



John Gaspey, courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association

# *Introduction*

**I**n 1980, Nantucket fishermen landed more than 100,000 bushels of scallops, driving an industry that pumped more than \$3.7 million into the island's economy. Immediately afterwards, the scallop fishery entered a period of decline from which it has not fully recovered. By 1998, the 100,000-bushel harvest was reduced to 5,000 or less, and what was once \$3.7 million in profit is now barely \$250,000.

On this, everyone is agreed. On what happened, and how to fix it, they are not. Some say that the fishery is simply in an extended, but natural, down-cycle. Others blame pollution. Regulations have been proposed and solutions debated, but without a final conclusion. One truth remains: there are fewer scallops now than ever before, and the island is

the worse for it. With the decline in scallops comes a loss to our environment, and a decline of a traditional Nantucket industry that was an important supplement to islanders' incomes.

While this may seem like an odd way to introduce Nantucket's Comprehensive Community Plan, in many ways the efforts to preserve our shellfish are similar to the larger effort of preserving our island. Scalloping, like many of the challenges that face our community today, represents a cherished part of Nantucket that is diminishing at a frightening pace, with no clear consensus on how to save it. In truth, there is no one action or solution that will bring scallops back: it will be a long process that may include hard decisions about capital



*Scalloping once provided a viable supplemental winter income and a recreational harvest for islanders, as seen in this ca. 1955 photo.*

investment, watershed protection measures, and limitations on use of the harbor. Similarly, there is no magic philosophy that will guide Nantucket's future. We will not find our way by adhering to pro-growth or anti-growth agendas, nor by glaring at each other across an ideological divide between the two. Rather, it will take a careful balancing act, understanding how different actions impact different areas, and understanding the consequences of exceeding environmental and man-made limitations. Maintaining this balance in the harbor will allow the scallop fishery to be both sustainable and profitable; maintaining it for Nantucket will allow the island to thrive and its people to prosper well into the twenty-first century.

## **O**ur Goals

Today, Nantucket faces distinct challenges, brought on by the burgeoning growth of the past thirty years. These are the dilemmas that accompany success; growth is not in itself harmful, and has in many ways improved the lives of the people who live here. The influx of money that has accompanied the expansion of the past thirty years has funded our children's clubs, built our school complex, and underwritten much of the artistic and cultural life of the island. The wealth it has generated has conserved hundreds of acres of open space and the income it has brought to island families has given our children greater opportunities for education. However, Nantucket is a finite place, with limits on just how much use it can sustain. Its economy, its environment, and its people can all be stressed to breaking points by unhindered expansion. The idea behind the Community Plan is neither to end growth nor to accelerate it. Its purpose instead is to manage growth, and to keep it at a pace and level where we are still able to:

- ◆ Protect the working community of Nantucket and provide for the housing needs of those who choose to live here
- ◆ Protect our open spaces and natural resources
- ◆ Enhance the ability of Nantucketers to live and work on our island
- ◆ Protect the historical integrity of our land and buildings
- ◆ Maintain a strong tourism-based economy
- ◆ Maintain access to our beaches
- ◆ Provide a healthy environment for all our residents

These challenges are not new, and indeed

Nantucket has a long and admirable record of rising to meet them. Throughout the last fifty years, islanders have shown a willingness to be bold, innovative, and thorough in their efforts to protect Nantucket’s natural environment, living community, and historical integrity. In 1955 Nantucket established a Historic District Commission (HDC) to regulate the architecture in its preserved town district and the village of Siasconset, and in 1970, in the face of new rural development, expanded the HDC to protect the entire island.

The onset of rural development also spurred islanders to acquire and defend their open space. The Nantucket Conservation

Foundation, begun in 1963, is today arguably the most successful private land trust in the country, and since its inception a host of other nonprofit agencies have joined the fight to preserve open space. In 1984 voters approved the nation’s first land bank, and in 1997 demonstrated their continued commitment to its mission by funding a \$25 million bond to help it purchase more open land. That same year, voters adopted a system of state-of-the-art composting technology designed to solve our complex problems with solid waste. The list goes on: the NRTA shuttle, airport noise-abatement routes, bikepaths, and wetlands laws all point to how our island has consistently demonstrated its ability to address problems with courage and creativity.

What we have not done, however, is address them all at once. Too often in the past,

problems such as traffic, lost open space, and housing have been addressed in isolation, as though each existed in a vacuum. As a result, those charged with solving them, effective as they were, sometimes developed tunnel vision, and failed to realize that if done improperly the solution to one problem could make others worse. A perception developed that some of our goals were mutually exclusive: that land conservation, for example, could not be accomplished without making our already scarce supply of housing even slimmer; that development could not be slowed without crippling our economy; or

that housing could not be made affordable without inviting waves of environmentally damaging construction. In fact none of this is true, but in not grasping the entire picture we have set ourselves at odds with one another, creating divisive debates where there should be common ground and

shying away from bold solutions for fear of their unintended consequences. This bogs us down, tears at our community fabric, and in the end only allows our problems to get worse. If we are to help ourselves, we must understand that our goals are not mutually exclusive, and we must go forward in confidence that what we propose is of benefit to all Nantucketers. That is the strength of a Community Plan: as its name implies, it looks at Nantucket as the sum of all its parts and more.

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## Consequences of Inaction

If we fail to act, the negative trends we see now will only compound themselves. Nantucket has reached a critical juncture; if we are to preserve those aspects of our community that make it special, it is imperative that we act now. Our problems, again, are not new: they were noted in 1983, when Town Meeting passed the Goals and Objectives. They were noted again in 1990, when the Goals and Objectives were renewed. And they have been discussed, assailed, debated, and analyzed in countless venues since. But despite good intentions, we have never followed up those discussions with a broad, thorough program of action. As a result, as we talked, our problems got worse.

If we do not take action now:

**The cost of housing, already beyond the means of most islanders, will continue to climb and ultimately change the entire character of Nantucket.** In the last five years, spurred by a powerful national economy and Nantucket's new found popularity, the cost of housing has tripled. The vacation-home market has made Nantucket a place for those who can afford to live here, rather than for those who actually do, and today it is almost statistically impossible for a year-round resident employed on the island to purchase a home, especially a first-time home buyer. Many families, recognizing the economic mountain they would have to climb to reach the dream of home ownership here, have already left, and if



Courtesy of Nantucket Association of Real Estate Brokers

*Market forces have made the building of larger vacation homes the priority on Nantucket. In the meantime, islanders struggle to find housing they can afford, and as a result in increasing numbers, they are forced to leave the island.*

the situation is not changed many more will do so in the future. For those who do own property, the temptation and pressure to sell will grow ever greater, and as more longtime residents “cash out,” the community only stands to lose.

**An exodus of Nantucket’s working families poses a serious threat to both the economy and the social health of the island.** If costs drive families away, the labor force—which today is composed largely of middle-class families—will necessarily change and most likely become dominated by commuters and young, single transients who are willing to live together in dormitory-style housing. A workforce like that is inherently unstable, as young singles with minimal connection to the town in which they work can and will leave quickly if better opportunities arise. Impermanent workers with no stake in the town will not be citizens in the traditional sense of the word; they will not participate in local government or give their time to volunteerism and charity. The participatory democracy of Town Meeting will suffer and compound the island’s inability to solve difficult issues.

**The same housing costs will also severely undermine our tourism-based economy.** The success of any tourism economy relies on an ability to attract and maintain a base of visitors and attract and maintain a base of workers to serve those visitors’ needs. In

the current housing market, these goals have become conflicting because the desire for second homes has created a situation where visitors actually compete for accommodations with those who would serve them. If we do not act to make seasonal employee housing more achievable, then our tourism industry will quite literally become its own worst enemy, for our very popularity will eliminate people’s ability to work here.

**Our current zoning bylaw will foster more development in rural areas and compromise the character of our countryside.** The zoning bylaw that governs development on Nantucket today is one that encourages the consumption of open land by mandating that every house be situated on large lots of one to three acres over much of the island. The result is not only contrary to the island’s historic character, it is also the single largest culprit in the case of our vanishing moors as the need for large lots



Rob Benchley

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forces homebuilding into rural areas. Failure to redraw our zoning bylaws will result in increased buildout of the countryside. For example, under current zoning the Dionis area alone can expect another 500 homes. Such intense use mars not only the aesthetics of the island and compromises its peace and quiet, it jeopardizes as well the fragile environment that we have fought for so long to protect. Endangered plants, animals, and birds can easily vanish beneath waves of new homes.

**As more homes are built, our traffic problems will dramatically increase and eventually reach a point where safety requires that we build more and wider roads and install traffic lights.** By forcing new homes away from established town centers, and indeed away from each other, our current zoning creates a second negative effect: the need for cars. It is impossible today to live in our rural areas without an automobile, and if we contin-

ue to channel new construction to rural land we will, undoubtedly, see more cars. Traffic analyses show that if the island were to reach maximum buildout, the number of cars on Milestone Road would more than triple, creating a gridlock so complex that traffic engineers cannot even predict its consequences. Should situations like that arise, the island would have little choice but to adopt mainland traffic-management solutions such as traffic lights and road widenings.

**The ability of Nantucketers to make a living on Nantucket will decrease.** Although Nantucket offers an abundance of jobs, many of those positions do not pay wages that keep pace with the island's cost of living, or do so only on a seasonal basis. As a result, many families have at least one person working in the construction industry, which provides a livable year-round wage. The future of new dwelling construction is finite, however, and it

is shortened each day by the use of off-island construction crews who are doing tomorrow's work and taking the income back to the mainland with them. Unless the pace of building is slowed, there will be little left for island contractors in the future.

**Rising municipal costs will place a large tax burden on families.** Today, the Town of Nantucket faces over \$50 million in capital improvements simply to bring its infrastructure up to date. As development increases, those costs will escalate. It is money the Town of



Rob Benchley

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Nantucket does not have. Unless alternative sources of income are found, property-tax rates will steadily climb, placing a still greater burden on homeowners and families.

**Failure to manage our shorelines will result in our losing access to them.** Loss of beach access will occur in two ways. First, the continued efforts of private property owners to fight erosion and armor their beaches will result in a physical loss of our shorelines, as scouring accelerates the erosion process. Second, if we do not regulate vehicular access to our beaches, property owners will feel compelled to close off sections of the shoreline, creating gated communities with mainland ideas about privacy and trespass.

**This is not necessarily our future. The trends can be slowed, and in some cases reversed, but it may require extraordinary action to do so.** The scope and nature of what we face today is unprecedented in our history, so the solutions we propose are in some cases unprecedented as well. A substantial portion of what is proposed in the Community Plan will require that we file special legislation with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, requesting regulatory powers not currently given to most communities. It is also important to understand that this document is not perfect. It represents a tremendous amount of research, debate, and hard work, but it is not written in stone and there is no expectation that it will never change. It will change, as the needs of our island change. This is simply a blueprint for Nantucket, written by us and for us.

## **S***trategies for the Future*

What is perhaps most striking about Nantucket's problems is that, according to conventional definitions, the island doesn't have them. The health of a community is traditionally measured by its economic success, and economically Nantucket is a healthy and successful town. Its business is booming; it boasts an unparalleled historic legacy; it has beachfronts and assets that other communities can only envy. Tourism and construction, its trademark industries, could not be healthier.

But in the town there is disquiet and anxiety. The island is changing rapidly—more cars, more people, and more development—and change can be upsetting, particularly when one feels it is change in the wrong direction, and especially when one feels powerless in the face of it. Public meetings are increasingly characterized by acrimony and discontent and a growing feeling that the boom has left some of us behind. In the summer, people work three jobs, make more money than ever, and see it all swallowed up by rent and other expenses in doing the "Nantucket shuffle." In the winter, trophy homes sit empty, while many islanders are in search of rental houses. And yet, theoretically, this is success. How can we rectify this? If the economy is up, why is Nantucket down?

If there is a single overriding goal of the Community Plan it is to create and sustain a healthy community. Achieving this may force us to redefine terms like "health" and "success." What the actions outlined below promote is an economic health that goes beyond money alone: a physical health that is more than the absence of illness and an environmental health that encompasses more than rolling fields and untouched moors. A healthy community is one whose residents have

stability and security, whose resources are safely protected for future generations, and whose civic life is free of bitterness, frustration, and disillusionment.

It is one where residents feel empowered instead of marginalized, and where change is measured as opportunity rather than loss.

No one action can give Nantucket these intangible attributes. But we believe that the actions detailed below, taken cumulatively, can bring us closer.

◆ The current building cap and associated point system can be revised. This will slow the pace of development and also allow

us to meet the housing needs of our residents. By assigning building permits based on planning criteria—for example, prioritizing

year-round homes in developed areas over vacation mansions in the moors—we can protect both our residents and our rural areas. A cap will also protect our tradesmen by delaying total buildout and ensuring a sustainable level of work for years to come (pages 46-47).

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◆ The zoning bylaw should be revised and the island divided into two types of zoning overlay districts: “Town” and “Country,” with new development being channeled toward already built, town areas. Creating



Rob Benchley

A priority of the Community Plan is to give preference to those committed to reside year-round on Nantucket through a building cap point system for building permits and through the establishment of a new Nantucket Resident Commitment Housing (NRCH) program.

this distinction allows us to reverse the trend started by our current zoning and use incentives, bylaws, and regulations to send future growth away from the Country. In doing this, we both preserve rural land and reduce the automobile dependency of the island (pages 29-41).

◆ **In Town and Country Overlay Districts, residents can have greater involvement in planning through the process of drafting Neighborhood Area Plans, which will help guide the growth and character of their neighborhoods.** Neighborhood Area Plans, drafted by neighborhood residents with the assistance of planning officials, can provide the framework that determines the amount and type of development for the area (pages 36, 37, and 41).

◆ **The provision that governs secondary dwelling construction must be revised, both to manage growth and to more effectively provide a housing preference for our year-round residents.** Regarded by some as the only chance for a Nantucket family to own a home, and by others as a development-friendly loophole that leads to unhealthy levels of construction, the second-dwelling provision needs to be clarified and rewritten in a way that allows housing opportunities in developed areas while curtailing speculative building in our

countryside. Long a subject of controversy, the secondary dwelling can in fact be an instrument of consensus—a linchpin to both growth management and housing (page 47).

◆ **Nantucket must establish a Nantucket Resident Commitment Housing (NRCH) program to meet the housing needs of its year-round residents.** Left alone, Nantucket’s real estate market will never return to a level where year-round islanders can afford to purchase homes. A Resident Commitment Housing program is one that establishes a parallel real estate market, protected from the skyrocketing values of the market at large, whose sole purpose is to give those committed to year-round residency the opportunity to



Joel Russell

*The Community Plan seeks to reduce new dwelling buildout by 1) slowing overall growth through continuing the building cap, 2) slowing growth in the Country Overlay District through a subordinate building cap on secondary dwellings, and 3) encouraging aggressive acquisition of land with the greatest buildout potential by the Land Bank and other organizations.*

buy or rent a house at a price they can afford. Administered by a Housing Office, the Resident Commitment Housing program can use covenants, land acquisition, and building cap points to set aside land and housing units for year-round use (pages 54-61).

◆ **Restrictions in the zoning bylaw that today impede the construction of employee housing must be removed.** The Town of Nantucket should not be required to provide

private-sector employee housing, but it should, through its zoning bylaws, allow those who can to do so. Current regulations provide little incentive for accessory apartments; other forms of worker housing face even greater obstacles. The regulations must be revised or eliminated to make the creation of seasonal and year-round worker housing a more feasible endeavor (pages 62-64).

◆ **Steps can and should be taken to keep government offices downtown and bring year-round businesses back to it.** In recent years Nantucket has begun to lose its downtown. As core-district stores and restaurants have shifted their focus away from year-round residents and marketed themselves instead to seasonal visitors, islanders find fewer and fewer reasons to go to town. A concerted effort is needed to keep downtown a vital, diverse, and functional area, rather than simply an attraction for visitors (page 81).

◆ **The island's myriad preservation groups should have a well-funded and coordinated program for the protection of natural and historic areas.** Nantucket has achieved tremendous success in the field of preservation through the efforts of a host of different agencies. A more integrated, strategic approach on the part of those groups that draws in public as well as private agencies can make their efforts still more effective (pages 92-93).



Rob Benchley

*The Community Plan encourages continued conservation efforts and access to our beaches and ponds, well illustrated by the view from this recent Land Bank acquisition in Polpis Harbor.*

◆ **In order to provide continued access to our beaches and ponds, we need to devise an expanded management plan for our shores.**

At a certain point, the present use of our shoreline becomes harmful. In order to prevent that point from being reached, and to prevent the beach closures that will surely follow it, we need to more stringently regulate what we do with the land closest to our waters (pages 94-95).

◆ **To whatever extent possible, we should limit the number of automobiles on the island.** Even if all building were to stop today, the number of cars on Nantucket in the peak season would exceed the capacity of its nineteenth-century roads. The problem of traffic can best be addressed by a combination of measures, some of which reduce outright the number of cars on the island and others that reduce the use of those that are here (pages 120-126).

◆ **In order to slow the rise of our tax levies, the Town of Nantucket should investigate alternative sources of revenue.** Linkage fees and impact fees—surcharges connected to the size and scope of new development—can help us meet our fiscal needs while taxing those forms of building least healthy for our island. Likewise, a head tax can generate valuable revenue from our visitors and protect our residents from consistent tax hikes (page 136).

◆ **The scallop population must be restored to a sustainable level.** Like the Community Plan itself, this will be a multi-tiered effort, approaching the problem from a number of angles in order to determine what has caused a decline in both the shellfish and their habitat. Once a problem is concretely diagnosed, meaningful steps can be taken by both the public and private sectors to boost our fishery to a level that is healthy for the environment as well as the economy (page 83).



Rob Benchley

*The Community Plan seeks to rectify potential environmental issues such as those that might affect the scallop fishery.*

# The Community Plan

The Community Plan in its entirety is detailed in the pages that follow this introduction. It is divided into seven chapters in an order that does not in any way reflect their relative importance. Indeed, the basic tenet of the Community Plan is that because all of the chapters are interrelated, no one section can take priority over any other. Contents of the chapters, and many of the recommendations they propose are outlined as follows.



## Chapter 1: Guiding Growth

This chapter recommends a blueprint for guiding the future growth of building on the island in a way that preserves the special character of Nantucket through the following suggestions:

- ◆ Implement the concept of Town and Country through the use of Zoning Overlay Districts so that future development is consistent with our historic patterns of development.
- ◆ Establish a greenbelt (a part of the Country Overlay District) around Nantucket town and Siasconset to provide open space and recreation accessible to residents of the Town Overlay District and create a definition between Town and Country.
- ◆ Define a process to develop Neighborhood Area Plans through a partnership of neighborhood residents, planners, and local boards and commissions. These plans will enable residents in each area to provide direct input to guiding growth in their neighborhoods and communities.
- ◆ Limit further commercial development that is out of scale with the size and character of historic building patterns by restricting the size of commercial buildings and their parking areas.
- ◆ Create a new commercial/industrial zone replacing existing RC-2 zoned areas in the vicinity of the airport.
- ◆ Fine-tune the building cap point system to allow development in the Town Overlay District and discourage development in the Country Overlay District.
- ◆ Replace the RC-2 zoning district with zoning districts that strengthen and protect existing neighborhoods, while also providing an adequate supply of commercially zoned land.
- ◆ Establish connecting open spaces from within the Town Overlay District neighborhoods to the greenbelt.
- ◆ Implement the Strategic Land Preservation Plan described in chapter 4, "Protecting the Environment."
- ◆ Protect vistas in the Country Overlay District through enhanced siting controls and restrictions that reduce groundcover and height of structures.
- ◆ Implement measures to make existing neighborhoods in the Country Overlay District less auto-dependent.
- ◆ Reduce potential buildout of new dwellings by:
  - Continuing to slow down growth by reinforcing the existing building cap and point system that gives priority for building permits to those committed to year-round residency.
  - Slowing down growth in secondary dwellings through a secondary-dwelling building cap in the Country Overlay District. Within the cap limits, secondary dwellings will be permitted only for those committed to year-round residency.
  - Focusing acquisition of land and conservation restrictions on land with the greatest buildout potential.
- ◆ Urge amendment of the policies, regulations, and bylaws of Town of Nantucket boards and commissions to make them consistent with the Community Plan and formalizing the procedure for periodically evaluating and amending the plan.



## Chapter 2: Housing Needs

This chapter addresses, through the following recommendations, the challenges of maintaining and expanding the availability of housing for island residents, seasonal workers, and those with special needs in the face of the rapidly growing cost of living on Nantucket:

- ◆ Establish a Nantucket Resident Commitment Housing (NRCH) program that creates a second housing market that operates outside the market forces currently driving prices out of the reach of residents. This will provide a protected supply of housing affordable to those committed to year-round residency.
- ◆ Establish the Nantucket Housing Office or other appropriate entity to serve as the agency to administer and enforce the NRCH program.
- ◆ Under the building cap point system, give preference to those committed to year-round residency for building permits for new homes.
- ◆ Allow residential cooperatives and condominiums to enable separate conveyance of existing or potential secondary dwellings restricted for the exclusive use of those committed to year-round residency, and give preference in the point system to new secondary dwellings with Nantucket Housing Needs Covenants.
- ◆ Allow apartments, condominiums, and co-op housing to expand the stock of affordable NRCH units.
- ◆ Under the building-cap point system, discourage the development of new seasonal vacation rental homes.
- ◆ Create performance standards so that small-scale seasonal employee residences in existing neighborhoods are good neighbors.
- ◆ Place larger-scale seasonal employee housing projects away from neighborhoods, preferably near the airport.
- ◆ Encourage the creation of scattered site lots restricted to seasonal employee (SE) housing.

- ◆ Create incentives for expanding the rental of rooms to seasonal employees.
- ◆ Expand senior housing and encourage development of assisted- and independent-living facilities.
- ◆ Assess the need for housing and support/rehabilitation services for those with special-needs.



## Chapter 3: *Making a Living*

This chapter focuses on maintaining the vitality of Nantucket's on-island workforce, while introducing new ideas to promote the long-term health of the island economy through the following recommendations:

- ◆ Monitor the effects on the island's construction workforce of implementing a building cap that gives preference to year-round residents but places limits on new construction.
- ◆ Strengthen the construction sector and reduce reliance on the off-island workforce.
- ◆ Expand apprenticeship programs to develop more of the specialized craftsmanship aspect of island building.
- ◆ Establish a Nantucket Artisans Certification Program.
- ◆ Provide a high-quality tourist economy by conducting training programs in hospitality and tourism and by discouraging the marketing of events in the shoulder seasons unless public health, safety, quality hospitality services, and benefits to island residents can be provided for.
- ◆ Restore and promote the shellfish industry by continuing the Town of Nantucket's support for the aquaculture program; by expanding the development of an export market for shellfish; and by implementing strategies to improve the water quality of our harbors.
- ◆ Preserve existing agricultural lands and expand and encourage new agribusiness.
- ◆ Encourage arts and cultural enterprises as contributors to the Nantucket economy.
- ◆ Encourage home-based businesses.
- ◆ Encourage the economic development of health-care enterprises.
- ◆ Explore other diversification strategies that have low impact, that reduce reliance on tourism, and that bring economic benefits to the community.
- ◆ Develop a strategy to retain and expand downtown businesses serving the year-round population.
- ◆ Establish a downtown zoning district that is more compatible with the downtown historic fabric and mix of uses than the current zoning.
- ◆ Encourage expansion of mid-island businesses in a manner that promotes a cohesive, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use retail, service, and residential area.
- ◆ Create exclusive commercial and industrial zones in the vicinity of the airport.



## Chapter 4: *Protecting the Environment*

This chapter proposes strategies for maintaining and expanding the island's preservation of its natural, cultural, and archaeological resources through the following recommendations:

- ◆ Establish a Strategic Land Preservation Plan through a formal partnership of governmental and private agencies that prioritizes the acquisition of privately held parcels located in the Country Overlay District, emphasizing those with the greatest buildout potential and conservation values.
- ◆ Develop a Protected Land Management Plan shared by all non-profits for all protected lands.
- ◆ Develop Vegetation and Wildlife Management Plans to restore and maintain habitats for plants and animals distinctive to coastal plain grasslands and heathlands.
- ◆ Encourage the acquisition of access rights by the Town or County of Nantucket or Land Bank to 25 percent of the shoreline by 2025.
- ◆ Prepare a long-range plan for the management of access and resources along the shoreline.
- ◆ Provide the fiscal resources to manage increased public access to the shoreline.
- ◆ Carefully review new development in proximity to the shoreline, especially in areas of active coastal erosion.
- ◆ Support efforts to study and implement new beach preservation technologies.
- ◆ Encourage a program to determine the long-range water supply needs of the island.
- ◆ Support the recommendations of the Nantucket Harbor Watershed Work Group to improve and enhance water quality.
- ◆ Initiate a work group to develop a Madaket Harbor watershed and water-quality study and implementation strategy.
- ◆ Establish watershed overlay zoning districts, as necessary, for ponds that may experience water-quality impacts from adjoining land uses.
- ◆ Encourage and monitor the ongoing effort of our aviation community to mitigate noise impacts.
- ◆ Through guidelines, policies, and bylaws, strengthen the protection of historical resources, both exterior and interior, island-wide.
- ◆ Update the Nantucket Island Architectural and Cultural Resources Survey as a basis for monitoring the status of Nantucket's historic architectural resources and the effectiveness of its preservation efforts.
- ◆ Support the negotiation of preservation restrictions to preserve important historic architectural resources.
- ◆ Increase awareness of preservation issues by broadening educational outreach and training initiatives.
- ◆ Consider the legality and feasibility of requiring surveys of major new developments to determine impact upon archaeological resources.



## Chapter 5: *Managing Transportation*

This chapter makes the following recommendations to confront the daunting challenge of managing Nantucket's road, water, and air transportation systems:

- ◆ Create an advisory entity to make recommendations on the transport of people, vehicles, and goods to the island.
- ◆ Encourage limitations based on findings and recommended strategies of the Traffic Congestion Plan Work Group.
- ◆ Consider the legality and feasibility of negotiating a binding agreement that places a defined limit on the numbers of motor vehicles transported to the island, while guaranteeing essential, affordable travel and transport of goods for island residents.
- ◆ Encourage the SSA to study the feasibility of allowing freight deliveries before or after peak traffic periods downtown.
- ◆ Control traffic congestion downtown by better management of deliveries, pedestrian traffic, parking, flow of traffic, and restriction of vehicles; enforcement of truck routes; and coordination of arrivals and departures.
- ◆ Encourage development of a marketing program to encourage visitors to leave their cars at home, supported by a program providing delivery of belongings to their final destination from point-of-departure to point-of-arrival.
- ◆ Consider the legality of a Town of Nantucket-administered permit system as might be recommended by the Traffic Congestion Plan Work Group designed to restrict the number of vehicles introduced to the island during peak season.
- ◆ Study the feasibility of reducing the size of trucks brought to the island by establishing a mainland facility to "break bulk."
- ◆ Reduce automobile dependence by improving and expanding the NRTA and introducing vans and jitneys to areas not currently serviced.
- ◆ Research methods for reducing traffic backups at key intersections that do not require traffic signals or road widening, such as opening alternative through-roads and interconnections.
- ◆ Consider the legality and feasibility of requiring new development to undergo an analysis of its impact on traffic.
- ◆ Seek permission from MassHighway to establish a speed limit of 20 MPH for certain streets in town and the Siasconset Old Historic District.
- ◆ Strive to negotiate a voluntary agreement between the Airport Commission, private carriers, and the Town of Nantucket that limits air traffic to the extent permitted by law.
- ◆ Establish a plan to manage vehicular access and use of the shoreline while ensuring traditional vehicular access rights.
- ◆ Promote the expansion of bicycle usage by enhancing the existing system of bikepaths.
- ◆ Improve the island's pedestrian systems to make neighborhoods more walkable and also more accessible to the physically challenged.



## Chapter 6: *Island Infrastructure*

This chapter makes the following recommendations to address the challenges of meeting the island's infrastructure needs consistent with the goals of the plan:

- ◆ Continue to expand and enhance the Town of Nantucket's long-range capital program by conducting facility-needs analyses, code-compliance analyses, and maintenance needs analyses, including bikepaths and sidewalk repair, to coincide with the plan's growth assumptions.
- ◆ Provide funding for longstanding capital needs, including the option of revenue bonds.
- ◆ Investigate the legality and feasibility of impact fees and a visitor fee structure to help fund capital improvements.
- ◆ Fund certain capital improvements through betterments (assessments of property owners who directly receive the benefits of the capital improvement).
- ◆ Support the ongoing preparation by the Town of Nantucket of a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan.
- ◆ Provide new sanitary sewers within the Town Overlay District while avoiding extension of sewers into the Country Overlay District, except under extreme circumstances.
- ◆ Require that all sewers be built to Town of Nantucket standards, and require acceptance and dedicated maintenance by the Town of Nantucket.
- ◆ Urge restricting the expansion of town water service only to the Town Overlay District, except under extreme circumstances.
- ◆ Provide an adequate supply of potable water during periods of peak demand through the application of water-saving devices and rain gauges on nonagricultural irrigation systems.
- ◆ Provide public safety facilities that enable a rapid response to emergencies, including the feasibility of central dispatching, the evaluation of roads to determine adequacy for emergency access, and needed public-safety facility upgrades.
- ◆ Provide additional boat ramps for emergency preparedness purposes.
- ◆ Upgrade recreational facilities to meet ADA standards.
- ◆ Conduct a needs analysis for future recreation facilities and acquire land anticipated to meet those future needs.
- ◆ Create an enclosed tennis, handball, and squash facility.
- ◆ Add walking trails to the Town of Nantucket's existing parks.
- ◆ Expand schools only after a needs analysis, and then provide that any expansion is a permanent facility.
- ◆ Prepare a school campus master plan including interconnection of the schools with an integrated pedestrian system.
- ◆ Consider the legality and feasibility of providing interim housing for new school employees.
- ◆ Establish a new Teen Center.
- ◆ Expand fees for the private use of the school facilities.
- ◆ Consolidate Town of Nantucket offices downtown.
- ◆ Encourage the private sector to create a Performing Arts Center.



## Chapter 7: A Healthy Community

This chapter makes the following recommendations to provide a safe and secure environment for islanders, to assess the adequacy of public services to meet the island's growing needs, and to implement measures to meet identified needs:

- ◆ Provide programs that offer sustenance to islanders in need of financial and/or mobility assistance.
- ◆ Bolster the existing social service network by:
  - Supporting the Cottage Hospital's program of in-home care
  - Encouraging programs for the physically, mentally, and emotionally challenged
  - Strengthening foster care and respite care
  - Providing needed human services to seasonal workers
  - Enhancing pre-school and after-school programs
  - Providing sufficient home and licensed day-care facilities.
  - Providing a continuum of care for senior citizens, including assisted and independent living
  - Seeking to remove legal barriers to the receipt of federal, state, and local funding for human-services needs
- ◆ Encourage new and expanded existing programs that promote the health of the island, such as the Healthy Communities Program and the island's tick-borne-disease-prevention programs.
- ◆ Develop community indicators, support the Hospital's Strategic Plan, and explore ways to maintain the affordability of health care for islanders through adequate health insurance.
- ◆ Promote a healthy natural environment, including the protection of Nantucket's peace and quiet.
- ◆ Increase the mobility of all Nantucketers through the development of alternative transportation systems and paratransit systems.
- ◆ Promote continued opportunities for quality education through curriculum and capital-facility improvements by:
  - Expanding school system programs for family support, including pre-school and after-school care
  - Fostering post-secondary educational opportunities
  - Continuing and expanding the use of the Community School for community needs
  - Continuing the government curriculum
  - Expanding literacy programs
  - Raising community awareness of the importance of this Community Plan
- ◆ Enhance recognition and support for arts and culture by investigating the feasibility of a Nantucket Arts Commission to broaden community support for the arts, by encouraging the private sector to create a Performing Arts Center, and by considering the establishment of a local sales tax to support the arts community.
- ◆ Expand leisure and recreational opportunities for islanders, visitors, and seasonal employees both during and outside the peak season.

## **H**ow the Plan Will Be Used

In discussing implementation of the Community Plan, perhaps what is most important is that it will be implemented. Unlike many well-intentioned studies, policy statements, and goals that have preceded it, the Community Plan is not one more document to be accepted, shelved, and forever ignored. Within it are delineated clear recommendations, and accompanying those recommendations are specific deadlines.

The Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission will be the leader in introducing the plan to the community and in beginning the implementation of its recommendations through proposed bylaw amendments. The NP&EDC has a broad set of responsibilities in this arena, beginning with a detailed analysis of the plan's projected costs. Many of the proposed recommendations contained within the Community Plan will involve significant expenditures of money, and it is up to the NP&EDC to understand and present those costs to the people of Nantucket when the plan comes up for a vote.

Beyond initial approval, the NP&EDC will also be the organization charged with coordinating the implementation of—and monitoring compliance with—the Community Plan's actions. The staff of the NP&EDC will act not only as advocates for the plan but as facilitators for cooperation and partnering between agencies in achieving the plan's goals.

As broad as the NP&EDC's role may be, however, it is by no means the sole body of island government that will find itself charged with implementing actions. The Nantucket Comprehensive Community Plan is an ambitious and far-reaching document and one that

will have a dramatic impact on regulations, policy objectives, and fiscal budgets of virtually every Town of Nantucket agency. Almost every segment of municipal government will be urged to bring its own objectives into conformity with those of the Community Plan, and the plan will necessarily be the foundation of Nantucket's capital budget each year.

Most important, however, the Community Plan's implementation will not be the responsibility of government alone. The plan stresses equally the roles of the private sector and non-profit organizations, as well as the responsibility of every citizen in its implementation. The plan requires a community effort to implement. It is only as valuable as the people, agencies, and organizations who are working to turn its recommendations into realities.

Throughout the implementation process, certain aspects of the plan—most likely longer-term actions—may need modification, if significant shifts in the island's demographics, economy, or other circumstances take place. Should the need for change arise, processes will be put in place through which it can happen. For the most part, however, the tenets and actions presented in this document are expected to remain valid for years to come. What is detailed in the pages that follow is a path to our future. The choice now is ours: it is time to ask ourselves what we want the Nantucket of the future to be. The decisions we make today will shape the island where we live tomorrow. We believe the vision for Nantucket contained in this plan is the best one for our island, and we urge the entire community to become involved in making it a reality.



Rob Benchley

*The decisions we make today will shape the island where we live tomorrow. It is therefore essential that the entire Nantucket community become involved in making the Nantucket Comprehensive Community Plan a reality.*