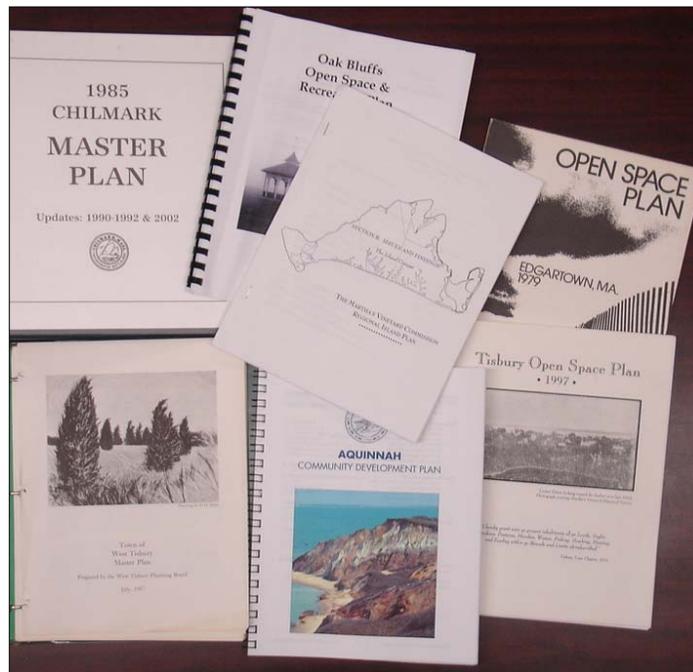


Martha's Vineyard ISLAND PLAN

Synopsis of Past Plans



Martha's Vineyard Commission
June 2006

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Note: This document was prepared by the staff of the Martha's Vineyard Commission.

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Background

The Martha's Vineyard Commission has undertaken preparation of a new Island Plan. A Steering Committee was set up in the second part of 2005 and has worked on outlining the planning process. The main public planning activities are slated to begin in the spring of 2006.

In order to build upon the considerable planning efforts that have gone on at an Island-wide and town-level over the past twenty years, the MVC staff, working with editor Nis Kildegaard, has prepared this Synopsis of Past Plans.

The aim is to provide participants in the current planning process with a summary of the main issues, goals and objectives as stated in previous plans. This will allow the participants to review these statements and see to what extent they are still valid today. In all probability, the majority of statements are still valid; if and when this is confirmed, we can appropriate those statements into the current process, recognizing that the organization and wording will likely change. Identifying which statements, if any, are not generally supported or where there is a divergence of opinion will help focus efforts on these more contentious issues, goals, and objectives.

Hopefully, the preparation of this synopsis will help compress the time required for the often very time-consuming process of identifying general goals and objectives. This should allow focusing more time and energy on other parts of the planning effort, such as defining an overall, integrated, interdisciplinary vision, and specific implementation strategies.

Methodology

This synopsis was prepared from a set of Vineyard planning documents dating back to 1987. Topics and sub-topics have been organized in the following standard format:

- Issue: a brief statement of the challenge;
- Goal: a broad statement summarizing the overall goal;
- Objectives: a list of more specific objectives, each with a short sub-heading.

This document only includes the broader statements of issues, goals and objectives. Statements about specific implementation techniques or about which entities should be responsible for which actions, were not included.

Preparation of this synopsis began with identification of the original document most likely to serve as the best source for each section. In most cases, the primary source document was the 1990 Martha's Vineyard Commission Regional Island Plan or, for the transportation section, the 2003 update to the Martha's Vineyard Regional Transportation Plan. The other documents listed below were also consulted, and additional statements of goals and objectives were culled from them and integrated into the synopsis.

This document uses the original language of its sources as much as possible. In some cases, similar statements were merged. In cases where no appropriate text was found to fit this format, notably for statements of an issue or goal, they have been left blank.

Note that the sources of the statements are not indicated. Although it might have been interesting to have a document that reproduced all the statements in their original form and indicate their sources, we concluded that this would take a much longer time to prepare and would in many ways be less useful in that it would be a much longer document that included considerable redundancies. Our aim was to compile a series of simple statements that can be readily understood and then supported, changed, or scrapped.

The following is the list of source documents:

- ❖ Island-Wide Plans
 - ◆ Regional Island Plan – Policy Plan, 1990
 - ◆ Regional Transportation Plan, 2003 Update

- ❖ Master Plans
 - ◆ Chilmark Master Plan Supplement, 2003.
 - ◆ Edgartown Master Plan, April 1990.
 - ◆ Oak Bluffs Master Plan, June 1998.
 - ◆ West Tisbury Master Plan, July 1987

- ❖ Open Space Plans
 - ◆ Chilmark Open Space & Recreation Plan Update, June 1996.
 - ◆ Tisbury Open Space Plan, 1997.
 - ◆ West Tisbury Open Space and Recreation Plan, April 2000.
 - ◆ Oak Bluffs Open Space & Recreation Plan, December 2004

- ❖ Visioning Documents
 - ◆ Documents from all six Island towns, 1997.

- ❖ Community Development Plans
 - ◆ Plans from all six towns, July and August 2004.

Editor's Notes

Preparing this document has been a labor of research and compilation rather than writing – an attempt to gather together the important statements that have emerged from planning efforts completed over the past two decades.

Over the course of this project, some patterns have become apparent. Primary among them is a pattern of consonance, among documents spanning the years and the borders of Island towns. The central assertion that emerges from these planning documents is stated repeatedly in a variety of contexts. Whether speaking of sandplain grasslands, roadside vistas, historic village centers or the traditions of

fishing and farming, these documents return again and again to the central importance of identifying, preserving and protecting those values which define the quality of life on Martha's Vineyard.

The study of planning documents from the past twenty years does show signs of evolution in the Island's civic discourse about how best to accomplish this central goal. In some cases, this evolution reflects actual progress made – for example, the early calls for public transit solutions have become suggestions for tweaking the system as the Vineyard Transit Authority service has grown. The discussion of zoning issues has also advanced as Island towns, most notably West Tisbury, crafted new bylaws to allow for creative approaches to the problem of affordable housing.

Outright contradictions among the documents are scarce. But there are notes of ambivalence when acknowledged goals are in tension with each other. A call for housing initiatives is balanced against concerns about the effects of added population on the costs of town services. Land use policies strive for balance between protecting open space and maintaining a rural character on one hand, and the need to use density as a lever to keep housing affordable on the other. Sometimes the note of ambivalence is audible when a policy seems to have unintended consequences. For example, the Commission's most recent Regional Transportation Plan notes that efforts to cap the summer automobile capacity of ferries to the Island may be related to a dramatic increase in the number of people who keep one car on the Island and another in the Falmouth parking lots.

The most important planning statements of the past twenty years are laid out in the pages that follow. What may not be clear from this synthesis is a sense of the careful, thoughtful research and consideration that went into the source documents. To read them is to read a detailed catalogue of all that is precious on Martha's Vineyard, from maps of historic districts to diagrams of pond watersheds to lists of threatened and endangered wildflowers. Taken together, the planning documents drawn upon here testify eloquently to the Island community's profound appreciation for all that contributes to its unique qualities of life.

Nis Kildegaard

1. OVERVIEW: INTERDISCIPLINARY ISSUES

1.1. Preserve the Island's Distinct Character and Environment

Issue: Martha's Vineyard possesses unique natural, historical, ecological, scientific, cultural, and other values and there is a regional and statewide interest in preserving and enhancing these values.

Goal: Protect and conserve the land and water resources that are essential to the Island's economy, character and quality of life. Manage change and growth to enhance traditional and natural landscapes. Preserve and enhance the rural quality of life and the unique, peaceful, small-town character of each of the six Island towns

Objectives:

1.1.1 Protect Critical Lands

- Whenever possible, avoid developing "critical lands" including critical habitats, agricultural land, lands affecting the sole source aquifer, and lands needed for community needs such as health and social services, government, housing, drinking water, waste disposal, education and recreation.

1.1.2 Preserve the Island's Character

- Carefully consider visual factors in order to preserve Island character.
- Preserve diversity as a principal visual characteristic of Martha's Vineyard. Match the use of land to the land's natural and visual qualities.
- Protect and enhance the visual experience of the major Island roads.
- Encourage the maintenance of historic streetscapes and Victorian or New England town character (See also section 6.1 Community Character.)

1.1.3 Protect Open Space

- Preserve and increase public and private common lands.
- Preserve the appearance of openness and great space, which is appreciated by Islanders and visitors.
- Require that development plans fit the scale and quality of the inherited landscape so that generations to come will have views and open vistas to enjoy.

1.1.4 Protect Man-Made Resources

- Identify and protect historic, cultural, archeological and aesthetic resources of Martha's Vineyard through overlay districts, site review, design guidelines and restrictions.

1.1.5 Protect the Aquifer

- Land uses affecting the Island's sole source aquifer should be managed to preserve the purest possible groundwater and surface water.

1.1.6 Protect the Social Landscape

- Foster a diverse Island housing stock in order to have a healthy and economically diverse community.

1.2. Manage the Pattern and Rate of Development

Issue: Some types of growth are welcome, necessary and unavoidable.

Goal: Ensure that new development fits the land – respecting and reinforcing traditional land use pattern and uses – and manage growth rates in the best interest of all Vineyarders.

Objectives:

1.2.1 Reinforce Existing Development Patterns

- Ensure that new land uses conform to the traditional land use pattern and enhance traditional uses.
- Guide development to fit into neighborhood patterns, based on settlement pattern, functional relationships, and character.
- Ensure that development proposals contribute to the rural quality of life on Martha's Vineyard. Reject qualities that are "suburban" and "urban."

1.2.2 Concentrate and Cluster Development

- Direct growth to locations that have the capacity to absorb the impacts of development.
- Channel residential development into neighborhood hamlet areas with green zones between (neighborhood clusters with services). Use the hamlet concept to increase open space, create commons and maintain rural character.
- Where private development of critical lands is unavoidable, preserve the capacity of the land for agriculture, water supply, habitat or community needs to the greatest extent possible through cluster development and by limiting the intensity of uses.

1.2.3 Manage Growth Rates

- Use growth rates to manage the pace of development and to ensure that buildout does not lead to economic stagnation. Developments which offer overwhelming positive social or economic benefits to the Island should be allowed to develop rapidly. Proposals whose detriments to the community as a whole are only slightly outweighed by the advantages should be made to grow slowly. Different growth rates are needed for different sectors of the economy: business growth, construction growth, vehicles, SSA foot passengers, housing.
- Encourage affordable housing development, as well as development that results in public access to recreation and to the water.
- Justify growth rates based on impacts and capacity of services and infrastructure.
- Rates should be based on percentages of the remaining capacity of resources so that no single development consumes too large a portion of remaining capacity.
- Tie growth management programs to capital planning to link the pace of development to the capacity of support systems.

1.2.4 Manage Growth in Relation to Carrying Capacity

- Ensure that development does not exceed road capacity. Use the Island Road District as planning unit to estimate capacity for increases in traffic and identify critical corridors.
- Use watersheds as planning units for estimating carrying capacity for water quality impacts such as nutrients and runoff. Predict buildout and set targets for levels of development within sub-watersheds.

1.2.5 Use an Island Development Plan to Manage Development

- Develop an Island land use plan for future development of remaining land. Include areas for commercial and industrial growth, housing, community facilities, infrastructure, open space, agricultural use, etc.
- Guide development so that more of the characteristics that Vineyarders feel have high value are protected and promoted, and that those characteristics considered to have lower value are avoided.
- Review use and management of publicly owned lands including designated open space.
- Plan sufficient land for community needs including health and social services, government, housing, drinking water, waste disposal, education and recreation and dedicate lands for those uses.
- Develop guidelines for appropriate locations for types of housing, commercial and industrial development. Set criteria for optimum densities and layout.

1.3 Balance Six Towns and One Island

Issue: The six Vineyard towns each have their own character and traditions, but are vitally interdependent since many issues are regional in nature.

Goal: Seek a balance between best interests, the home rule, preservation of the special character of each town, and regional cooperation to deal effectively with Island-wide issues.

Objectives:

1.3.1 Deal with Regional Issues in a Regional Way

- Define issues that have regional impact, including but not limited to: issues which affect the health, safety or general welfare of more than one town, issues which affect the public use of State, Federal, or County-owned resources, any action affecting the quality of public drinking water or marine waters, actions affecting the public's use of Mass. State Highways, actions with negative effects on natural (and particularly coastal) resources, cultural or historic resources of statewide significance, other actions deemed regionally important by local or State agencies.

1.3.2 Coordinate Regional and Local Actions

- Ensure that the towns and Commission act jointly to strengthen efforts of the towns to provide for their futures.
- Bring local and regional plans into agreement. Amend zoning by-laws, subdivision rules and regulations, and board of health regulations so that they comply with master plans.
- Towns should use the tools available to them through the MVC (including DRI, DCPC and master planning) to accomplish local and regional planning goals.
- Regional agencies should take the initiative to involve town boards in regional decision-making.
- The MVC should assist towns and other agencies in defining their planning needs. Town officials should make use of the planning tools available to them through regional agencies.
- Regional agencies should coordinate grants, funding and capital planning as a service to towns including start-to-finish grant assistance including grant-writing, administration and follow-through.

1.3.3 Coordinate with Related and Off-Island Entities

- Strengthen communication between regional agencies and the Steamship Authority (SSA). Coordinate with towns on the other side of the water.
- Develop working relationships with the Cape Cod Commission and its member towns, the Southeast Regional Planning and Economic Development District, its member cities and towns, and Nantucket on issues of mutual concern.

1.3.4 Foster Civic Engagement

- Increase public involvement and participation in local government.
- Encourage participation in town boards.
- Boost voter registration.

2 ECONOMY

2.1 Economy in General

Issue: Island residents deserve the ability to enjoy a comfortable life through local employment. The Vineyard's primary economic resources are its natural setting, environmental purity, rural small-town character, and recreational access to ponds and beaches. These resources create a desirable setting for all the Island's industries and increase the value and attractiveness of its products.

Goal: Promote a vital, balanced, and more diversified year-round economy, while preserving the Vineyard's distinct character and environment.

Objectives:

2.1.1 Prioritize Appropriate Economic Development

- Foster economic development that is compatible with the Island's rural environment, that costs least in Island resources, and that puts the most back into the local economy.
- Give top priority to year-round job opportunities for permanent Island residents.
- Encourage "location-free" (i.e. telecommunications-based) enterprises.
- Foster economic diversification into services, crafts and cottage industries to decrease reliance on resort industries and construction employment.

2.1.2 Favor Local Resources

- Increase the Island's self-sufficiency, particularly in production of food products.
- Encourage the development of small-scale industries (i.e. horticultural, cottage industries, forestry and adjuncts to fishing and farming).

2.1.3 Support Local Businesses

- Ensure that regulations affecting small businesses do not cause unnecessary burdens or discourage new small business start-ups.
- Encourage businesses to invest through local institutions, to use local labor and materials, and to patronize Island businesses.
- Encourage the use of Island-based contractors whenever possible.
- Encourage local outlets for Island crafts, especially opportunities for Island artisans.

2.1.4 Plan for Commercial Growth

- Keep existing business districts vital and workable; prevent winter ghost towns.
- Develop commercial design guidelines to protect rural and townscape character.
- Plan commercial development to match the scale and density of Island neighborhoods.
- Monitor the supply of commercially zoned land Island-wide and plan to accommodate the effects of full buildout of commercial areas.
- Ensure adequate infrastructure for transportation, access and services.

2.2 Fishing and Farming

Issue: Farming and fishing represent both scenic and economic cultural sensibilities. The presence of farms and fishing activity in the Island landscape and culture, the availability of local seafood and agricultural products, as well as the opportunity to "catch" or "pick your own" are essential features of the Island experience.

Goal: Foster the local fishing and agricultural economies for the benefit of the whole island economy and character.

Objectives:

2.2.1 Protect Farming and Fishing from Competing Land Uses

- Preserve suitable agricultural land, including land with agricultural potential, and make it available for farming and grazing.
- Prepare management plans for lands specifically protected for agriculture to ensure that the land can be properly used for agricultural purposes.
- Protect farming and fishing from changes in attitudes and ensure sufficient land is zoned for storage, equipment and activities. Prevent conflicts with residential land uses.
- Carefully examine land use controls that restrict the ability to farm suitable land, except farm practices that would cause a direct environmental threat.
- Establish additional marine commercial districts to favor water-dependent uses where appropriate.

2.2.2 Ensure that Farming and Fishing are Visible Parts of the Landscape

- Encourage farming and fishing activities as visible parts of the landscape for the well-being of other parts of the Island economy, particularly tourism.

2.2.3 Offer Other Support to Farming and Fishing

- Designate and manage facilities for commercial and recreational fishing including easements to ponds, dock and mooring space, equipment storage, parking.
- Create jobs for the skills and working habits of the year-round labor force, in industries that will prudently utilize the Island's natural resources. Offer training and assistance to young Islanders who wish to work in fishing and farming.
- Expand markets for Island produce and fish both on and off-Island. Bring locally grown products to Island consumers through Farmer's Markets in each town and make local products available in supermarkets. Find opportunities to distribute local produce off-Island.
- Explore on-Island cooperative ventures for processing – such as a slaughterhouse, fish processing – and transporting meat, fish and other products.
- Encourage aquaculture to sustain the commercial fishing economy. Develop guidelines and by-laws to encourage commercial aquaculture for both finfish and shellfish.
- Encourage programs through local banks to offer loans and assistance to Island farmers. Promote necessary economic support for sport and commercial fishing.

See also: groundwater (5.5) re: preserving quality of coastal ponds for shellfish.

2.3 Tourism

Issue: Martha's Vineyard is a natural resort whose seasonal tourist economy is based on its environmental quality and its natural beauty. However, the extreme fluctuations from peak season to winter season place severe strains on the Island's employers, labor force and infrastructure.

Goal: Foster strategies for developing the tourism that impact Island resources least and return the most back to the local economy.

Objectives:

2.3.1 Broaden the Season

- Promote visitation in the shoulder and off-seasons.
- Explore possibilities for off-peak business through conventions, seminars, events and new segments of the visitor market.
- Explore the potential for high school and college level research and credit programs.

2.3.2 Focus on Vineyard-Specific Activities

- Promote activities that capitalize on the Vineyard's unique features, particularly direct enjoyment of the Island's natural environment through activities such as fishing, boating, swimming, beachcombing, hiking, biking, horseback riding, as well as shopping for local products.

2.3.3 Improve Hospitality to Visitors

- Foster a more welcoming attitude toward visitors.
- Improve hospitality training in courtesy, procedures, Island orientation and history, open to all Islanders, especially workers in hospitality industries including the SSA.
- Recognize the importance of the summer economy as a base for the year-round economy Educate the public about the tourist economy through school programs, community workshops and literature at arrival points. .

2.3.4 Improve Visitor Facilities and Amenities

- Improve visitor facilities and services such as beaches, beach parking, rest rooms, attendants, signs, markers, maps and guides, establishing fair user fees where appropriate to finance this.
- Develop information and welcoming facilities both on and off-Island.
- Make the Island more user-friendly with features to orient and educate visitors including brochures, historic plaques and markers, transportation symbols, guidebooks.

See also: public transit (7.4) re: promoting use of transit for visitors, especially trips to the beach.

3.1 Housing Affordability

Issue: There is a serious affordability gap between the actual cost of a home on the Vineyard and what families can afford. It is beyond the free market's ability to provide for permanent year-round affordable housing for sale and rent for young singles, couples, families and elders.

Goal: Foster a diverse Island housing stock in order to have a healthy and diverse community.

Objectives:

3.1.1 Increase Affordability of Housing

- Work toward the state's goal of designating 10% of year-round housing stock for affordable housing, to be counted towards the state's Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory.
- Seek funding for the development and rehabilitation of homes for affordable housing for both individuals and families earning at or below 80 percent and up to 140 percent of the area median income.
- Pursue programs to dedicate permanent affordable year-round rental housing.
- Identify obstacles to home ownership and secure rental housing for low/moderate income residents. Review town regulations and by-laws (including residency requirements) for potential improvements.
- Encourage employers to offer employee housing to assist in placing summer employees in housing. Design specific housing for summer use to free up year-round stock for year-round residents.

3.1.2 Refine Zoning to Encourage Affordable Housing:

- Encourage public and private development of affordable housing at increased densities in certain areas, provided that water resources are protected and nitrogen-loading goals are met.
- Support refinements to zoning to encourage accessory units and enhance housing potential where appropriate.

3.1.3 Require Permanent Affordability

- Affordable units should be permanently dedicated for low- and moderate-income use.
- Continue to support resident homesite programs and refine them to ensure that these lots remain affordable in perpetuity by deed restriction or other mechanisms.

3.1.4 Provide Housing for People With Special Needs

- Ensure that elderly, handicapped and special needs residents have the choice to stay in housing on the Island near family, friends and community.
- Promote the construction of congregate housing that will provide some degree of independence and care, particularly for the elderly and for those of all ages with mental and physical handicaps.

3.1.5 Design Affordable Housing to Fit the Vineyard

- Tailor housing to what people can afford and find desirable, and integrate it into the community.
- Meet housing needs imaginatively while preserving the character of the Vineyard.
- Maximize the year-round housing potential within the Island's existing housing stock. Encourage rehabilitation of aging dwellings as an alternative to new construction for affordable housing. Create new units within existing structures and within existing developed land.
- Identify and designate developable vacant town-owned land that is appropriate for affordable housing.
- Encourage the development of prototype designs for affordable housing in character with the Island.
- Develop standards to ensure that affordable housing is designed to allow conservation of energy, water and other resources.

4.1 Health Facilities and Services

Issue: The Island population is not large enough to support a full range of services, though the seasonal population peak requires the provision of good emergency services and emergency transportation to hospital services on and off-Island. Health care services do not reach some Islanders because of costs, lack of insurance, a desire for privacy, or ignorance of services available.

Goal: Define a safety net of basic health services to be maintained on Martha's Vineyard (including mental health services).

Objectives:

4.1.1 Collect and Organize Information

- Develop local demographic information on health care needs, possibly as part of an annually updated needs assessment.
- Use local resources to collect detailed census information on population characteristics and health care needs specific to Martha's Vineyard.

4.1.2 Coordinate Services Regionally

- Pool town resources allocated for health and human service programs and coordinate with private agencies.
- Implement a service referral system to ensure that local residents have access to care.
- Ensure access to a full range of services and facilities within the community for special needs residents of all ages.

4.2 Educational, Social and Cultural Facilities and Services

Issue: [no issues statement]

Goal: Provide for a network of year-round community facilities for Islanders to accommodate programs for all ages and abilities.

Objectives:

4.2.1 Provide Community Facilities and Services

- Community facilities should be flexibly designed for participatory activities such as dances, meals, workshops, meetings and winter sports.
- Plan adequate space for town meetings, hearings and regional agency activities.
- Design and upgrade meeting spaces to encourage public participation and access, including workshop space, libraries and public information networks.

4.2.2 Provide Educational Facilities and Services

- Provide quality public education opportunities for all residents of the Island.
- Plan new facilities cooperatively between public/private organizations and educational institutions to provide choice without duplication.
- Explore opportunities to establish higher educational institutions on Martha's Vineyard to make best use of unique local resources, attract students and researchers and offer wider educational choices to Islanders.
- Encourage historic programs and teaching in Island schools; MVC and schools can collaborate to offer courses in Island topics including government, history and natural history.
- Provide indoor winter recreation and teach summer programs that emphasize Island issues and community identity.

4.2.3 Coordinate Funding

- Coordinate fund-raising between groups to avoid unnecessary competition.
- Share funding to meet community needs.

5 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

5.1 Open Space

Issue: Open space is a fundamental determinant of the character of Martha's Vineyard. Since development of the Island is bound to continue, the Island's future economy and environmental quality depend on actions to protect open space in keeping with the pace of development. The most important lands needing protection are pond and ocean frontages, natural habitats, farmland, aquifer lands and buffer zones between developed areas. No agency can afford to buy all the land that needs protection.

Goal: Preserve and increase public and private open space to protect the Island's unique natural, historical, ecological, scientific and cultural values for future generations

Objectives:

5.1.1 Preserve Critical Areas as Open Space

- Use open space to protect farmland, wildlife preserves and hunting areas, to provide recreation and educational opportunities, to protect the water supply, to moderate the effects of flooding and erosion and as a buffer to reduce air and noise pollution.
- Preserve suitable agricultural land and make it available for farming and grazing. Protect lands with agricultural potential.
- Identify areas where public access to the water is limited (for swimming, beaching, boating, walking) and seek additional public coastal access.
- Preserve the Island's ancient ways, which represent a landscape feature of great historical, scenic and recreational value. Use a system of Special Ways to guide open space acquisitions and other land use decisions.
- Create linkages between parcels of open space and connect with corridors for wildlife and access.
- Coordinate open space planning with a transportation plan to maximize public access.

5.1.2 Favor Cooperation to Acquire and Manage Open Space

- Have regional agencies, Town Boards and conservation groups join in a major initiative to negotiate conservation easements, protect views and trails, and adopt land use controls for these lands to augment acquisition programs.
- Conserve and manage resources on an Island-wide basis for regional purposes, rather than solely within Town boundaries for local purposes.

5.1.3 Plan Open Space as a Part of the Development Process

- Make open space in developments serve meaningful functions for the neighborhood and community.
- Provide incentives to landowners who contribute meaningful open space for public benefit.
- Direct development toward lands with the capacity to sustain it and away from critical and vulnerable lands.
- Promote flexible zoning and cluster development where appropriate.

5.2 Scenic Values

Issue: The character of the Vineyard is derived to a great extent from how it looks from public spaces, including major roads and the water.

Goal: Foster the maintenance of existing vistas, creation of new vistas, and restoration of vistas that have been lost over time from plant succession.

Objectives:

5.2.1 Protect Roadside Views

- Encourage the opening of long views of the Island landscape.
- Protect scenic view easements.
- Identify and protect key parcels along roadsides in order to improve scenic quality.
- Review dimensional requirements of the Island Roads District and add design specifications appropriate to enhance the visual experience of the major Island roads.

5.2.2 Limit Light Pollution

- Discourage the proliferation of artificial lighting, which has impacted scenic resources, most notably the dark night sky, and has disturbed night vistas and interfered with small boat navigation in Island harbors.

5.3 Habitat

Issue: Habitats for species that are threatened, rare, or of special concern on Martha's Vineyard have regional significance in New England and nationally. Because natural fires have been suppressed by humans for decades, large portions of the sandplain have been allowed – against the natural pattern – to succeed into stands of oak woodland and mature scrub oak shrub with limited areas of grassland.

Goal: Ensure that plans for development affecting critical habitats or species acknowledge that they are extremely vulnerable and require strictest protection.

Objectives:

5.3.1 Support Wildlife

- 2 Sustain the rich wildlife resources of the Island and provide protection for the rare, threatened and endangered plant and animal species.
- 3 Employ early planning and review of development projects under the Wetlands Protection Act and other laws in order to protect rare species, their habitats, and significant natural communities.
- 2 Focus especially on larger, contiguous parcels of land, which are important from the standpoint of many animal species.

5.3.2 Encourage Sandplain Restoration

- Establish an active sandplain acquisition and restoration program to limit woodland encroachment.

5.3.3 Manage Wooded Lands

- Encourage public and private landowners to manage wooded lands for health and productivity.
- Allow opportunities for residents to gather and use dead wood where appropriate.

5.3.4 Protect Marine Habitat:

- Minimize adverse effects on marine flora and fauna and wildlife habitat while promoting safe navigation on Island waters.

5.3.5 Protect the State Forest

- Be strong against encroachments that will diminish its value as habitat.
- Work with DEM to review and update management plans for the State Forest.
- Re-establish sandplain environment in the State Forest.
- Explore proposals for new productive uses of State Forest land including agriculture, woodlot management, coppicing and different combinations of tree species.

5.4 Coastal Resources

Issue: On Martha's Vineyard, lands close to the ocean are particularly important to preserve as open space. They serve as storm damage prevention for the interior wetlands and built areas, as recreation, scenic vistas, and habitat. The primary economic activities on Martha's Vineyard occur in the down-Island town centers, each of which is located around its own harbor and waterfront area.

Goal: Preserve opportunities for public access and maritime uses of the waterfront.

Objectives:

5.4.1 Maintain and Promote Maritime Uses

- Where appropriate, encourage water-dependent maritime industrial uses of coastal land.
- Encourage the development of waterfront zoning by-laws that are protective of coastal environments and their traditional island uses.
- Ensure that each Town Harbor has an adopted Harbor Management Plan compatible with Mass-CZM guidelines to ensure the most productive and environmentally sound use of these limited public resources.
- Maintain the scenic quality of the Island's harbors.

5.4.2 Protect and Increase Access to Beaches

- Share the responsibilities and privileges of beach use among all towns.
- Coordinate planning to meet beach needs for all towns and avoid concentrating impacts in anyone location.
- Emphasize the natural beauty of the Island's beaches and dunes while providing for public access and enjoyment of these resources.

5.5 Groundwater and Surface Water

Issue: Water is a regional resource and knows no Town boundaries. The quality and quantity of our water resources is of Island-wide concern. As a sole source aquifer, Martha's Vineyard requires minimum Island-wide aquifer protection standards. The Island's surface waters, salt marshes and other coastal zone wetlands provide the base for both the shellfishing industry and the recreational tourist industry. Construction and filling of tidelands, salt marshes and inland swamps are threats to water resources; they endanger the natural capacity of wetlands as storage basins, critical habitat and groundwater buffers.

Goal: Protect the delicate natural balance of Island water resources to maintain the economy and character of the Island. Protect the Island water supply from contamination and overuse. Preserve the quality of Island ponds, harbors, marshes and streams to encourage the expansion of fisheries, fresh and salt, shell and fin, commercial and sport.

Objectives:

5.5.1 Protect Ponds

- Manage fertilizers and pesticides to prevent impacts on shellfish ponds.
- Require land buffers around ponds. Review groundwater setbacks and other regulations to develop Island-wide standards and enforcement mechanisms.
- Scrutinize proposals for development near ponds, streams, wetlands, and public water supplies for strict adherence to groundwater protection regulations.
- Town boards and departments should work together with the help of the MVC and State agencies to minimize the effects of road runoff on ponds and wetlands.
- Educate residents to the negative effects of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides and discourage their indiscriminate use around wetlands and homes within coastal districts.

5.5.2 Provide Adequate Wastewater Treatment and Infrastructure

- Coordinate efforts to build sufficient septic and wastewater treatment plants to meet current needs and satisfy legal requirements.
- Encourage Boards of Health and Planning Boards to become more pro-active in efforts to reduce the amount of nitrogen entering ground and surface waters.
- Discourage the use of "nitrogen credits" on conservation land.

5.5.3 Promote Shellfish Productivity in Ponds

- Encourage developments that would contribute to increased productivity in Island waters.
- Work with local shellfish committees, wardens and experts to strengthen and support local efforts to manage shellfish for long-term productivity.
- Expedite necessary dredging in an environmentally safe and legal manner to keep ponds viable for shellfish production.

5.5.4 Plan for Managing Wetlands

- Provide Towns and regional agencies with access to the best tools for managing and enforcing wetlands protections including detailed local mapping and technical training and enforcement tools.

6.1 Community Character

Issues: Each Island town reflects its origins: Edgartown as a historic marine commercial center and seat of county government; Tisbury as a working port and market town; West Tisbury as an agricultural center and mill town; Chilmark with larger agricultural estates; Aquinnah as a traditional native settlement and fishing village, and Oak Bluffs as the first true summer resort town.

Goal: Identify and protect historic, cultural, archeological, and aesthetic resources of Martha's Vineyard. Preserve the individual, peaceful, small-town character of each of the six Island towns.

Objectives

6.1.1 Protect the Vineyard's Physical Character

- Protect historic, cultural and aesthetic resources through overlay districts, site review, design guidelines and restrictions.
- Survey and protect archeological resources.
- Preserve diversity as a principal visual characteristic of Martha's Vineyard.
- Match the use of land to the land's natural and visual qualities. Preserve the appearance of openness and great space.
- Manage change and growth to enhance the traditional and natural landscapes of the Vineyard.
- Require that development plans fit the scale and quality of the inherited landscape so that generations to come will have views and open vistas to enjoy.

6.1.2 Ensure that New Construction Enhances the Vineyard's Character

- Use neighborhood patterns to guide development.
- Design guidelines should include principles to guide site planning, design of structures and architectural detail. They should be flexible enough to allow individual, creative design solutions and specific enough to serve as a useful tool for local review boards.
- Recruit advisory committees composed of design professionals and community experts to propose model design guidelines for specific areas.
- Design guidelines should encourage conservation of energy, water and other resources.

6.1.3 Maintain the Character of Historic Districts

- Review existing historic districts. Determine the existing levels of protection and propose new districts and regulations where necessary.
- Review zoning with regard to encouraging the maintenance of historic streetscapes and Victorian or New England town character.

6 TRANSPORTATION

6.1 Transportation in General

Issue: Our economy depends heavily on people who are drawn to the Island's scenic beauty; but the Island's burgeoning popularity could threaten the very attributes that make it attractive. Without good transportation planning, future population growth holds the specter of increasing congestion or inappropriate engineering solutions.

Goal: Establish and maintain a transportation system that is safe, convenient, accessible, economical, and consistent with the Vineyard's scenic, historic, and natural resources.

Objectives:

6.1.1 Offer an Integrated Transportation Network

- Promote a variety of transportation options that meet the needs of Island residents and visitors, to more efficiently use the Vineyard's existing transportation infrastructure, and to minimize the necessity for creating more roads, wider roads, or inappropriate traffic controls that would degrade the character of the Island.
- Promote cooperation among the Island's transportation agencies and its public and private providers.
- Coordinate regional land use and transportation planning policies to encourage development patterns that complement these transportation goals:
 - Favor the consolidation of mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly village areas within the limits of already developed areas, where people can meet many of their daily needs by walking or biking, rather than taking a car.
 - For development outside village areas, favor development within walking distance of bus routes. Also, the creation of convenience stores in outlying residential areas could reduce the need for many routine trips.
- Integrate port improvements (harbor and airport) with economic development strategies.

6.1.2 Reduce Dependence on Private Automobiles

- Encourage visitors – especially short-term visitors – to come to the Vineyard without their cars by promoting alternate modes of travel (bus, bicycle, shuttles to town centers from park-and-rides, etc.). Promote the Vineyard as a node in a network allowing visits to Nantucket and various locations on Cape Cod, without a car.
- Favor the seamless integration of various transportation systems, with respect to physical installations, scheduling and baggage handling, to increase the efficiency of alternate modes and to increase their convenience to people.
- Make the network of non-car transportation systems (bus, taxi, bicycle) so effective and well promoted that more visitors will make their visit to the Vineyard without a car.
- Expand and enhance a safe and efficient network of bicycle paths, walking trails, and in-town pedestrian accommodations. Favor pedestrian use, and control vehicular access and egress, in designing circulation patterns within commercial districts.
- Consolidate expansion of the year-round, Island-wide bus system to reduce car dependence as well as to enhance the mobility of residents and visitors who have limited mobility (disabled, elderly, young people and others without car access).

6.2 Water and Air Transportation

Issue: Traffic to and from the Island by ferry and air has more than doubled in the past quarter-century; air traffic has grown more dramatically, but arrivals by water still outnumber air arrivals nearly 10:1. A proposal to limit summer automobile capacity on ferries, on Island ballots in 1997, was approved by all the towns.

Goal: Manage transport to and from the Vineyard to minimize the impact of auto traffic on both sides and to better serve the traveling public.

Objectives:

6.2.1 Limit Ferry and Ferry-Related Traffic

- Maintain the summer capacity of vehicular access to the Island at the 1995 levels, based on the results of the 1997 Island-wide referendum on the subject.
- Encourage visitors to come to the Island without their cars.
- Reduce vehicular traffic to the ferry passing through Vineyard Haven and Oak Bluffs in addition to Falmouth, the Cape Cod Canal bridges and on the Cape, particularly cars (and for the Cape side, buses) that are dropping passengers off at the ferry.

6.2.2 Improve Ferry Access and Integration

- Improve vehicular and passenger access to and from ferry terminals including better remote parking-ferry connection, drop-off, queuing and better distribution between the two Island ferry terminals.
- Seek to achieve a seamless experience whereby passengers can check in at mainland SSA parking lots, including leaving their baggage, and be brought from bus, to ferry, to bus and then to a parking/service center on the Vineyard where they would have all transportation opportunities available (bus, taxi, car rental).

6.2.3 Improve Airport Facilities

- Improve the safety, efficiency and reliability of the airport facility as a transportation resource for the community.
- Improve the airport facilities in response to present needs and growing demand with a priority on increasing ramp areas and hangars for airplane parking, and ensuring adequate facilities to accommodate aviation activity.

6.3 Road Network and Traffic

Issue: The Vineyard's 177.4-mile network of paved roads was created when the population was fewer than 5,000 people, yet it still performs satisfactorily for most of the year. During the busy season, however, congestion and a relatively high incidence of accidents occur at several down-Island intersections and sections of road.

Goal: Ensure that the road network is designed and traffic managed to minimize congestion and pollution, to increase safety, and to preserve scenic roadside views and the character of rural roads.

Objectives:

6.3.1 Maintain the Historic, Scenic Character of Vineyard Roads

- Ensure the maintenance of the road network while preserving the character of rural roads by maintaining and repairing them while respecting their existing "footprints" and designs.
- To maintain the Island's historic character, avoid street widening, new turning lanes, or traffic lights.
- Pursue context-sensitive solutions to roadway design issues including guardrails, road shoulders, roadside paths, bridge design and dirt roads.
- Put in place a process whereby a thoughtful commitment to rural road design creates the opportunity for the roads to become a resource themselves, rather than being generally considered an adverse impact on the Island's scenic resources.

6.3.2 Improve Safety and Reduce Congestion

- Improve road congestion and safety with improvements to the quality of the infrastructure, traffic slowing and calming, new or improved sidewalks and signage, and possibly installing traffic control devices.
- Make or plan for improvements to the least safe locations.
- Consider the effects of additional park-and-ride programs, pedestrian zones, new loop roads and rerouting of traffic as means to improve the flow of traffic.
- Increase promotion of existing park-and-ride programs and make them more user-friendly.
- Reduce vehicular traffic to the ferry passing through Vineyard Haven, Oak Bluffs and Falmouth by eliminating non-essential trips, such as cars dropping passengers off at the ferry. Offer alternate ferry departure points on the mainland.
- Adopt traffic management strategies in regionally significant corridors.

6.4 Public Transit

Issue: As a locality of unique environmental, scenic, and historic qualities, there is ongoing concern about the impact of transportation on these important features of the Vineyard.

Goal: Foster the coordination, the improvement of services, and the promotion of alternatives to the private automobile.

Objectives:

6.4.1 Improve Public Transit

- Publicize the availability of public transportation services by improving signage, coordinated scheduling, use of printed material and web sites, and other marketing techniques.
- Continue to optimize passenger facilities, scheduling, routing and maintenance.
- Improve coordination of transportation planning, delivery of services and promotion among the various Island entities including the towns, the county, the Steamship Authority, the Vineyard Transit Authority and the Martha's Vineyard Commission.
- Favor the use of alternative fuels in bus acquisition and replacement.

6.4.2 Improve Taxi Service

- Improve the attractiveness of using taxis and help the taxi industry adjust to the presence of the bus system.
- Look at the possibility of having more uniform taxi fares and regulations in the six towns.

6.5 Bicycles and Pedestrians

Issue: Bicycling and walking are prime ways of experiencing the Vineyard environment. But competition for space on the Island's narrow and winding roads reduces the level of comfort and safety, especially in the summer season.

Goal: Promote and facilitate bicycling and walking as healthy ways to relieve traffic congestion, contribute to the visitor experience, save energy and improve air quality.

Objectives:

6.5.1 Improve Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities:

- Expand and enhance the network of bicycle paths, walking trails, and in-town pedestrian walkways, carefully planning new facilities to ensure proper integration with existing networks and to meet growing needs.
- Address bicycle safety and access in the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of transit, airport, highway and bridge projects.
- Encourage walkers by increasing the appeal of the pedestrian environment, particularly in village and commercial areas, providing continuous and adequately dimensioned sidewalks and well-marked crosswalks as well as services such as shelter and weather protection, comfortable places to sit, signage, information centers, water, restrooms, plantings, lighting and trash receptacles.

6.6 Freight

Issue: Most freight is shipped to the Island by truck using SSA ferries and freight boats; some is brought by barge to the Island's only barge docks in Vineyard Haven. Air freight is used for smaller, time-sensitive shipments.

Goal: Ensure that freight is brought to the Island and distributed to its destinations in a timely and efficient way, with minimal negative impact on traffic, on safety and on the environment.

Objectives:

6.6.1 Minimize Freight-Related Traffic

- Reduce vehicular traffic to the ferry passing through Island towns as well as through Falmouth, on Cape Cod Canal bridges and on the Cape, particularly trucks and especially hazardous materials.

6.6.2 Explore Alternatives to Current Freight-Handling Methods

- Explore how a greater proportion of freight, and particularly low value and less time-sensitive commodities (e.g. lumber) and hazardous materials (e.g. oil, propane), could be brought to the Island by barge instead of by ferry.
- Examine the possibility of limiting which vessels are used to transport garbage and septic and the possibility of using only barges.
- Explore the possibility of using containerization.
- Explore the possibility of reducing the need for transporting waste by treating liquid waste on the Island and by reducing the volume of solid waste through community composting.

7 INFRASTRUCTURE

7.1 Drinking Water and Wastewater

Issue: The quality and quantity of our water resources is of Island-wide concern. The greatest threat to Island water quality is man-made nitrogen loading from septic systems and acid rain. 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.

Goal: Manage land uses affecting the Island’s sole source aquifer to preserve the purest possible groundwater and surface water. Limit nitrogen pollution of town water bodies; mitigate groundwater pollution sources. Develop sustainable approaches to addressing wastewater management.

Objectives:

7.1.1 Protect Our Drinking Water Supply

- Plan sufficient land for community needs including drinking water.
- Propose standards that maintain groundwater at drinking water quality at property boundaries.
- Assure adherence to best management practices at all sites within the Zone II's where hazardous chemicals or large volumes of waste are handled is crucial to protection of water resource quality.
- Devise a tracking database for land uses within the Zone II's that pose potential risk to the integrity of the water supplies.
- Develop an inspection program/methodology for periodic inspections of sites where hazardous materials are stored and/or used for sites that generate hazardous wastes.
- Scrutinize proposals for development near public water supplies for strict adherence to groundwater protection regulations.
- Develop working agreements between the agencies concerned with water supply to plan system expansions to match land use plans.
- Preserve lands within the areas of protection of public wells – Zone I, operational zone of influence, and Zone II – to protect public health as well as public investment in infrastructure.
- Promote water conservation and water budgeting based on sustainable well drawdown.

7.1.2 Provide Adequate Wastewater Treatment

- Work together across town boundaries to provide cost effective wastewater and septic treatment facilities that allow for beneficial levels of growth.
- Create regional water resources district to develop comprehensive management plans for water supply/delivery and for wastewater treatment.
- Coordinate water and waste companies, Town boards/departments and include fire departments.

- Coordinate efforts to build sufficient septic and wastewater treatment plants to meet current needs and satisfy legal requirements. Consider an Island-wide septic treatment system with local treatment and one common discharge area.
- Better manage septic pump-outs with self-regulation and staggered fee structures. =\
- Support Innovative Treatment Techniques such as biological treatment, no-flow toilets, recycling graywater, composting, conservation and others. Encourage the installation of denitrification systems in on-site septic systems.
- Implement town-by-town review and offer education and incentives for septic improvements. Use great ponds as pilot areas for monitoring programs.

7.2 Energy and Waste Management

Issue: [no issue statement]

Goal: [no energy goal statement] Pursue environmentally benign and cost-effective regional programs for solid and septic waste disposal.

Objectives:

7.2.1 Plan for Adequate Energy Supply

- Plan growth to match the energy supply (electricity and fuels) and coordinate planning with Commonwealth Electric and oil companies to ensure adequate and affordable supply for future needs. Compare projections of energy needs with projected growth rates.
- Monitor pricing of all fuels and compare to the mainland.

7.2.2 Support the Development of Alternative Energy Sources and Conservation

- Design guidelines should include measures to encourage conservation of energy, water and other resources in new development.
- Solar access should be a consideration in the design of affordable housing.
- Plan new development to minimize vehicle trips in order to reduce traffic congestion, energy consumption and pollution.
- Support programs promoting energy conservation that discourage car use by using alternative means of transportation and that encourage use of energy-efficiency cars and buses.

7.2.3 Support a Regional Solution to Waste Management

- Support the regional solution to solid waste management as implemented by the Martha's Vineyard Regional Refuse Disposal and Resource Recovery District (MVRDRRD).

7.3 Capital Planning

Issue: The population, seasonal and year-round, must not increase faster than the capacity of public services and facilities on the Island.

Goal: Finance expanded services with income derived from new developments and exactions, so that services are kept at a level consistent with public health, safety and welfare.

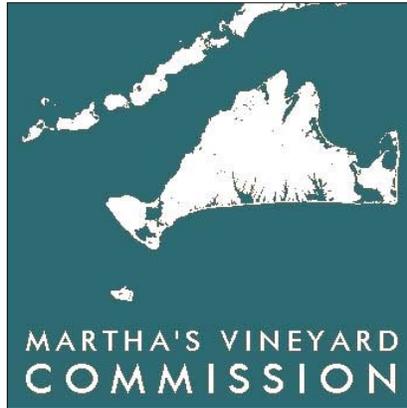
Objectives:

7.3.1 Ensure Overall Capital Planning

- Develop Island-wide capital planning program for major infrastructure and minor contracting and supplies.
- Develop an overall funding strategy for Island improvements based on Town involvement in regional capital planning, 10-year bonding plans for each town.

7.3.2 Have New Developments Contribute to the Cost of Services

- Ensure that plans for new development include locations and contributions for services and infrastructure necessary for the development.
- Seek exactions, impact fees and contributions as part of development proposals to fund services and infrastructure needs of those developments. These exactions will help ensure that transportation, municipal and regional services, waste disposal, water supply and human services are adequate to support the approved development.
- Develop explicit methods for calculating exactions based on the scale of each development proposal so that these costs are predictable and equitable.
- Have the funds administered by the agencies responsible for providing services.
- Allow developers to propose alternative means of contributing to costs of their proposals and the MVC may waive fees if appropriate.



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