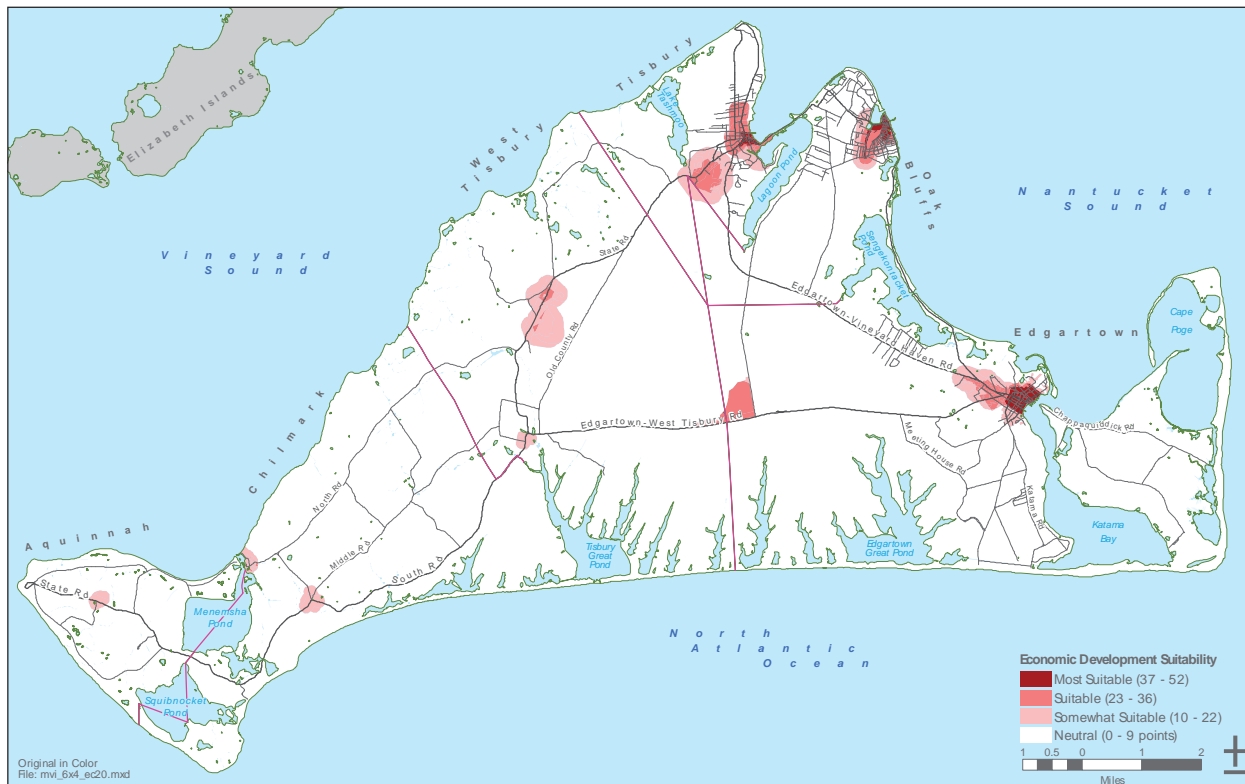
Criteria for Economic Development Suitability Water Resources in Tisbury		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
Secondary non-sensitive water area	2	1,577

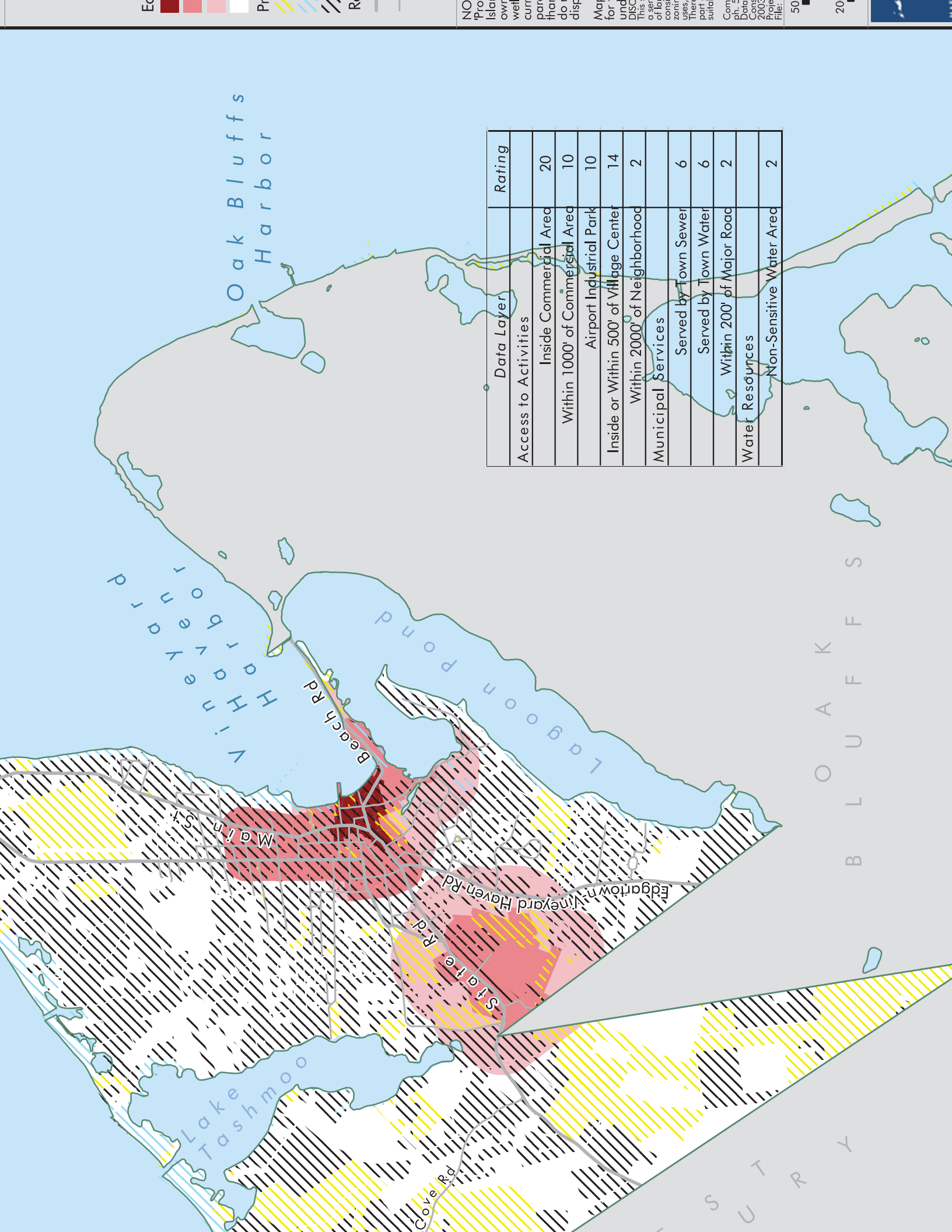
## 5.2.4 Economic Development Suitability Map

As in the previous sections, this map shows the overall suitability of land for economic development, based on a combination of all the criteria described in this section, with the intensity of the color reflecting the degree of suitability. Lands that are already preserved or developed are overlaid with a diagonal crosshatch.

On Martha's Vineyard as a whole, the map indicates that the most suitable locations for additional commercial development are in and near the existing commercial areas, notably in the down-Island towns.

Economic Development Suitability		
	Martha's Vineyard	Tisbury
Most Suitable	217 acres (0.4%)	35 acres (0.8%)
Suitable	765 acres (1%)	343 acres (8.2%)
Somewhat Suitable	1,487 acres (2.6%)	343 acres (8.2%)
Neutral	55,203 acres (96%)	3,485 acres (83.3%)





Data Layer	Rating
Access to Activities	
Inside Commercial Area	20
Within 1000' of Commercial Area	10
Airport Industrial Park	10
Inside or Within 500' of Village Center	14
Within 2000' of Neighborhood	2
Municipal Services	
Served by Town Sewer	6
Served by Town Water	6
Within 200' of Major Road	2
Water Resources	
Non-Sensitive Water Area	2

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### 5.3 ORIENTATIONS

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The town of Tisbury should:

- Reinforce the town's role as the main year-round commercial area on the Island,
- Improve the town's attractiveness to seasonal residents and visitors.

#### Upper State Road

The suitability analysis indicates the only large area of "available" land in Tisbury with high suitability for development is the Upper State Road area, particularly the area between State Road and the Park-and-Ride. In fact, this is the largest area of available land on the Island with high suitability for commercial development and no suitability for open space or natural resource protection.

The town should prepare a development/redevelopment plan for this area that addresses the following objectives:

- Reducing traffic congestion and increasing public safety.
- Encouraging the use of mass transit.
- Creating opportunities for new housing, especially affordable housing.
- Adding to our open lands, not diminishing them.
- Repairing and restoring those portions of our streets and landscape that have been disrupted by recent developments. Improving the overall visual quality of the town.
- Finding ways for the town to grow while preserving its village character and protecting its open space.

This plan could include the following concepts:

- Building a connecting road system linking State Road and Edgartown Road.
- Creating a transit center at the Park-and-Ride lot.
- Extending commercial development along High Point Lane.
- Relocating emergency services to the area.
- Creating a motor vehicle storage within the landfill.
- Expanding residential development, looking for affordable housing possibilities.
- Restoring the landscape.
- Increasing open spaces and preservation lands.
- Expanding recreational opportunities.

#### Downtown and Waterfront

Downtown Vineyard Haven has the potential to strengthen its appeal as a commercial destination for Islanders and visitors.

The town should prepare a redevelopment plan for this area that addresses the following objectives:

- Creating a "Harbor Walk" along the shore of Vineyard Haven Harbor.
- Establishing a system of pedestrian walks and spaces for all of downtown.
- Integrating the parking lots with the pedestrian system.

- Re-routing Union Street.
- Defining Beach Street – from Main Street to the water – as the central corridor of the town.
- Relocating the fire department and other emergency services.
- Consolidating Town Hall functions at the (former) site of the Fire Department on Beach Road.
- Creating new uses for existing town properties.

## 6. SYNTHESIS – PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The final step in the suitability analysis was to combine the three suitability maps.

### 6.1 Development

The map below represents the combination of the Housing and the Economic Development Suitability Maps into an overall Development Suitability Map. Those areas that were “suitable” for either housing or economic development were considered “high”; those areas that were neutral or “somewhat suitable” were rated “low”. Remember that this exercise is without considering zoning, ownership, or the suitability of land for open space or natural resource protection that, in many cases, could have a higher priority in determining the ultimate use of the land.

### 6.2 Development versus Conservation

These maps represent the combination of the Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation Suitability Map with the Development Suitability Map. The maps indicates those areas where the suitability for preservation and development are complementary and where they conflict.

Suitability for Development versus Conservation		
	Martha's Vineyard	Tisbury
Neutral	1,827 acres (3%)	167 acres (4%)
Development Only	1,750 acres (3%)	499 acres (12%)
Somewhat Suitable Open Space & Development	2,952 acres (5%)	673 acres (16%)
Somewhat Suitable Open Space Only	6,547 acres (11%)	471 acres (11%)
Suitable Open Space & Development	1,273 acres (2%)	189 acres (5%)
Suitable Open Space Only	18,993 acres (33%)	788 acres (19%)
Most Suitable Open Space & Development	1,917 acres (3%)	241 acres (6%)
Most Suitable Open Space Only	21,808 acres (38%)	1,154 acres (28%)



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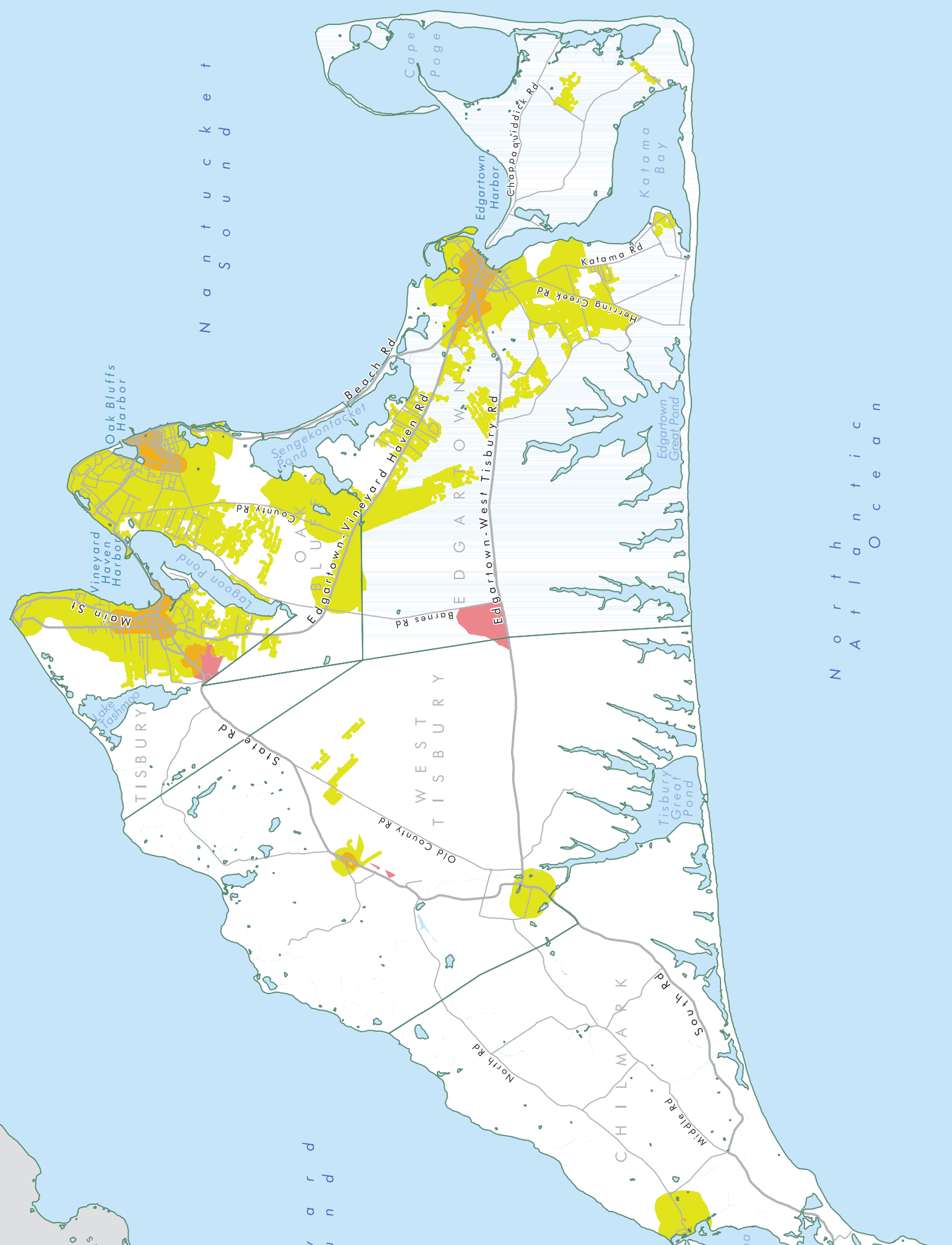
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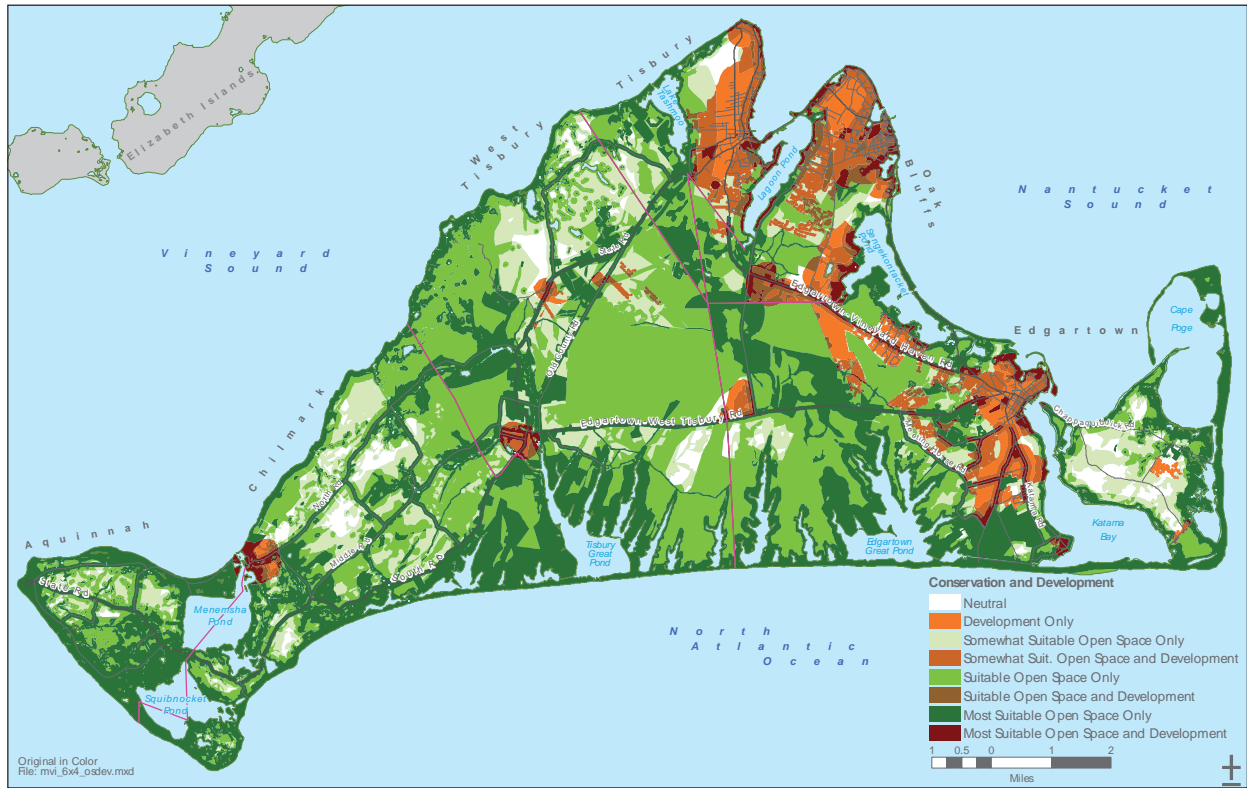
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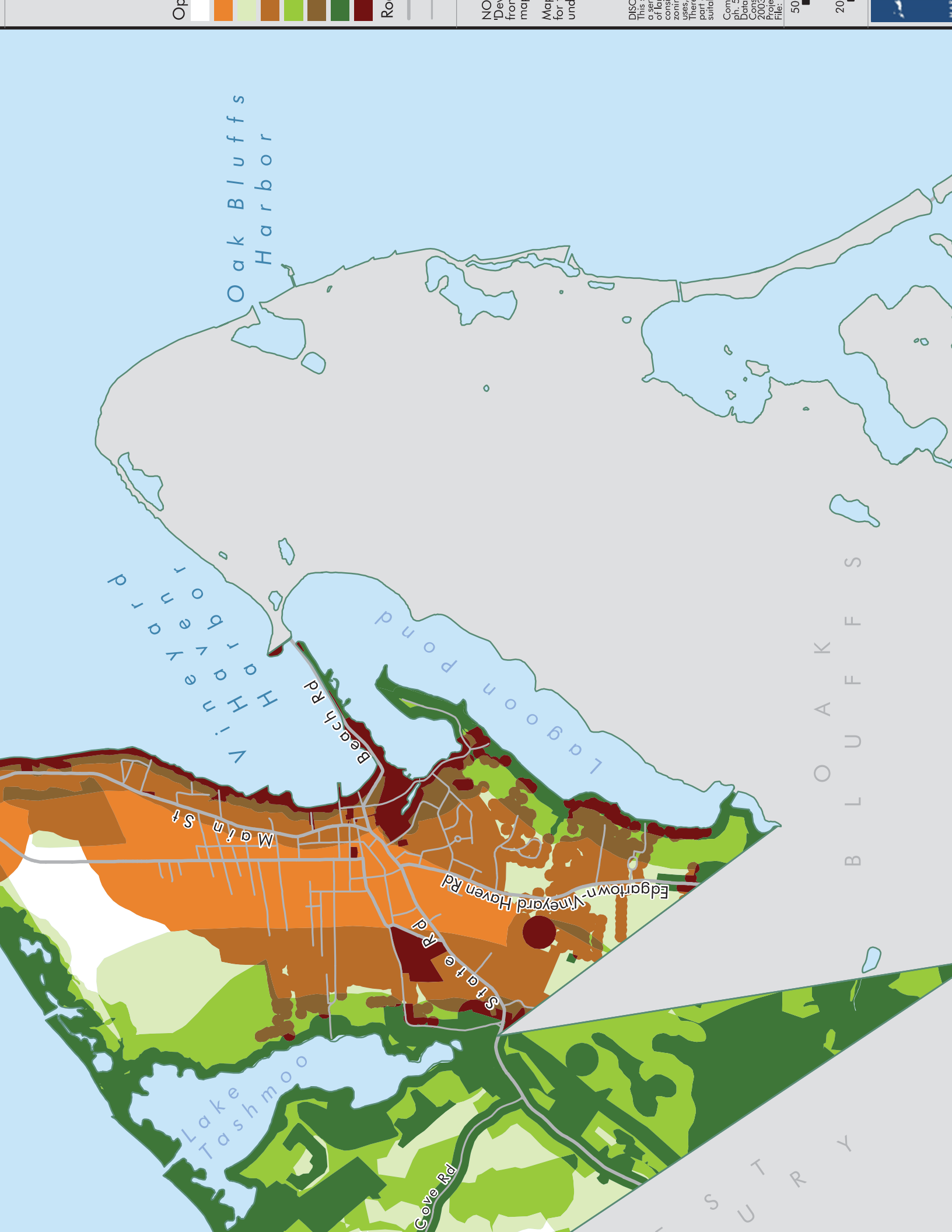
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Fold-out map of Town on opposite page



Oak Bluffs  
Harbor

Vineyard  
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Main St

Edgartown-Vineyard  
Haven Rd

State Rd

Lake  
Tashmoo

Grove Rd

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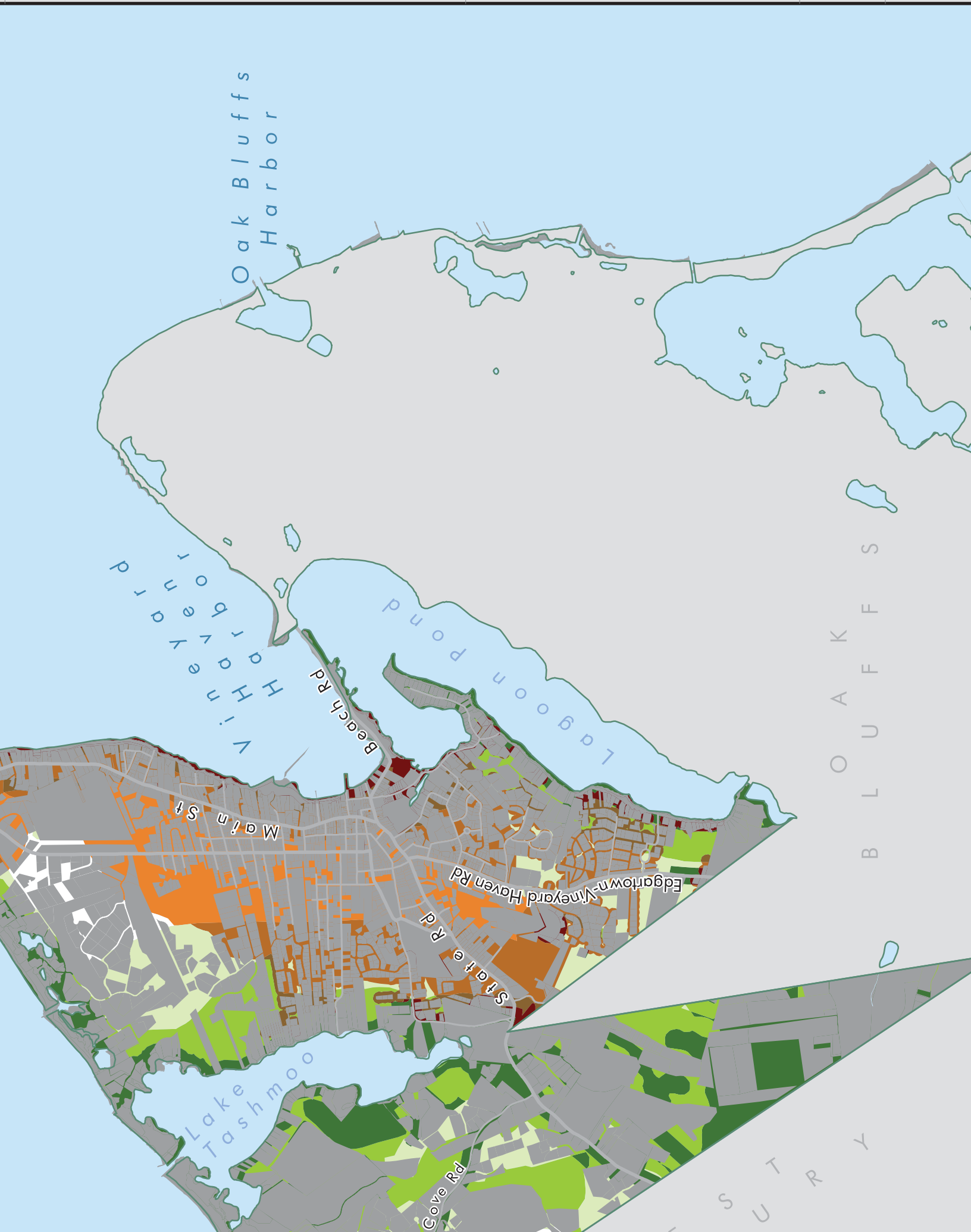
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Oak Bluffs  
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Tashmoo

Cove Rd

B L O O K S

S U R Y

### 6.3 Zoning and Implementation Policies

The results of the suitability analysis were compared to the Town's existing zoning to identify areas where the community might wish to consider changes to make the zoning correspond more appropriately with the suitability of various parts of the Town for various uses.

Tisbury, and in fact all of Martha's Vineyard, is an older, largely developed community that has put considerable effort into thinking about what it wants to be. So it is not surprising that all of the Island towns have largely reaffirmed their existing policies with respect to land use.

The following map indicates the basic proposed land uses as well as those areas where additional analysis of possible uses and densities could take place.

### 6.4 Next Steps

The results of the suitability analysis suggest that Tisbury's current zoning is appropriate. The Town might consider acquisition of land for open space and natural resource protection, particularly those most highly rated in the suitability analysis; especially if said lands also rated low in the development suitability analysis.

The Martha's Vineyard Commission might also use the results of the suitability analysis in the following ways:

- Consider a policy to require mandatory clustering in areas of highest open space and natural resource suitability when reviewing proposed Developments of Regional Impact;
- Consider the development and open space preservation suitability when reviewing proposed Developments of Regional Impact;
- Consider enlarging or creating Districts of Critical Planning Concern to protect those areas that rated in the highest categories in the open space and natural resource suitability analysis.

The Island's conservation organizations are also encouraged to use the open space and natural preservation suitability map as a guide to identifying properties for possible preservation.

The Community Development planning process has proven to be extremely valuable in many ways. It has allowed the towns and the MVC to gain a much clearer understanding of the various factors involved in land use decisions through the compilation and validation of GIS mapping and other data related to land use, housing and economic development. The open space and natural resource preservation suitability map can serve as a guide for public agencies and conservation organizations by highlighting the land most important to preserve through acquisition of property and conservation restrictions, or through the permitting process by the MVC and town boards. Affordable housing committees can use the housing suitability criteria and maps to focus in on properties for possible projects.

The process has also led the steering committees of all six towns, to conclude that this planning effort should serve as the basis for a comprehensive Island-wide planning effort to re-articulate the broader community's vision for the future growth of the Vineyard. This effort should be a collaboration between

the Martha's Vineyard Commission and all six Island towns.

Certain issues can only be dealt with on an Island-wide basis, such as how much additional commercial development there should be and where it should take place. In the community development plans, most communities reaffirmed the extent of the present business districts, with the possible exception of Tisbury that wished to explore a possible expansion of the Upper State Road business area into a presently underused area to create a mixed-use neighborhood. It is believed that more efficient use of existing commercial districts will be able to accommodate future growth. However, the Martha's Vineyard Commission and the towns should work together to test this hypothesis in more detail by estimating how much additional commercial development can be absorbed in existing commercial areas. A significant limiting factor to more concentrated development is the limited community sewer capacity for two of the three down-Island towns and all of the up-Island towns. Ideally, this testing could be done by preparing sketch plans for each of these areas. If it is anticipated that additional commercial space will be needed, several options can be explored:

- enlarging existing commercial districts,
- creating a large new commercial district in a new location (e.g. the airport),
- creating small commercial districts dispersed in various Island locations.

Other issues that could be dealt with in this comprehensive planning effort are:

- rate of growth;
- affordable and moderate housing;
- wastewater management;
- preservation of scenic values, including a revisit of the Island Road DCPC and the Coastal DCPC with a view to strengthening its effectiveness;
- traffic and transportation;
- dealing with economic changes in the community;
- open space protection;
- implementation of smart growth principles of concentrating development in compact, mixed-use neighborhoods and preserving rural and other natural areas.

## APPENDIX – WATER RESOURCES

### **Tisbury Surface Water Resources:**

There are two significant coastal water bodies in the Town of Tisbury. These include Lagoon Pond, which is shared with the Town of Oak Bluffs and Lake Tashmoo. Both systems receive large groundwater inputs at their inland end, resulting in fresh water wetlands and artificially created fresh water ponds. Based on water quality analyses, the growth of phytoplankton and marine wrack algae in both systems have been revealed to be clearly limited by the availability of nitrogen. Both systems manifest some symptoms of excess nitrogen loading, including some decline in eelgrass beds, the growth of epiphytic (slime) algae and production of wrack algae.

The groundwater area that contributes water to Lake Tashmoo within the Towns of Tisbury, Oak Bluffs and West Tisbury is 2091 acres (Stone Environmental, Inc. 2002). There were 566 residential and commercial units at the time and 56 vacant lots. The potential to more than double the units in the watershed exists but the middle growth projection would result in a 50 percent increase.

The groundwater area that contributes water to Lagoon Pond within the Town of Tisbury is 609 acres (MVC, 2000). This area included 490 lots with a residential or commercial building and 126 acres of vacant land and 88 acres of open space and 54 acres of farmland. In addition 158 acres had a residence but had potential for further subdivision.

### **Buildout and Related Water Quality Concerns:**

The greatest threats to water quality are the nitrogen loading from septic systems. Disposal of wastewater from existing dwellings adds nitrogen to the groundwater and eventually to the coastal pond to which that groundwater discharges. The ability of a coastal pond to process nitrogen is dependent on how quickly tidal exchange carries the nitrogen out of the system. The longer the nitrogen is resident in a coastal pond, the more times it can be passed on to stimulate the growth of new generations of phytoplankton and wrack algae. The water quality in both systems will be reduced by the nitrogen loading from their watersheds because marine plant growth in these systems is limited by the availability of nitrogen. The degree of the impact and its acceptability can be assessed by determining the water quality loading limit for the desired water quality goal.

In Lagoon Pond, the water quality goal selected was the "highest quality" goal. Based on the tidal exchange for the Pond system that is estimated to require 9 days to remove 95% of the nitrogen entering the system on any given day, the recommended loading limit for the Lagoon is 17,000 kilograms of nitrogen per year. This is equal to the present day load and will be exceeded by over 5,000 kilograms under the MVC's moderate growth buildout scenario. Lagoon Pond shows symptoms of nitrogen loading including decrease in coverage of eelgrass beds, low oxygen levels in the deep water toward the southern end of the pond and growth of wrack algae. Water quality maintenance in Lagoon Pond will require constraints to growth in its watershed. Primary fish resources include bay scallop, quahog and soft shell clams as well as herring and sport fish.

In Lake Tashmoo, the interim nitrogen-loading limit ranges from 9,000 kilograms for highest water quality to 27,000 kilograms for good water quality. However, the present day load of about 6,000 kilograms is causing some undesirable water quality symptoms in the southern half of the pond. The tidal exchange is vigorous and a 95% removal of nitrogen entering the system is expected to occur within 3 to 4 days. Projected annual nitrogen loading from all sources is estimated at 8,000 to 11,500 kilograms. Continued good quality water will be reduced under the projected buildout. The installation of first-flush basins along West Spring Street by the Highway Department and Tisbury Waterways has greatly reduced stormwater inputs to Lake Tashmoo. Primary fish resources include soft-shelled clams, quahogs as well as herring and sport fish.

Options to address water quality impacts include:

- Treat stormwater runoff entering the Lagoon.

- Extend the sewer service area in the Tashmoo watershed.

- The Tisbury Sewer system will alleviate a small portion of the nitrogen loading to Lagoon Pond.

- Create nitrogen management area(s) where denitrifying technology is required.

- Educate the public to continue to keep landscape areas small and fertilizer inputs low.

**Fresh water resources:**

Growth of aquatic plants and phytoplankton in these resources are usually not limited by nitrogen but instead are affected by phosphorus loading from the surrounding watershed. The primary fresh surface water resources in the Town of Tisbury include:

Upper Lagoon Pond	13 acres
Upper Tashmoo Pond	1 acre
Mink Meadows Ponds	about 8 acres in two ponds
Cranberry Acres Ponds	about 8 acres in three ponds

Upper Lagoon Pond has been sampled at the Herring Run over a number of years. The discharge reveals periodic high levels of chlorophyll and particulate matter reflecting algae blooms. A flow meter is currently in the run to determine the quantity of fresh water and nutrients discharged into the Lagoon Pond from the upper pond.

Upper Lake Tashmoo has recently been deepened somewhat and had a herring ladder installed. There is no data available at this time for water quality in the system however a flow meter is currently in the run to determine the quantity of fresh water and nutrients discharged into Lake Tashmoo from the upper pond.

Little is known about the Mink Meadows and Cranberry Acres ponds.

Water quality in fresh water ponds may be maintained by treating sewage within a fixed distance of the shoreline to remove both nitrogen and phosphorus. The typical distance for a wastewater management area ranges from 300 to 500 feet. Elimination of stormwater runoff directly into the system will reduce a phosphorus source. Encouragement of a natural plant buffer around the pond will help remove nutrients running off from residential landscapes.



PREPARED FOR THE TOWN OF TISBURY  
BY THE MARTHA'S VINEYARD COMMISSION

