

Chapter 1: Guiding Growth

Nantucket awoke from a century-long economic slumber in the early 1960s. The seasonal economy, which had taken root after the demise of the whaling industry, began to blossom. The key ingredient in Nantucket's popularity was that Nantucket looked, felt, and worked like no place else. This landscape, both built and natural, was the result of the island's history and culture. Today it is the economic and emotional foundation of the community.

Year-round population growth was gradual from 1940 to 1970, but has been explosive since that time, especially in the last decade, which has shown a 54% increase. Seasonal population growth, which is harder to measure accurately, has exploded even faster. The increase in housing units has been more rapid than the increase in year-round population, an indication that most new houses have been for seasonal use.

Nantucket's popularity as a place to live and vacation now threatens the very qualities that attract people here. Although much of the land has been preserved as open space, we are nonetheless bursting at the seams. Because we have chosen to maintain the historic character that makes the community distinctive, we feel the pressures of population growth more acutely than mainland communities that have been consumed by four-lane roads, commercial strip development, and suburban sprawl.

This view of Nantucket town toward Brant Point was taken ca. 1885 from the South Tower (Unitarian Church). At that time, there were only four buildings on Brant Point.

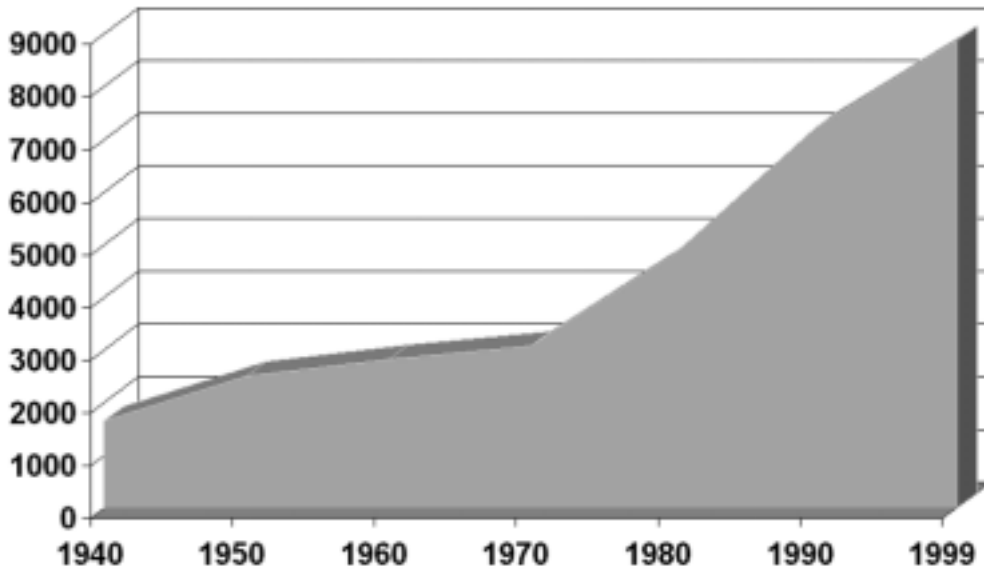
Courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association



We are different and wish to remain that way. But if growth rates and patterns of development continue as they have over the past thirty years, we will lose what we value so highly: our historic buildings and narrow streets, much of our open landscape, and the special

small-town island feeling that sets us apart from the rest of America. Nantucket faces a clear choice: to act decisively now to protect what makes us special, or to let real estate trends and market forces devour us, which they surely could do.

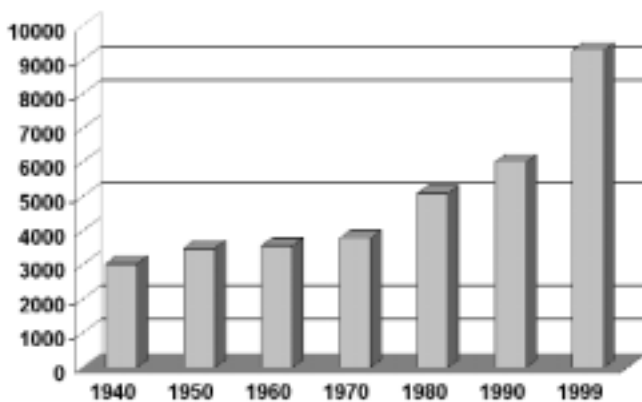
Housing Unit Growth 1940-1999



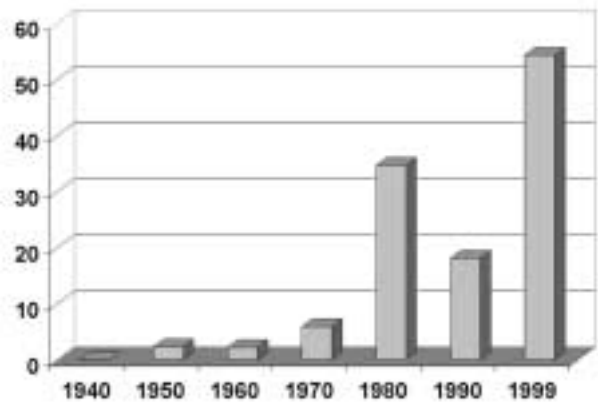
Source: Nantucket Building Department

Since the 1960s, we have built 4,000 houses, as many as were built in the first 310 years and are still standing. In the same time frame, population growth has been dramatic, especially in the last decade, which has shown a 54% increase over the prior decade.

Island Population 1940-1999



% Growth in Population by Decade 1940-1999



Source: 1990 CPH, Summary File 3, MISER Updated by Nantucket Town Clerk, July 18, 2000



Preserving Traditional Patterns

Courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association (left) and Joel Russell (right)

Nantucket town toward Monomoy and mid-island, 1870 vs. 1998. Today, buildout blurs the once distinct line between Town and Country.

The Island Today

Despite the singular importance to the community of Nantucket's unique landscape, growth over the last thirty years has followed conventional mainland patterns. Since the 1960s we have built 4,000 houses—as many as were built in the first 310 years and are still standing. As a result of zoning bylaws (as well as perceived market demand), development on the island has made us look and function increasingly like the mainland. The trends show:

- ◆ Our historic character is slipping away.

- ◆ Despite all our conservation efforts, much of our landscape is losing its rural character.
- ◆ Cars have become the dominant travel mode of daily life, creating seasonal traffic problems and a landscape marred by parking in lots, on streets, and even on our beaches.
- ◆ Despite a burst of economic activity, housing prices have moved beyond the reach of many year-round residents.



These trends will continue if we do not change our zoning bylaws. When we adopted zoning in the 1970s, we hoped it would safeguard our special qualities, but despite conscientious efforts to make it work, it has not served us well in protecting and enhancing our traditional landscape. If the activities of the last thirty years continue, in the next several decades the Nantucket we inherited will be lost forever. Growth, however, can be rationally managed and does not necessarily have to erode the valuable common assets of Nantucket’s unique natural and built environment.

Our Goal

- ◆ To preserve Nantucket’s character, which is based on the traditional settlement pattern epitomized by Nantucket town and the village of Siasconset (“Town”), separated and distinguished by intervening areas of largely undeveloped rural land (“Country”).



Rob Benchley

By establishing a planning model based on our historic heritage, we can maintain a clear distinction between Town and Country neighborhoods. For instance, the Town Overlay District will include neighborhoods such as those in downtown and extend into the mid-island area where many year-round islanders live, like the Seikinnow Place neighborhood, pictured at right. The Country Overlay District as illustrated by the Sesachacha Pond area, pictured on the opposite page, will also include neighborhoods like the hamlet of Quidnet. Planning strategies will accommodate the unique character of each area.



Rob Benchley



Strategies for the Future

The most important and effective way to accomplish these goals is to examine our historic heritage, which maintained a clear distinction between Town and Country. This is our inheritance and should be our model for the future. To create a clear distinction between Town and Country, the Community Plan proposes the creation of Town and Country Overlay Districts. The planning strategies and objectives must be fundamentally different in each. Both Town and Country Overlay Districts have neighborhoods, but they have different characteristics:

Town neighborhoods are areas where:

1. Compact development is the predominant land use.
2. Some commercial use already exists or has the potential to develop.
3. Public water supply and sewerage can be used efficiently and/or expanded cost-effectively.
4. The majority of the year-round island population lives.



Rob Benchley

Country neighborhoods include areas where:

1. The natural landscape predominates.
2. Open space has been acquired or targeted for protection.
3. Sensitive habitats remain intact or can be re-established.
4. Scenic vistas and public recreation resources are valued by islanders and visitors alike.
5. There are prime, or important, agricultural lands.
6. Small hamlets and low-density rural subdivisions are nestled into the landscape.



Rob Benchley



Making It Happen: Preserving Traditional Patterns: Town and Country

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Objective 1.1

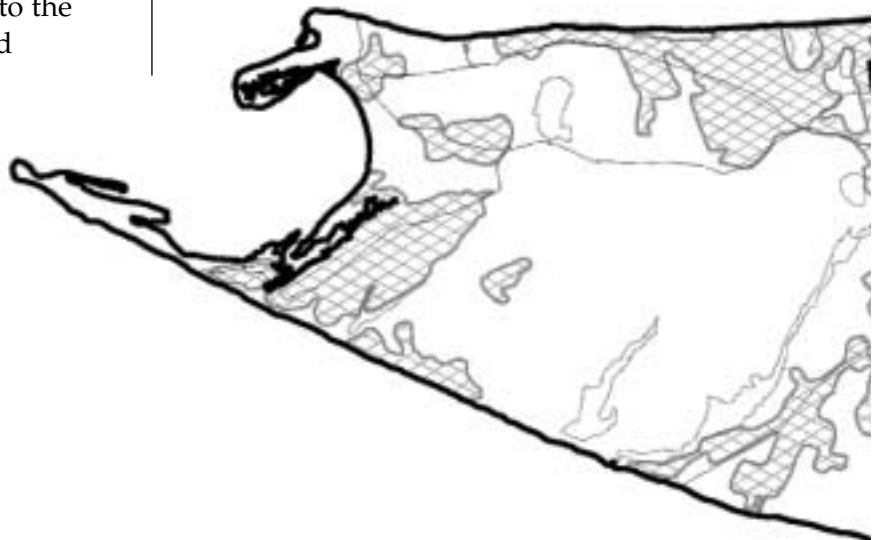
To make the distinction between Town and Country.

Recommendations:

1. IMMEDIATE: Establish Town and Country Zoning Overlay Districts to implement development and density standards that focus development in the Town Overlay District and discourage growth in the Country Overlay District.
2. SHORT TERM: Amend the content and nomenclature of the Zoning Bylaw and the Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land consistent with the concept of Town and Country.
3. SHORT TERM: Establish a band of undeveloped land to be acquired for public use that sharply defines the limits of Town (the "greenbelt"). Priority consideration is recommended to the Nantucket Land Bank and the Town and

County of Nantucket for acquisition of remaining undeveloped parcels that define this edge under the Strategic Land Preservation Plan (see chapter 4, "Protecting the Environment," pages 92-93). This greenbelt may contain parks and trail systems in relative proximity to Town neighborhoods. It is further recommended that the Town of Nantucket:

- a. SHORT TERM: Apply the concept of the greenbelt to Siasconset, Madaket, and other areas, if recommended by Neighborhood Area Plans. (See *Town* subsection of this chapter, pages 34-37.)
- b. SHORT TERM: Amend the NP&EDC's Open Space and Recreation Plan to incorporate the greenbelt concept.
- c. SHORT TERM: Provide open space extensions into the Town Overlay District; for example, along the Miacomet Pond wetland corridor.



Source: Nantucket Geographic Information System and NP&EDC

IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),
SHORT-TERM (will begin within five years of plan adoption), LONG-TERM (will begin more than five years after plan adoption)



The Community Plan proposes to clearly define the line between Town and Country and their associated neighborhoods through the implementation of Town and Country Overlay Districts. The greenbelt is part of the Country Overlay District and its inner edge defines the outer edge of Town limits.

NOTE: The boundaries may be modified or refined through Zoning Bylaw amendments that may be recommended through the preparation of Neighborhood Area Plans.

TOWN OVERLAY DISTRICT

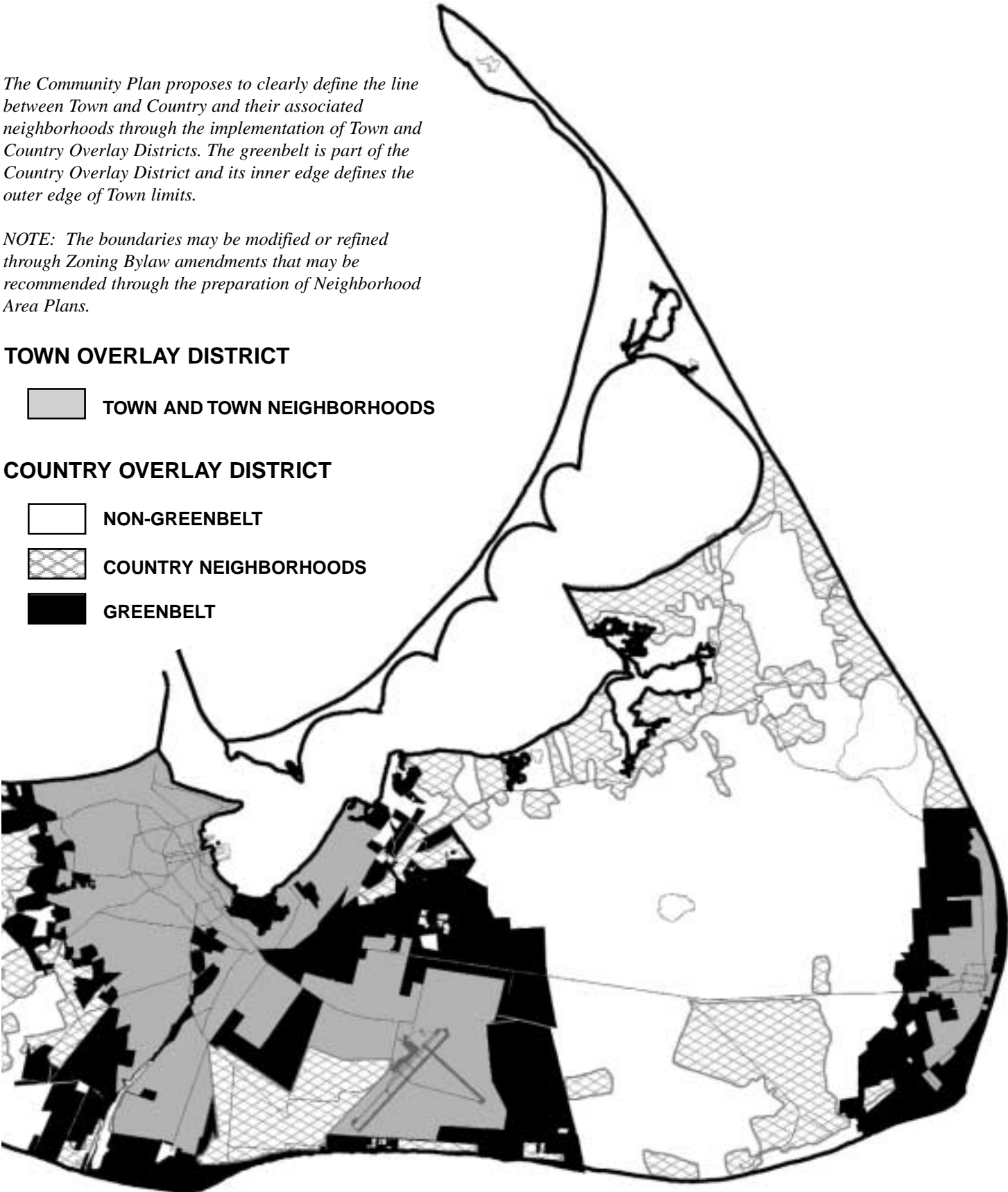
 TOWN AND TOWN NEIGHBORHOODS

COUNTRY OVERLAY DISTRICT

 NON-GREENBELT

 COUNTRY NEIGHBORHOODS

 GREENBELT



IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),
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Rob Benchley

Town

The Island Today

Consider Nantucket town as a model. Its center comprises a variety of businesses and social functions. Many residential neighborhoods are within walking distance of town and car use can be optional. Streets are friendly to pedestrians and many daily needs can be met on foot. This layout has also been durable, adapting to the needs of a community as it has changed from an agricultural community to a major whaling center to a world-class resort. Although it has become more tourist-oriented, its basic layout served the community well before the tourism era accelerated.

The village of Siasconset has distinctive town neighborhoods that are the target of the first Neighborhood Area Plan.

Since the 1960s, development permitted by current zoning has spread across the island, gradually obliterating the distinction between Town and Country. Many new areas like Pine Valley, Hooper Farm Road, the Hussey Farm area, the Raceway, Cisco, and Tom Nevers have developed. The southern part of town is just short of Surfside. As a result:

- ◆ Traffic has increased as residential areas move farther and farther from the places where daily practical needs used to be met by walking.



- ◆ Children and older people have become dependent on others to get around.
- ◆ In many areas, low-density development of vacation homes has eliminated sites where more affordable year-round housing could have been built.
- ◆ New commercial developments are dominated by parking lots, making them look much like those on the mainland.
- ◆ Streets are unfriendly to pedestrians and bicyclists.

Our Goal

- ◆ To reinforce and support existing neighborhoods as places where island residents live, work, and play and to guide future growth in a manner that does not diminish the quality of life for residents of those neighborhoods.

Strategies for the Future

Achieving these goals requires putting the concept of neighborhoods at the center of all planning efforts. No two neighborhoods are alike. Each village and hamlet is distinct; some have commercial and retail establishments, others only a loose collection of dwellings. The Community Plan does not seek to make all neighborhoods the same but to see that each one works better for its residents and for the island overall.

What works depends on the particulars of each neighborhood: its location, history, development patterns, densities, and the needs of its residents. A few changes can significantly improve how a neighborhood functions and looks, which will improve the quality of life. We should embrace and protect the special character of each neighborhood, allowing only development that enhances its character. In so doing, the rights and expectations of resident and nonresident landowners must be appropriately balanced with the needs of the entire community.



Rob Benchley

The Siasconset community, both year-round and summer residents, is already working together to define the specifics of their Neighborhood Area Plan.

For example, neighborhoods might consider neighborhood service centers—small-scale commercial establishments meant to cater to the specific convenience needs of a neighborhood. With such modest centers, automobile trips, normally made with great frequency to larger scale mid-island facilities, can be significantly reduced as many of these items can be purchased within walking distance of most of its residents.



Making It Happen: Town

The objectives and recommendations listed below are not intended as mandates to the Town of Nantucket, or to any other person, agency, organization, or public or quasi-public entity.

Objective 1.2

To create Neighborhood Area Plans through a participatory planning process to facilitate zoning district changes to implement the concept of Town and Country and to foster the creation of areas with neighborhood services. Such plans would identify neighborhood residential and service areas.

Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Design a planning process and strategy for the preparation of Neighborhood Area Plans.
2. SHORT TERM: Develop Neighborhood Area Plans for selected neighborhoods.
3. SHORT TERM: Amend the Zoning Bylaw to create neighborhood service centers.
4. SHORT TERM: Amend the Community Plan by incorporating Neighborhood Area Plans as appendixes to the plan.
5. SHORT TERM: Consider implementing the action plan elements of each Neighborhood Area Plan.

Objective 1.3

To preserve the character and integrity of our traditional town centers, especially the Old Historic Districts of Nantucket and Siasconset.

Recommendation:

1. SHORT TERM: Amend the Zoning Bylaw for the RC, LC, Residential Old Historic (ROH) in Nantucket and Siasconset Old Historic (SOH) in Siasconset Zoning Districts, as well as the Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land. This would preserve or replicate the character of historic structures and existing building patterns (i.e., bulk, form, setbacks, diversity of lot sizes, pattern of private spaces, and parking, etc.) for infill development, building and use expansions, changes and renovations, and encourage appropriate mixed-use development.

Objective 1.4

To encourage the retention of small neighborhood centers consisting of mixed-use development; protect established residential neighborhoods; and to reserve other commercial-only and industrial-only zones, while guarding against commercial sprawl.

Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Amend the Zoning Bylaw to limit future "strip commercial" development by restricting the size of commercial buildings (and their parking areas) and the layout of buildings and parking lots, and to encourage "infilling" of existing strip commercial development to provide more of a village character.
2. SHORT TERM: Eliminate the Residential Commercial-2 (RC-2) zoning district and create

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zoning districts for areas now zoned RC-2 in a manner that reinforces and preserves existing residential neighborhoods and compatible mixed-use neighborhood centers, while establishing zones dedicated to commercial and industrial development.

3. **SHORT TERM:** Amend the Zoning Bylaw and zoning map to create a new industrial zone encompassing Town of Nantucket property under the jurisdiction of the Airport Commission and surrounding privately held land located outside the Wellhead Protection District. This would provide opportunities to relocate, or establish anew, uses that are incompatible within the Town, established neighborhoods, and the Wellhead Protection District.
4. **SHORT TERM:** Employ the Neighborhood Area Planning process to recommend to Town Meeting the extent and characteristics of the new zoning districts within areas currently zoned RC-2 prior to implementing Objective 1.4, Recommendations 2 and 3.

Objective 1.5

To establish connecting open-space corridors extending from the greenbelt into the Town Overlay District and to preserve and establish private and public greenspace throughout the district.

Recommendations:

1. **SHORT TERM:** Amend the Open Space and Recreation Plan to provide for small-scale open spaces, parks, and conservation or preservation restrictions in the Town Overlay District to establish focal points and informal gathering and recreational opportunities that complement compact development patterns and help to preserve their character.
2. **SHORT TERM:** Acquire land and conservation restrictions, as appropriate, in accordance with the Strategic Land Preservation Plan and Objective 1.5., Recommendation 1.

3. **SHORT TERM:** To the extent applicable to the Town Overlay District, implement the same policies and recommendations pertaining to land and conservation restriction acquisition as contained in the *Country* subsection of this chapter, pages 38-41.



Catherine Johnson

The Community Plan encourages preserving the character and integrity of our traditional town centers.

IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),

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Rob Benchley

The Island Today

Nantucket's rural landscape is of vital importance. We enjoy it for walking, biking, hunting, fishing, and for the simple pleasure of admiring the island's natural beauty. The countryside is also part of Nantucket's appeal to seasonal visitors, who provide significant support for the island's economy. For them, Nantucket's open landscape and connection to the ocean are among our greatest attractions. (See chapter 4, "Protecting the Environment," pages 88-91, for a fuller discussion of this subject.)

Over the last thirty-five years we have

The Nantucket moorlands are among the most beautiful in the world.

conserved 13,223 acres, or 44% of the island. The success of this preservation effort, through public and private means, has provided more than open land. It has also contributed to the financial and emotional stability of a community whose identity is defined by its unique landscape. Despite major efforts to conserve the countryside, however, growth has continued to alter the landscape and today it is difficult to go for a walk, ride a bike, or to fish or hunt without seeing houses. Nantucket's distinct "town and out-of-town" landscape has been blurred; it is hard to know where the town ends and the countryside begins.



As a community, we have recognized the importance of conserving the rural landscape. Individuals and institutions have donated land and created conservation restrictions, and voters have continued to appropriate funds for the Land Bank's acquisitions.

The current Zoning Bylaw does not sufficiently recognize the importance of the natural landscape to our community. By allowing a large house on every two or three acres, the countryside will be altered beyond recognition. The Washing Pond area is a clear example of how an open landscape can be obliterated. This can happen to the Dionis area, where another 500 houses could be built under current zoning. Other rural areas are equally vulnerable.

Our Goal

- ◆ To preserve the historic, aesthetic, and environmental character of the countryside.



Rob Benchley

The most effective way to protect Nantucket's imperiled countryside is to continue efforts to purchase land and conservation restrictions such as this Land Bank purchase of 50 acres in Polpis.

***S**trategies for the Future*

The most effective way to continue to protect Nantucket's imperiled countryside is to foster continued efforts to purchase land and establish conservation restrictions. These methods, although costly, guarantee that the lands will remain forever in their natural state. As land becomes more valuable and development pressures continue unabated, conservation efforts must keep pace. A cooperative effort involving all the island conservation groups will accelerate the effectiveness of strategic conservation efforts.

It may be impossible, however, to buy all of the land that should be saved because the current Zoning Bylaw does not address the differences between urbanized and rural areas of the island. Regulations that recognize the impact of development on surrounding vistas and the environment must be sought. Changes in ground-cover, height, and open-space requirements, together with restrictions on siting homes in the Country Overlay District, will minimize these impacts.

While excluding existing developed areas, this plan recommends the creation of a greenbelt—a band of open space, technically a part of the Country Overlay District, surrounding the Town Overlay District—to create a clear demarcation between Town and Country. The plan provides that priority be given to acquiring those undeveloped private parcels that will complement existing preserved land around the Town Overlay District. This greenbelt is intended to provide open space, natural buffering, and recreational amenities especially to benefit residents of town—much like the benefits enjoyed by island residents when the distinct border between "town" and "country" was at Pleasant Street.



Making It Happen: Country

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Objective 1.6

To discourage development in the Country Overlay District through buildout reduction, acquisition of land and conservation restrictions, and through regulatory and other incentives.

Recommendations

1. IMMEDIATE: In the point system associated with the building cap, amend the Zoning Bylaw to assign fewer points when evaluating requests for building permits for new homes in the Country Overlay District.
2. SHORT TERM: Through the Strategic Land Preservation Plan (see chapter 4, "Protecting the Environment," pages 92-93), establish as a high priority the acquisition of privately held parcels, in fee or through the acceptance of voluntary conservation restrictions, that are located within the Country Overlay District; the decision to acquire would be based on development potential and impact on adjacent preserved land. Promote the interconnection of open spaces.
3. SHORT TERM: Encourage the HDC to revise the Historic District regulations or legislation, as appropriate, to enhance siting controls, to protect vistas, and to minimize the impact of development on the landscape.
4. SHORT TERM: Amend the Zoning Bylaw to create disincentives for developing in the Country Overlay District, while creating incentives for developing in the Town Overlay District.

5. SHORT TERM: Conduct a technical analysis to determine the feasibility of a bonus incentive pilot program [such as transfer of development rights (TDR)] in which an incentive for building density can be granted in return for the voluntary reduction of development rights on grandfathered lots in the Country Overlay District.
6. SHORT TERM: Based on the technical analysis of Objective 1.6, Recommendation 5, above, amend the Zoning Bylaw to create a pilot bonus incentive program in a limited area.
7. LONG TERM: Based on the successful outcome of the pilot bonus incentive program, expand the program to other areas within Country and Town Overlay Districts.



Rob Benchley

This recent Land Bank acquisition along Hummock Pond preserved 90 acres of potentially developable land.

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Objective 1.7

To support existing neighborhoods (including traditional hamlets and modern-day subdivisions) located in the Country Overlay District.

Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Permit infill development on existing lots within established neighborhoods in keeping with the existing density and character of those neighborhoods and with the objectives contained in chapter 2, "Housing Needs," pages 58-61.
2. SHORT TERM: Create pocket parks and other neighborhood-scale open spaces within existing neighborhoods.
3. SHORT TERM: Encourage the preparation of

Neighborhood Area Plans for existing neighborhoods located in the Country Overlay District.

4. SHORT TERM: Implement measures found in chapter 5, "Managing Transportation," pages 118-119 and 121-126, to make existing neighborhoods in the Country Overlay District less automobile-dependent. Strategies might include interconnecting roads and extending shuttle and bikepath systems.
5. LONG TERM: After considering the recommendations, if any, of the Neighborhood Area Planning process, amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow limited commercial, civic, and service uses to enable residents to meet more of their daily needs in their own neighborhoods and reduce the number of trips they need to make into more congested areas of the town.

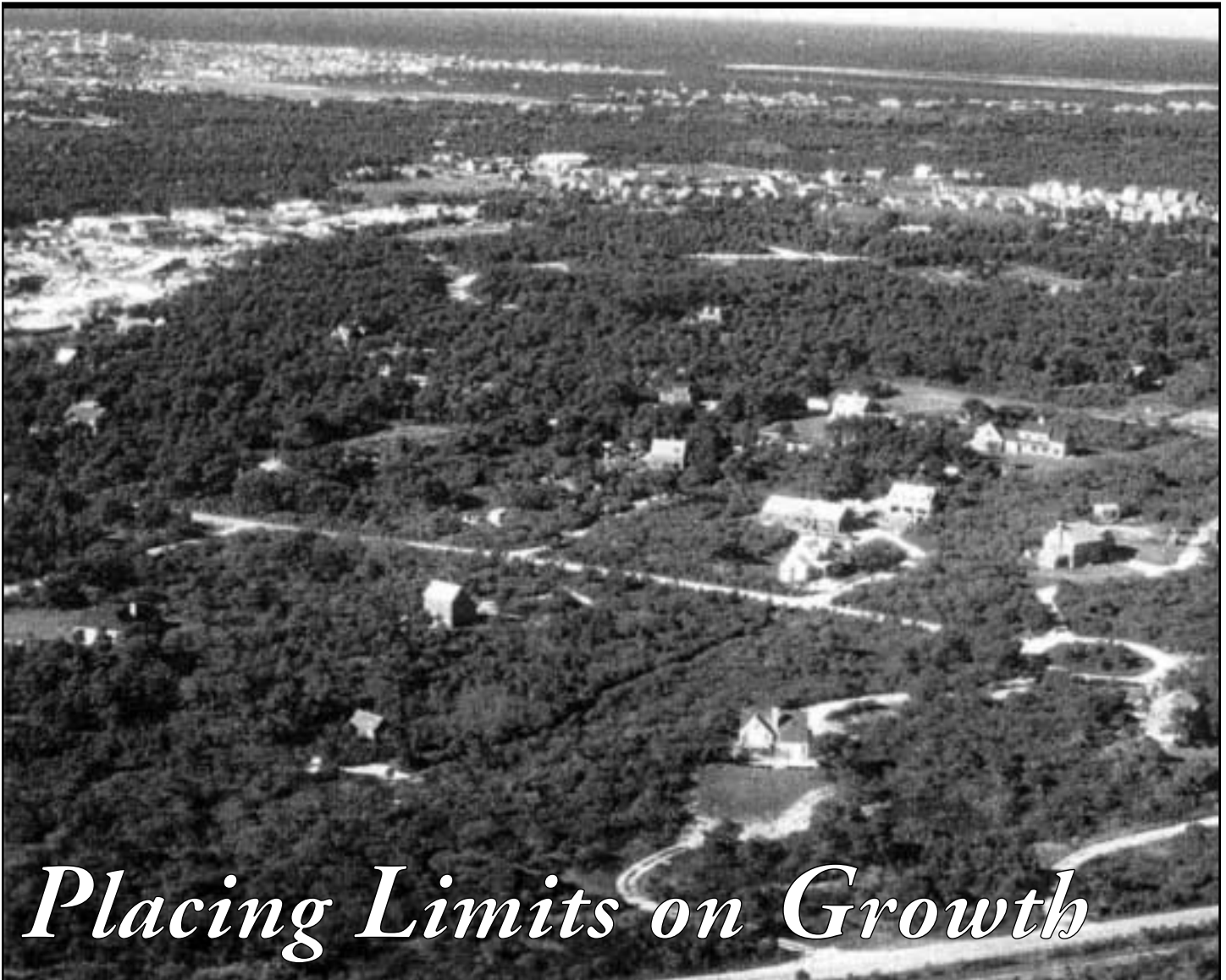


Rob Benchley

Tom Nevers, home to many year-round families, is a neighborhood in the Country Overlay District with its own specific issues and requirements. The Community Plan will encourage each neighborhood, in partnership with the NP&EDC, to participate in the creation of its own Neighborhood Area Plan with these issues in mind.

IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),

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Placing Limits on Growth

Joel Russell

The Island Today

Many people believe the population has been growing too fast on Nantucket, sweeping away the qualities that make this our valued home. The adoption of mainland-style development patterns has greatly increased the effect of growth, especially on traffic. But the sheer quantity of houses being built year after year has sufficiently alarmed residents so that they have supported building caps in recent years in an attempt to control the rate of growth and change.

The combination of growth pressure and growth controls has created a “gold rush”

From the air, it is nearly impossible to find vistas unencumbered by development in any area of Nantucket today.

mentality, in which more and more off-islanders want to own a house on Nantucket before the opportunity is lost because of growth controls or because the island will be completely built out. This situation drives prices ever higher and fuels a buying frenzy.

As the number of allowable building permits for new houses declines, concern remains about retaining jobs for islanders.

Thus, we must find a way to manage growth without displacing long-time residents either by pricing them out of the housing market or



by taking away their jobs in construction and related industries. The longer it takes Nantucket to reach its ultimate buildout, the longer there will be a viable construction industry on the island. It is to everyone's advantage to maintain the minimum rate of growth necessary to sustain an adequate level of employment for islanders.

Our Goal

- ◆ To place limits on growth based upon the need to preserve the island's traditional small-town character, ecological integrity, and natural beauty while protecting the economic well-being of year-round islanders and the Town of Nantucket's fiscal integrity.

Strategies for the Future

Placing limits on new dwelling growth implies reducing the total amount of building that can occur on Nantucket, known as buildout reduction. Buildout reduction is necessary to protect the special qualities of the island that will significantly diminish, or be irreparably damaged, should growth occur beyond its carrying capacity. Total buildout reduction is achieved in two ways: (1) through acquisition of land and conservation restrictions so that less land can be built upon, and (2) through changes in zoning that reduce the total number and size of dwellings that can be built on buildable private land.

At the same time, **managing growth** is necessary if we are to allocate the growth that will occur in keeping with the island's character. Growth is managed in two ways: (1) through the spatial allocation of growth (the Town and Country concept, described earlier) and (2) by the reduction in the rate of growth. Spatial allocation places growth where it is most desirable—both to preserve the community's character and to be able to afford the consequences of growth. Growth in the Country Overlay District adds



Source: Nantucket Geographic Information System, NP&EDC

Shown above is current development in Dionis, a Country neighborhood. To the right is potential maximum buildout under current zoning. The dark shaded areas denote land already protected. The light shaded areas denote wetlands.



infrastructure costs, and increases auto-dependency. Controlled growth in the Town Overlay District maximizes use of existing infrastructure, and holds out hope for a more pedestrian-friendly development pattern.

Reduction of the rate of growth is necessary for two reasons: (1) to minimize economic dislocation that would result from a decline in new construction when buildout occurs; and (2) to enable us to plan carefully for increases in population so that essential facilities and services are not jeopardized and that we will not be overwhelmed by the rate at which we grow. Slowing down the rate of growth buys time to enable us to purchase land and conservation restrictions before land parcels are developed. Thus, limiting and managing growth work hand-in-hand—by slowing the rate of growth, time is afforded to acquire land, thus reducing buildout.

The major source of new dwellings on Nantucket is the potential construction of secondary dwellings, which current zoning allows on nearly every lot. The Town of Nantucket can reduce the buildout impact of new secondary dwellings by changing zoning to limit the size of such dwellings in the Country Overlay District and by enabling the Planning Board to prohibit secondary dwellings on newly created lots where they will not serve the purposes of this Community Plan. Zoning can also ensure that the construction of secondary dwellings will help to solve housing needs on the island by requiring that on properties with new secondary dwellings only one of the houses may be used for seasonal vacation rental.

Rate of growth, which we can feel as more and more houses pop up in the moors and as we get caught in the ensuing traffic congestion, is easier to comprehend than total buildout, which is a more abstract concept. Nantucket's primary tool for controlling the rate of growth has been an annual building cap on single-family

residences. As noted above, when combined with a strategy for protection of open space that has significant development potential, the building cap on primary and secondary dwellings helps to reduce the total buildout of the island.

Rate-of-growth issues affect housing and the economy in important ways. Creative management of Nantucket's growth is the central challenge to solving our interrelated housing, economic, transportation, and environmental problems.

A cap on new single-family residential development should be continued, but to maintain relatively stable employment it should be reviewed annually based upon experience in previous years. One such refinement would limit the number of secondary dwellings that can be built in any given year. The cap should also be refined so that it advances other goals of the Community Plan. A point system should be implemented giving preference to construction projects that:

1. Favor housing designated for those committed to year-round residency and/or seasonal employees, which is in short supply, as opposed to housing for seasonal vacationers.
2. Reinforce the distinction between Town and Country Overlay Districts, continuing "in-town" development that is well served by public transportation and existing infrastructure.
3. Result in the permanent preservation of significant tracts of open space or create other important civic amenities.
4. Preserve the existing stock of historic buildings.
5. Moderate the rate of construction of new second-dwelling units in the Country Overlay District to allow open-land preservation efforts to reduce total buildout.
6. Employ a year-round workforce rather than a commuting workforce.

1940—1,645 DWELLING UNITS



1975—3,900 DWELLING UNITS (estimated)



1996—8,130 DWELLING UNITS



This comparison of growth patterns in 1940, 1975, and 1996 clearly shows how dramatic recent growth has been and how construction is eroding the countryside. A change in zoning can guide the pattern of further growth to already developed areas.

Source: Nantucket Geographic Information System, NP&EDC



Making It Happen: Placing Limits on Growth

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Objective 1.8

To place long-term limits on the annual rate of growth, thus enabling the Town of Nantucket to keep services and public infrastructure in line with that growth while providing for the island's economic well-being, housing needs, and quality of life.

Recommendation:

1. IMMEDIATE: Amend the Zoning Bylaw to retain and modify the building cap as a temporary measure designed to manage growth:

continuing the building-cap limit adopted at the 1999 Annual Town Meeting and fine-tuning the point system adopted at the 2000 ATM to better accomplish the goals of this Community Plan.

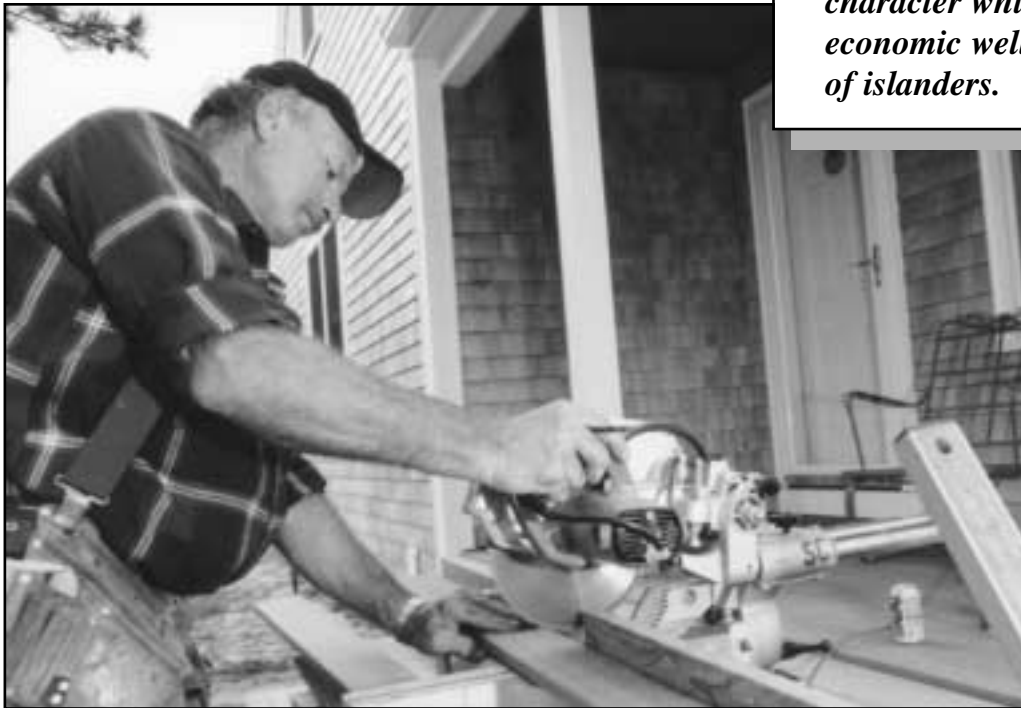
- a. Consider a procedure for evaluating if a Zoning Bylaw amendment is needed for adjusting the building cap to balance growth reduction goals with economic well-being.

Objective 1.9

To enable reduction in total buildout in keeping with the desired holding capacity of the island and its traditional character while providing for the economic well-being and housing needs of islanders.

Recommendations:

1. IMMEDIATE: Amend the Zoning Bylaw and, when appropriate, the Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land, with respect to secondary dwellings to provide for the housing needs of those committed to year-round residency (see chapter 2, "Housing Needs," page 60, for strategies to address housing needs) and to enable reductions in total buildout of the island.



Rob Benchley

The Community Plan calls for the continuation of the building cap with a point system that gives preference to homes for those committed to year-round residency. The cap should be monitored and adjusted as necessary to balance growth versus impact on island economy.

IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),

SHORT-TERM (will begin within five years of plan adoption), LONG-TERM (will begin more than five years after plan adoption)

The objectives and recommendations listed below are not intended as mandates to the Town of Nantucket, or to any other person, agency, organization, or public or quasi-public entity.

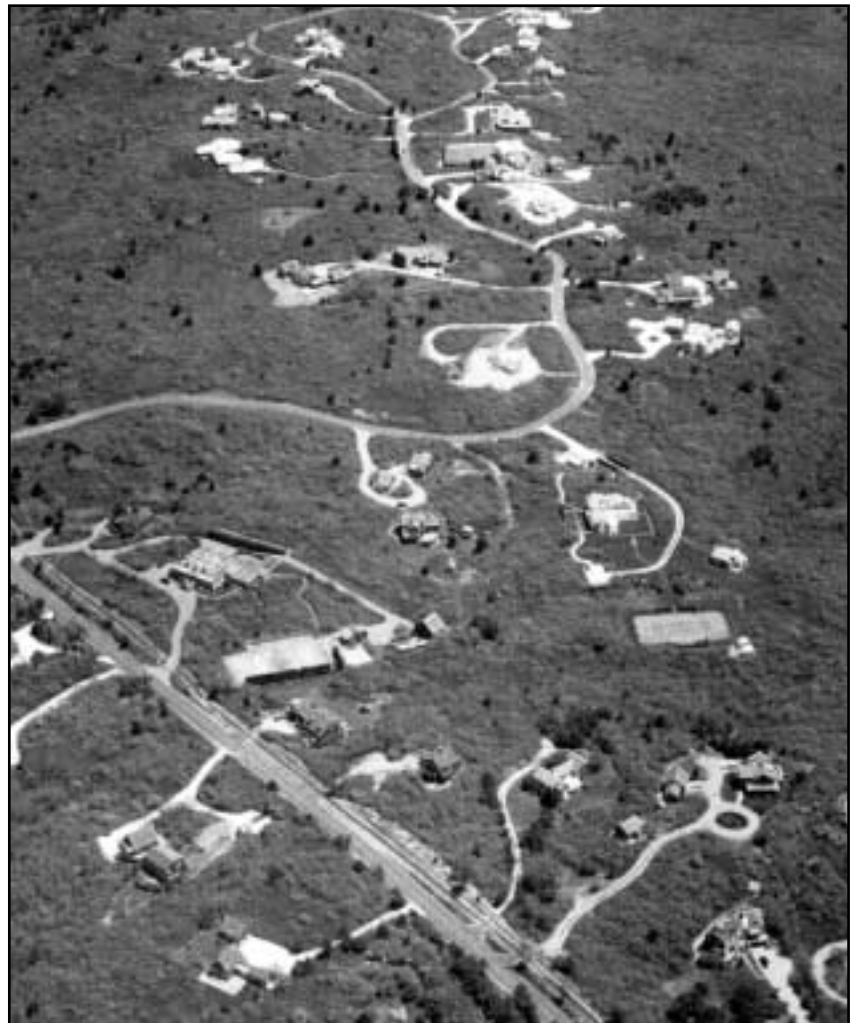
Specifically, the Zoning Bylaw amendment should provide that:

- a. In the Town Overlay District:
 - Use of existing secondary dwellings is unchanged.
 - For new secondary dwellings, the same as above, except that of the two dwelling units on the lot, only one may be used for seasonal vacation rentals.

- b. In the Country Overlay District:
 - Use of existing secondary dwellings is unchanged.
 - For new secondary dwellings, the same as above, except that, of the two dwelling units on the lot, only one may be used for seasonal vacation rentals. The secondary dwelling should be used by those committed to year-round residency and any new secondary dwellings may be subject to limitation as to permits issued annually under the building cap; the secondary dwelling may also be limited as to size.

- 2. **SHORT TERM:** Include buildout potential of remaining undeveloped land (especially secondary dwelling buildout potential) with conservation values as major criteria in establishing acquisition priorities and, ultimately, in the acquisition decisions when establishing priorities for the Strategic Land Preservation Plan. This "policy shift" will involve the acquisition of smaller parcels of land that, collectively, may have considerable development potential.
- 3. **SHORT TERM:** When acquiring land with development potential in the Country

Overlay District, particularly infill lots in existing subdivisions, consult with the Nantucket Housing Office (NHO) (see chapter 2, "Housing Needs," pages 58-61) concerning the retention of some lots for housing to meet the needs of the year-round community. In acquiring lots to meet housing needs, the Town of Nantucket should balance the objective of discouraging development in the Country Overlay District with these needs.



Joel Russell

The Community Plan seeks to limit further sprawl in the Country Overlay District by defining growth limits for new construction, reducing groundcover and height limits, and restricting the building of secondary dwellings to use only by those committed to year-round residency.

IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),
 SHORT-TERM (will begin within five years of plan adoption), LONG-TERM (will begin more than five years after plan adoption)



Making It Happen: Placing Limits On Growth (continued)

The objectives and recommendations listed below are not intended as mandates to the Town of Nantucket, or to any other person, agency, organization, or public or quasi-public entity.

Objective 1.10

To place limits on the spatial extent of growth and the size and character of new residential development.

Recommendations:

1. IMMEDIATE: Amend the Zoning Bylaw to recognize the boundaries abutting the Town Overlay District beyond which infrastructure extensions such as water and sewer are discouraged.
2. SHORT TERM: Amend the Zoning Bylaw to reduce groundcover and the height of structures in the Country Overlay District.
3. SHORT TERM: Evaluate measures that can be used to limit the size of new structures in the Country Overlay District and limit the overall buildout potential.
4. SHORT TERM: Implement measures limiting the size and bulk of new structures in the Town Overlay District to strive for compatibility among structures in a neighborhood.

Objective 1.11

To promote consistency with the Community Plan.

Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Amend the policies of Town of Nantucket boards and commissions to strive for consistency with the Community Plan.

2. SHORT TERM: Encourage the Historic District Commission, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, and Board of Public Works to revise their regulations to make them consistent with the goals of the Community Plan.

Objective 1.12

To provide that the strategies contained within the Community Plan are rigorously implemented and processes are established to evaluate and amend the plan.

Recommendations:

1. SHORT TERM: Encourage the NP&EDC and the Town of Nantucket to designate, or establish anew, an entity, or subcommittee of the NP&EDC (Plan Implementation Advisory Committee) to monitor and advise the NP&EDC on its prioritizing and effective implementation of the Community Plan. This subcommittee would:
 - a. SHORT TERM: Draft and adopt procedures for implementing and amending the Community Plan.
 - b. SHORT TERM: Evaluate annually progress in implementing strategies contained in the Community Plan.
 - c. SHORT TERM: Based on the annual evaluation, review the conclusions and "Making It Happen" sections of the Community Plan and propose amendments as deemed expedient and necessary.

IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),

SHORT-TERM (will begin within five years of plan adoption), LONG-TERM (will begin more than five years after plan adoption)



The Community Plan seeks to reduce potential buildout of new dwellings, while protecting the rights of islanders, through a three-pronged approach:

1. Continue to slow down growth by reinforcing the building cap. This limits the number of new dwellings that can be built each year, pushing full buildout into the future.

Furthermore, the building cap and point system puts those committed to year-round residency first in line for building permits.

2. Slow down the growth in secondary dwellings in the Country Overlay District through a secondary dwelling building cap. Secondary dwellings are the single greatest source of buildout potential.

Only secondary dwellings for those committed to year-round residency will be permitted within the cap limits.

3. Encourage the Land Bank and other conservation organizations to prioritize acquisition of land with large potential buildout, such as the recent acquisition of the 31-acre Lappin property (pictured here) that reduced buildout by approximately 100 potential dwellings (50 primary and 50 secondary). As an added bonus, this property further augments the greenbelt—the band of open space and recreation land that creates a clear delineation between Town and Country Overlay Districts.

Rob Benchley

IMMEDIATE (will occur within the timeframe of Town Meeting),
SHORT-TERM (will begin within five years of plan adoption), LONG-TERM (will begin more than five years after plan adoption)