



Tisbury Master Plan: Status Report

October 11, 2022



Introductions: Master plan leadership



Planning Board

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Introductions: Master plan consultants

Agenda

- Strengths (what's working here?)
- Issues and concerns (what needs to be addressed?)
- Key themes (frequently heard topics and ideas)
- Discussion questions



Our requests



- Many attendees!
- Lots of material to cover, limited time
- Please set your microphone to “mute” unless a meeting hosts calls on you to speak
- Please use the Zoom chat function to post questions or comments
- Questions will be answered tonight or in writing on the Tisbury Master Plan website: www.tisburymasterplan.com/

Presentation notes

- Organized by Tisbury Vision Plan's six goals
- Where did the information come from?
 - Interviews
 - Review of past plans, studies, and other available public documents
 - Data from Town, independent research
 - Master Plan Steering Committee members
 - Martha's Vineyard Planning Commission
- Research is ongoing (we're not done yet!)
- For this presentation, topics appear under only one goal even though they often fall under other goals as well
- What are we aiming for? To understand Tisbury's critical master plan issues and the strengths it can build on going forward





Goal: Sustain a strong, forward-looking, year-round community.

By developing strong working relationships and partnerships between municipal, civic, business, and citizen groups, the town works toward fulfilling its shared vision and protecting Tisbury's special character.

Purposes

- Organize the structure of town government to provide effective and responsive governance.
- Maintain a forward-looking planning process to manage change, address affordability, and guide appropriate development.
- Encourage broad participation in the implementation of the vision plan.

Strengths: Town government



- Specific Vision Plan achievements since 2015:
 - Dept. of Public Works re-established under Select Board
 - Master plan is underway
- And:
 - Pandemic response: technology, services
 - Several town departments provide bilingual resources
 - VTA provides year-round transit service for the island
 - Strong volunteer community (e.g., Fire Department)

Strengths: Housing

- Housing plans completed for all six towns
- Island-wide support for regional Martha's Vineyard Housing Bank
- Island Housing Trust, with Town support, has developed year-round affordable housing, sometimes *deeply* affordable units



Issues, concerns: Town government

- Capital planning process
- Town website, technology
- Staff
- Public participation in government
 - Competition in town elections
 - Outreach for committee appointments
- Communication



Issues, concerns: Population & housing

- Aging community with year-round needs: housing, services
- Housing affordability challenges for Town staff
- Identifying and meeting the needs of Town's most vulnerable residents: older residents, chronically ill, those with mental health conditions, lower income, isolated individuals
- Home sales prices (median sale price above \$1 million in 2022)
- Production of affordable housing can't keep pace with local needs

Issues, concerns: Health & well-being

- Health care:
 - Continued monitoring incidences of chronic illnesses, e.g., asthma, cardiovascular diseases, mental health, etc.
 - Coordination among health care providers on- and off-island
 - Improve access to dental services on-island
 - Connecting ESL community with important services
- Understanding the health impacts of climate change on mental and physical well-being
- Majority of children in Tisbury School are food insecure

Issues, concerns: Sustainability, natural resources



High energy costs



Supply-chain vulnerabilities during extreme weather



Preparedness for/response to extreme weather

Key themes

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Capacity
- Roles/responsibilities
- Housing affordability
- Regionalization
- Unique challenges of island setting, year-round town
- Island-wide collaboration
- Communication and education
- Building capacity
- Resiliency and sustainability

Goal: Act as responsible stewards for our natural environment.

The town's population recognizes and values its immediate environment and acts as stewards for future generations.



Purposes

- Support the ongoing preservation of open space and views.
- Monitor and mitigate the impact of land use activity on the health of our environment and the water quality of our estuaries.
- Understand potential impacts of environmental change on town resources and land uses.
- Support local activities that contribute to long-term sustainability.



Strengths: Sustainability

- Established Tisbury Climate Committee (2021)
- Island-wide coordination for Martha's Vineyard Climate Action Plan
- Renewable energy & energy efficiency for GHG emissions mitigation
 - Renewable energy via Cape Light Compact (and Vineyard Power/Vineyard Wind once complete)
 - Vineyard Sustainability Energy Committee & island-wide adoption of energy self-sufficiency and fossil fuel use reduction resolutions
 - Green Communities participation
- VTA Electric Bus Fleet Upgrades

Strengths: Open space preservation

- Open Space and Recreation Plan (2019)
- Martha's Vineyard Land Bank actively acquires and maintains publicly accessible open space in Tisbury
- Land Bank and Island Housing Trust have a strong working relationship, and successfully coordinate to meet housing needs while maximizing preserved land
- CPA used as a funding source for conservation projects
- Conservation holdings include large, connected blocks; aquifer protection lands



Strengths: Environmental protection

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- Conducting a Comprehensive Wastewater Management (Phase 1 Needs Assessment complete)
 - Sewer construction (2004) serving 138 connections, expanding to State Rd.
 - Town monitors nitrogen run-off and PFAS, related to wastewater
 - BOH has developed nitrogen reduction strategies
 - Multifamily housing developments installing nitrogen reducing septic systems
 - Coastal Zone Management (CZM) funding harbor study
 - VTA Electric Bus Fleet Upgrades

Issues, concerns: Environmental protection

- Adopted regulations on fertilizer application, but only works with landscaper and homeowner buy-in
- No real incentives for people to “go green”
- Stormwater management
- Lack of comprehensive facilities plan
- Town owns land that is not protected in perpetuity
- Most open space acquisition is left to the Land Bank



Issues, concerns:

Vulnerability of coastal, inland resources

- Development and water quality impairments (stormwater runoff, septic systems, etc.)
- Climate change impacts on natural resources and ecosystem services
- Coastal erosion (especially West Chop, harbor)
- Limited access to shore for recreation
- Flooding on Beach Road
- Vulnerability of Hines Point Road to sea level rise
- Protection of Lake Tashmoo

Key themes

- Open space
- Preservation
- Cooperation with non-profits
- Balancing development needs with environmental needs
- Land use and water quality connection... local economy, quality of life
- Impacts of climate change
- Public access to shore
- Protection
- Pollution reduction
- Monitoring





Goal: Sustain a beautiful and lasting built environment.

Buildings are preserved and well maintained. As new buildings are proposed, care is taken in the consideration of how they may impact their surroundings so that they fit harmoniously into the existing town fabric.



Purposes

- Restore the condition of dilapidated buildings and poorly maintained sites.
- Take steps to better maintain town facilities.
- Identify and address long-term build-out issues and infrastructure needs.



Strengths: Facility improvements

- Tisbury School renovation
- Waterworks facility, ambulance and fire, and police facilities are in good condition
- Beach Road recently rebuilt
- State Road Sewer Expansion project



Strengths: Planning

- Island-wide coordination on hazard mitigation planning
- MVP Community Resilience Building Workshop (2018)
- Stormwater management
 - DPW drainage system evaluation to set routine maintenance priorities
 - Five Corners/Union Street SW/green infrastructure funding
- Green Communities participation (energy efficiency)

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Issues, concerns: Protecting the built environment

- Dilapidated buildings and poorly maintained properties
- Tisbury's Zoning Bylaw needs a rewrite: unclear or confusing provisions, murky establishment of districts, some questionable provisions, e.g., regulations for individual parcels
- Lack of a clear vision for the Town's major commercial areas
- Infrastructure conditions
- Wastewater
- Traffic



Issues, concerns: Investing in public facilities

- Increase energy efficiency of municipal facilities/operations
- Several town buildings (ex. Town Hall, Town Hall Annex, Harbormaster Building, DPW, Library) need facility upgrades
- Gaps in safe and comfortable walking environment
- Limited sewer coverage
- Exposure of critical facilities and low-lying infrastructure to impacts of climate change and sea level rise



Key themes



- Renovated and new public buildings need to be maintained (HVAC, etc.)
- Project design
- Maintenance
- Overhauling and updating Zoning Bylaw
- Increase energy efficiency
- Adapt municipal facilities/operations to climate change
- Making streets safe, comfortable, and sensitive to the needs of many users and cultural traditions



Goal: Create a welcoming gateway and town center with a strong pedestrian path network that facilitates walking and mitigates the impact of traffic congestion.

A clean, welcoming port facilitates Island arrival and provides strong pedestrian connections to Main Street and its small-scale, year-round shops, walkways, and public spaces.

Purposes

- Develop and enhance public pedestrian spaces which promote walking.
- Promote opportunities associated with the Vineyard Haven Harbor Cultural District and the Martha's Vineyard Museum.
- Protect the scale and character of the village of Vineyard Haven.
- Create a comprehensive traffic and parking strategy to reduce congestion.



Strengthen:
**Vibrant Main Street
commercial center**



- Vineyard Haven is a well-known and lively port of entry for the entire island: existing tourism reputation and potential for lots of foot traffic
- Lots of existing shops along walkable streets
- Pocket parks are in progress (rehabilitation, tennis courts, etc.)
- Planning Board has conducted a review of the B1 Zoning District

Strengths: Options for getting around

- Veteran's shared use path
- Beach Road sidewalk, on-street bike lanes, and shared use path
- Strong transit connections, good ridership
- Walkable Main Street business corridor
- Park and ride lot helps to mitigate traffic congestion
- Private bike rentals by the ferry terminal
- Traffic officers' direct traffic around Ferry Terminal
- MassDOT Complete Streets funding

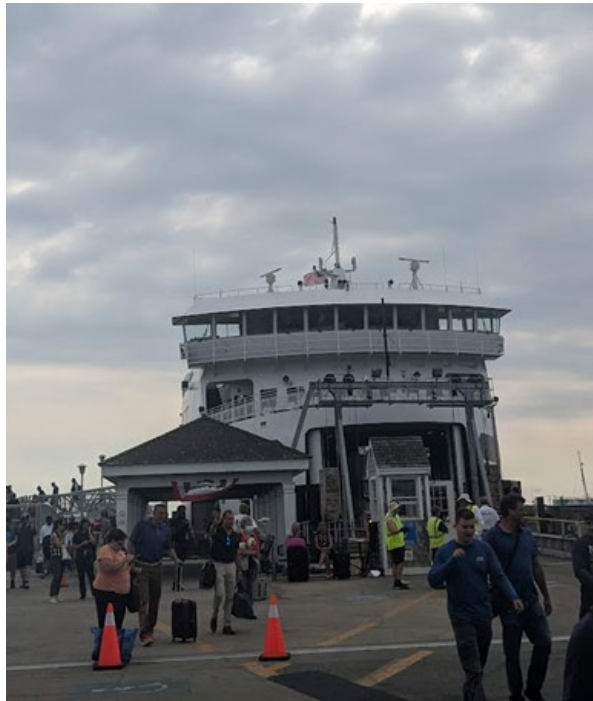


Issues, concerns: Safety, congestion

- Five Corners is a bottleneck
- Vehicle-centric ferry terminal area uncomfortable for walking and biking
- Pedestrian walkways and bikeways safety, connectivity
- Narrow sidewalks in some areas of downtown
- Lack of comprehensive parking plan
- Lack of circulation plan
- Stop and Shop

Issues, concerns: Ferry terminal

- Gateway appearance
- Number of vehicles affects quality of life for visitors, residents, and businesses
- Regional transportation impacts without proportional benefits
- Congestion related to ferry departures and arrivals
- Congestion and inadequate space for bus parking and turnaround cause VTA delays
- Ineffective wayfinding signage
- Multimodal conflicts, congestion, and parking issues
- Competition for limited public space between travel modes



Key themes



- Regional transportation impacts
- Multimodal conflicts
- Island-wide cooperation needed; Tisbury is the island's year-round gateway
- Challenges working with Steamship Authority (SSA), MassDOT
- Engaging Stop & Shop, SSA, VTA with future plans
- Stakeholder cooperation
- Public information
- Physical constraints
- Placemaking
- Redevelopment pressures



Goal: Create an even more accessible waterfront.

An accessible public treasure, Tisbury's working waterfront is an educational and recreational resource that celebrates the working nature of the town's past, present, and future.

Purposes

- Expand public access and recreational use on the harbor waterfront.
- Explore ways to expand fishing and shellfishing as part of the working waterfront.
- Improve and maintain town property that currently provides public waterfront access.



Strengths: Facilities, services, access

- Celebrating maritime history
- VTA buses provide access to waterfront
- Reconstructed the Lake Street landing pier
- Town Harbormaster manages public boat moorings, enforces water safety
- Recently upgraded Lake Street Landing pier
- Upcoming project to replace Owen Park pier
- Shellfish farming business has made progress
- Vineyard Power/Vineyard Wind Community Benefits Agreement and future operations/maintenance facility in Vineyard Haven harbor



Issues, concerns: Missing pieces, missing information



- Lack of strong trail network connecting to water resources town-wide
- Limited public access to waterfront
- Shellfish committee provided helpful support and volunteer base, but has been eliminated
- Impacts from extreme storms, sea level rise, etc.
- Understanding how managed retreat from sea level rise will affect access to the waterfront
- Identifying key properties the Town could purchase in the waterfront area and upland
- Land use and water quality connection... impacts on local economy (e.g., shellfisheries/fisheries) and quality of life

Key themes



- Multimodal waterfront connections
- Private vs. public waterfront access, responsibility
- Town services & facilities
- Preparedness to address impacts of sea level rise on waterfront access, use, and protection



Goal: Create a public realm that connects and integrates great neighborhoods, parks, and open spaces through a network of safe walking and biking routes.

All town neighborhoods are connected through a clean and easy-to-use network of paths, parks, and open space. This functional network provides an alternative means of movement and transportation that also integrates the town's neighborhoods and center into the entire Island system.

Purposes

- Raise awareness of parks, beaches, and open space.
- Better maintain, improve, and expand existing town parks.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of sidewalks and develop an improvement plan.
- Develop and promote a safe network of bike paths.

Strengths: Volunteer initiatives



- Open Space and Recreation Committee
 - Created 2.5 years ago
 - Has started many activities listed in the 2015 Vision Plan
 - Active in planning for maintaining existing assets and creating connections between them
- Getting information to parents of school-age children about neighborhood open space and park projects

Strengths: Working on better connectivity

- Veteran's shared use path
- Beach Road sidewalk, and shared use path
- Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and funding for 20 projects. Eligible for additional \$500,000
- Low-volume roads provide walking and biking connections between neighborhoods
- Wooded walking trails
- Sidewalk network focused on Vineyard Haven area
- Recently convened Traffic Safety Committee



Issues, concerns: Much to do, limited resources



- Sidewalk inventory is needed
- Town doesn't have a designated Tree Warden (is currently the head of DPW)
- Need more staff support to help realize goals
- Street trees/tree canopy coverage
- Incomplete town-wide low-stress bicycle and pedestrian network
 - Gaps in the network
 - Limited bike facilities
- Access within utility right of way
- Bike parking at destinations



Key themes

- Pedestrian and bicycle network gaps
- Low-stress pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Prioritize safety for people biking and walking
- Need for more connectivity of parks
- Powerline corridor is an opportunity for connectivity
- Need for a Street Tree Planting program





Discussion Questions

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Discussion Questions



- To what extent are short-term rentals affecting the local housing market?
- Does the level of vehicle traffic during the summer negatively impact the quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors, and would the town like to pursue measures to limit the volume of vehicle traffic?
- Where are the significant redevelopment opportunities in Tisbury – including opportunities outside the business districts?