

## MEETING SUMMARY TISBURY COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS WORKSHOPS HELD ON OCTOBER 21-22, 2022

### Introduction

On October 21 and 22, 2022, the Town of Tisbury, MA held a series of public workshops focused on the Town's three commercial districts: the Waterfront/Commercial District, B1 District (Downtown), and B2 District (State Road Area). The workshops were designed for community members to share local knowledge about the areas and provide input to inform a vision for the future of the three Commercial Districts. This document summarizes the workshop activities and the information that was gathered.

The workshop series began with two walking site tours on the afternoon of Friday October 21. The first site tour explored the downtown and waterfront. The second site tour explored the B2 area. Attendees had the opportunity to visit various locations in the three districts to show the consultants what was working and not working well. Attendees shared their ideas for improvements and discussed their experiences and ideas with each other.



*Figure 1. Participants talk about Main Street pocket parks and underutilized properties during the first site walk*

The second part of the workshop series was an evening Listening Session. The session began with a presentation that introduced the Master Plan project, the purpose of the Commercial District Visioning component, and the history of the development of the B2 District, the Downtown and the Waterfront. Afterwards, attendees were divided into four groups. Each group visited four stations focused on four

themes: transportation, environment and climate resilience, businesses and housing, and design and placemaking. At each station, participants shared their thoughts on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and trends (known as SWOT) of the study areas related to the theme.<sup>1</sup> They did this by writing comments on color coded sticky notes, placing them on maps of the study areas, and discussing the results.

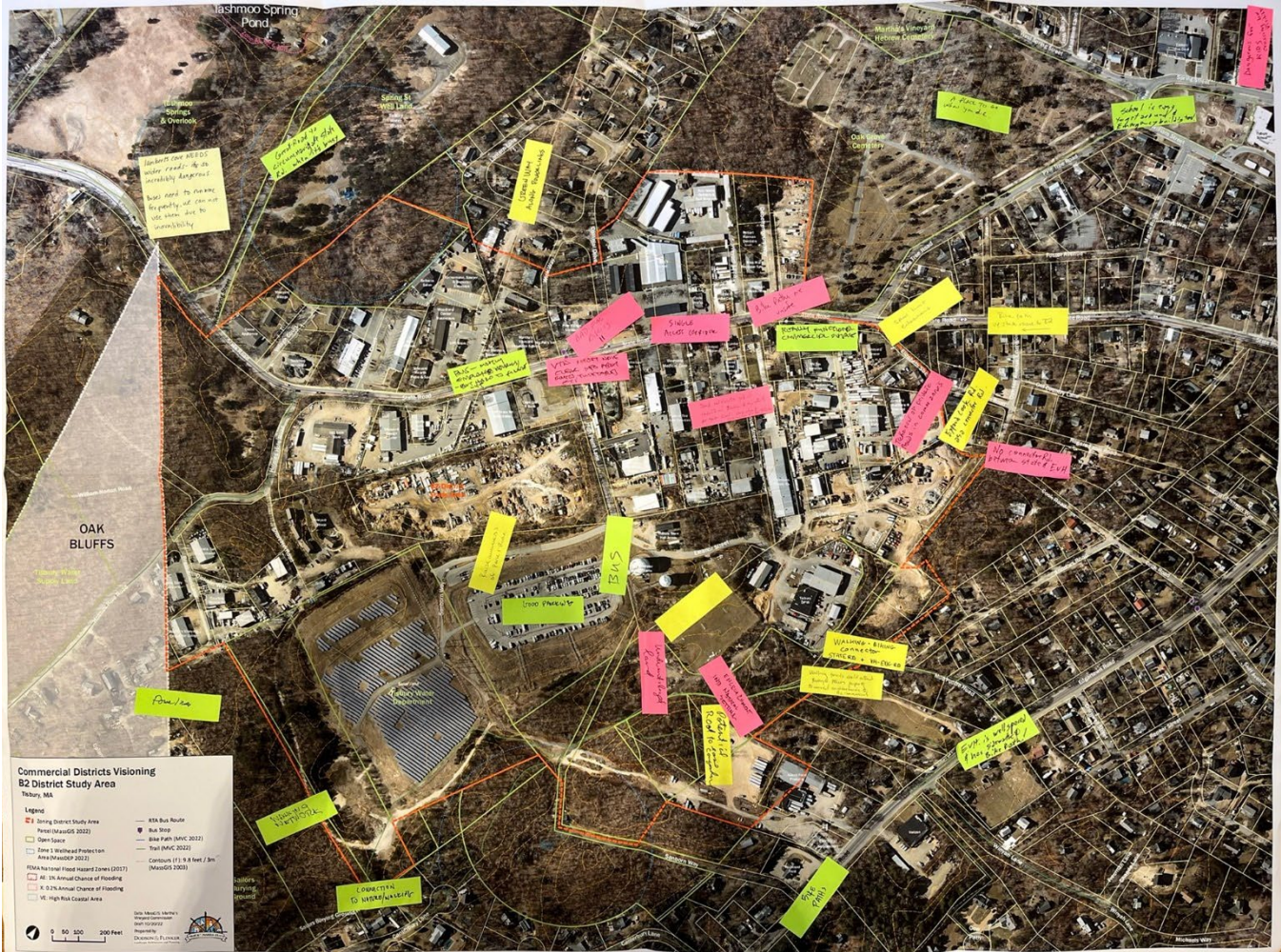


Figure 2. Map of the B2 District from the Transportation Station showing sticky note comments. Green sticky notes indicate strengths of the area. Red sticky notes indicate weaknesses. Yellow sticky notes indicate opportunities.

The third and final part of the workshop series was a Visioning Workshop held on Saturday morning, October 22, 2022. The workshop began with the consultant team sharing their key takeaways from the Friday evening Listening Session. A brief question and answer session followed. Participants were then

<sup>1</sup> To streamline the workshop, the downtown and waterfront were shown on one map and discussed together. On Friday night, facilitators for each station alternated whether groups began by discussing the B2 district or the downtown and waterfront. This ensured that equal time overall was given to the study areas.



divided into four groups. Each group worked on prioritizing the issues facing the study areas and evaluating ideas for improvements drawn from previous Town planning projects and/or generated by participants. After a break, participants divided into two groups: one focused on the downtown/waterfront and the other on the B2 District. The groups summarized the key takeaways from the morning's four break out groups and further prioritized the key challenges facing the study areas and the most promising opportunities for improvements.

Overall, these workshops were an opportunity for community members to work together and contribute to the development of a vision for the future of the Waterfront/Commercial District, B1 (Downtown), and B2 District (State Road Area) in Tisbury. They produced a wealth of information about the study areas and ideas for improving them.

### Walking Tour 1, Downtown and Waterfront

The route of the walking tour of the Downtown was steered by the participants. It began at the Post Office, proceeded up Water Street to the gazebo and steamship authority ferry terminal, went up Union Street to Main Street, traveled south on Main Street, turned left down Cromwell Lane and then right on Cromwell Lane to Beach Street. The tour crossed Beach Street and proceeded through Veteran's Park to Lagoon Pond Road. It traveled down Lagoon Pond Road, cut through Safe Harbor Marina to Tisbury Marketplace and then crossed over Beach Road to the Shell Station to look at the waterfront before returning to the Post Office.



Figure 3. Participants discuss Lagoon Pond Road during the first site walk

During the walking tour, community members discussed a variety of topics, including circulation for people on foot, in cars, and on bicycles, the legibility of the downtown, public spaces, property



maintenance, design of new development, the benefits and challenges of the working waterfront, public access to the waterfront, flooding and sea level rise, water quality, and the town's economic development strategy.

Regarding circulation in the downtown and waterfront areas, participants pointed out that Vineyard Haven is walkable but it can be confusing for visitors (both on foot and in cars), especially five corners and the one-way circulation around downtown. Participants said there is a need for a clearer linkage from the Steamship Authority to Main Street. The information booth on Union Street is less visible than desired. Recent changes to the direction of traffic flow on Union Street have made it possible to proceed directly from the Steamship to Main Street but many visitors are unaware of this and follow the dominant flow of traffic left out of the Steamship Authority arrival lanes. In addition, the directional change on Union Street has made it more difficult to circulate for parking on Main Street. Previously, if a driver did not find parking on Main Street, they could turn down Union Street and loop back to Main Street via Water Street and Beach Street. Now a driver must make a loop through the one-way streets uphill of Main Street, a route that is longer and requires more turns.

Participants discussed Stop and Shop and its relationship to the town parking lot. Some people said that having a walkable grocery store is very important to Vineyard Haven. Others expressed concerns about the scale of a new store shown in plans that were previously put forth by Stop and Shop.



Figure 4. Benjamin Robinson explains how the Union Street Mall is part of a developing pedestrian network that connects Union Street to Veteran's Memorial Park



The need for legible, accessible, and attractive public spaces was discussed at several points on the walking tour: at the Gazebo and pathway along the beach by the ferry terminal, at Union Street Mall, at the pocket park on the corner of Union Street and Main Street and at the pocket park next to the former Capawock Theatre. These public spaces were described as valuable for visitors and residents. At the gazebo, participants raised concerns about the quality of plantings and maintenance. At the space next to the Capawock, there were concerns about poorly maintained spaces adjacent to the pocket park, including the former theater itself. The site tour explored the developing pedestrian pathway that connects Union Street to Veterans Memorial Park. Some participants were unaware of the pathways. They pointed out that access to the path network is not visible in some locations and it is unclear whether the paths are private or public.

The role of the working waterfront was another topic of discussion. Some participants said they liked the authenticity of the working waterfront. Others said that it is unattractive and could use some cleaning up. There was strong desire for increased public access along the waterfront. This would improve quality of life for residents and would attract and retain visitors to downtown which would support local businesses. On the other hand, some people had concerns about the feasibility of implementing a continuous walkway along the waterfront given the diverse ownership and potential conflicts between uses based on “work” and recreation. The waterfront/commercial zoning was also discussed. One property owner in the area pointed out that the zoning allows property owners to make improvements, but that permit review authorities often say, “no.” He said this is a disincentive to making improvements to properties and that there is a need to clarify the zoning to ensure that businesses can continue to survive in the waterfront area.

Community members expressed strong concerns about flooding along the waterfront, both currently and for the future as sea level rise continues to increase flood levels and frequency. They said five-corners, Beach Road Extension, and Beach Road frequently flood. The need to clarify and/or adjust allowed building heights was also discussed. Participants recognize the need to raise the first floor of buildings above the base flood elevation, but some are also concerned about the visual impact of taller buildings. Likewise, there were differing opinions about Veterans Memorial Park, with some people saying it is an essential downtown park space that should be maintained and improved and others saying it will increasingly be flooded and it should be allowed to return to marsh.

Water quality in the Lagoon was another significant concern, especially the west arm, and hypoxia at the lower levels of the pond.

Participants talked about the need for improved building maintenance throughout the downtown and waterfront and the need for improved design consistency between new development and historic buildings. For example, some participants said siding on new development should either be painted white or shingled.

Regarding economic development, there seemed to be a consensus that the town should build on its strengths rather than focusing on its weaknesses. One participant said we cannot address blight, so “let’s focus on letting everyone else shine.” Strengths included the town’s walkability, its diverse economy, its maritime-related businesses, the First Friday event, visitors, and its year-round economy.



## Walking Tour 1, B2 District

The B2 Walking Tour began at the Park and Ride Lot. After an introductory conversation participants proceeded up Eleanor Street to Olga Road to Marie Street to Evelyn Way to State Road and back up State Road to High Point Lane.

While the downtown and waterfront site tour often focused on the design details of specific places, the conversations on the B2 site tour were broader—both physically and conceptually. Participants tended toward discussing district-wide changes, rather than site specific improvements.

Participants appeared to share the opinion that the B2 District holds significant potential for Tisbury, including potential for housing development. It is well situated in the town. It is close to the school and the downtown, served by the VTA, on a major road, near walking paths and natural areas, and it is a large area that will not be directly impacted by sea level rise. Most participants appeared to share a vision of redevelopment transforming the B2 District into a mixed-use walkable center with better connected roads, more organized and attractive development, additional trees, and safer and more efficient transportation for people on foot, on bikes, and on cars. The natural areas around the B2 could be preserved and trail connections to adjacent neighborhoods could be improved. The lack of wastewater service and the existing zoning were cited as a major deterrent to additional housing development in the area. The group discussed appropriate building heights, densities, and parking requirements for the area and expressed a range of opinions. Existing patterns of ownership and private roads were described as barriers to transportation and overall improvements.

Much of the site walk was spent discussing previous and current efforts at changes in the B2. Participants discussed the previous Town effort to establishing a road connecting Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road to State Road through the B2 area was discussed. While most participants generally supported the idea, they differed in their understanding of why it did not succeed at town meeting and what could be done to revive the proposal and successfully implement it. Based on the conversation, it appears that safe facilities for walking and biking would be required for project success. Participants also discussed recent development efforts in the area and adjacent sites, including the proposal for housing at the IFP site and Brook Katzen's interest in pursuing a mixed-use project at the Island Cove Adventures site.

At several points in the site walk, participants discussed the impact of existing commercial activities on adjacent residential neighborhoods. Some participants said that commercial activities were encroaching on residential neighborhoods. They also mentioned that there is a lack of organization and neatness on some properties with a proliferation of storage of vehicles, containers, some of which may not be functional. On the one hand, the B2 District is one of the few places on the Island for these types of activities. On the other hand, participants thought it could be managed better. Another viewpoint was that this area is home to many island businesses. It supports good jobs and necessary services. The businesses need to be protected and supported to ensure their continued success.





*Figure 5. Participants gathered in the Cronig's parking lot to discuss opportunities for improving State Road.*

Participants discussed the State Road corridor itself and the best design approach for improving it. Participants valued the nice old trees along State Road. They discussed front setbacks: the current front setbacks reflect those of the older houses in the area, but they limit the development potential of the lots and may not be appropriate for what the area is now—a major commercial center—or a future vision where the area is more walkable (typically walkable commercial areas have smaller front setbacks so that storefronts are more connected to sidewalks and there is more space for parking at the rear of lots). Several approaches to improving the State Road corridor were discussed. One approach was described as “clean and green”—reducing curb cuts and creating cross access between lots, relocating parking to the side or rear of buildings and sharing parking where possible, improving front landscaping and sidewalks, and screening. Another approach discussed was developing secondary pathways adjacent to State Road. Overall, there was a strong desire for safe walking and biking in the area.



## Listening Workshop

During the Listening Workshop, groups of participants circulated among four topical stations about transportation, the environment and climate resilience, businesses and housing, and design and placemaking. At each station, participants wrote comments on sticky notes and placed them on base maps of the study areas. The sticky notes were color coded. Red sticky notes indicated study area weaknesses. Green sticky notes indicated strengths. Yellow sticky notes indicated opportunities. The groups discussed their input with station facilitators. The stations were facilitated by relevant experts from the consultant team. Staff from BETA facilitated the Transportation station. Staff from Barrett Planning Group handled the Housing and Businesses Station. Staff from Horsely Hitten Group ran the Climate and Environment station. Staff from Dodson & Flinker worked the Design and Placemaking Station. While the stations were focused on specific topics, participants often commented on other topics and other areas adjacent to the study area. This reflects the interconnectedness of community systems. The input from all stations is summarized below grouped by study area and topic. The notes are color coded with green indicating strengths, red indicating weaknesses, and black indicating opportunities.



Figure 6. Listening to the introductory presentation on Friday night





## B2 District (State Road Area)

### Overall

- Much of the area is unattractive and poorly connected with numerous private roads
- The B2 area has many opportunities, but needs a plan
- Opportunity to relocate town offices to B2, including town hall and grammar school. Combine town hall, school, library with parks to create a campus
- Make the area a village center: walkable, green, with a mix of shops

### Transportation

- + The Park and Ride Lot, which is accessible but hidden
- + The bus is used by a lot of workers in Tisbury, but it is difficult to figure it out
- + The trail networks in parts of the B2 and adjacent areas
- + The powerlines which provide an opportunity for a greenway walking and bikeway network
- + Bike paths and sidewalks on Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road. The road is wide and has fewer curb cuts than State Road.
- + West Spring Street is useful for getting around State Road when it is congested
- There are narrow sidewalks and narrow shoulders along State Road.
- The private roads throughout the B2 lack sidewalks and are also narrow.
- Traffic on State Road is either speeding or stopped
- State Road is not safe for bicycling, bike paths there are unsafe
- State Road has developed as a corridor where almost every business has its own access. The huge number of curb cuts makes the corridor less safe and makes traffic flow more congested
- Most of the streets intersecting with State Road in the B2 District are dead end streets. The trucks and equipment operated by the businesses off of State Road end up on State Road. Explore a new access route for trucks.
- There is no connection between State Road and Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road
- Spring Street near the school is dangerous for kids to cross. There is low visibility
- Poor sight lines at the bend in State Road near the “Nobnocket” property (east of Holmes Hole Road)
- VTA does not have clear info about routes, timetables, etc.
- Lambert’s Cove Road is narrow and dangerous. The buses on the Lambert’s Cove route do not run frequently enough to be useful
- The Park and Ride lot and its bus service is a strength for the B2 District and Tisbury more broadly. It is especially useful for small commercial business owners who can pay to park commercial vehicles there
- Raise awareness of the Park and Ride Lot
- Area southeast of State Road lacks interconnectedness, including lacking a connection to Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road
- Establish Connector Roads between State Road and Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road to ease congestion and improve connectivity. This could be a walking and biking connector.
- Connect Cook Road to State Road so that it can connect Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road to State Road



- Take over private roads in the B2 District and provide sidewalks on them
- Establish roads that connect between existing private roads within the B2 area
- Make State Road a more walkable street; create a better pedestrian and bike connection through the area to downtown and beyond; establish a bike path from downtown to Main Street along State Road
- Enforce the speed limit on State Road
- Bury utilities
- Consider an on-demand crossing light for kids crossing State Road
- Walking trails through town property could be expanded, improved and publicized to connect surrounding neighborhoods to the B2 commercial uses
- Establish a greenway along the powerlines
- Work toward limiting the number of cars in Tisbury, for example, set a limit of two cars per family and charge fees for extra cars.

## Housing and Businesses

### Overall

- + There is more physical space in B2 than in downtown
- + If businesses or residences need to retreat from downtown, the B2 area can absorb more density
- The current sewer plant is inadequate. Evaluate financing for sewer improvement.
- There is underutilized land in the B2 District, especially near the Park and Ride field

### Housing

- + Year-round housing in the B2, including affordable housing on Village Court, and in adjacent neighborhoods
- + Close to strengths outside of the District: School, Fire Department, sledding hill at field near Tashmoo Springs Overlook, the Tisbury Amphitheater
- The more industrial businesses that are located in the B2 need to be there—there are few other suitable locations on the Island—and need to operate freely. If more housing was built in B2 is might cause problems for these businesses.
- The B2 is an appropriate location for housing because it is already a dense developed area with good transportation access
- State Road (and downtown) would be an appropriate location for a tiny house community
- Need neighborhoods of small cottages for young families—think post WWII developments
- Housing above commercial would be desirable but requires sewer service
- Loosen the zoning to allow for apartments in houses and in apartment buildings for affordable housing. At the same time, limit the size of large single-family houses
- Limit short-term rentals; do not allow Airbnb properties that are purely for rental and unoccupied otherwise
- Need rent controlled apartments
- Can new housing be built at the solar field with the panels moved on top of housing?



- Develop the “Nobnocket” property (at corner of Holmes Hole Road and State Road) for housing, mixed use
- Existing housing stock in areas around the B2 District should be preserved to reduce the need for new development
- Allow guest houses in the R-3A District (west of B2)
- Don’t build housing at the Island Food Products Site

### Businesses

- + The B2 is a functional commercial district, provides space for many useful businesses
- + B2 district provides year-round businesses
- Some properties have derelict trucks, junked cars, etc.
- The large vehicle storage lot adjacent to the Park and Ride lot is not a good location for heavy equipment and construction vehicles and is a poor use of space
- Potential conflicts between growing businesses and adjacent residential uses

### Design & Placemaking (includes Open Space)

- + Existing shade trees and greenery along State Road—keeps it nice
- + Two-story buildings are a good scale
- + There is a good view from the Park and Ride Lot
- + The connection to nature from B2
- + The Oak Grove and Martha’s Vineyard Hebrew Cemeteries are positive green space
- Opportunity for town to take over private roads, rationalize and beautify them and work toward more orderly and efficient development patterns
- If you are going to build housing, also need to build amenities
- Don’t need mediocre suburban apartments or mixed-use blocks
- Want village style apartments: compact layout, low buildings but close together, shared amenities down the block
- Put parking behind buildings
- Need more fields for sports. The B2 area has potential for that; Develop the Park and Ride field for resident use; improve the field; add seating on the slope
- Preserve the pretty knoll at the intersection of Short Hill Road and Holmes Hole Road
- Preserve and enhance natural connections

### Climate Resilience and Environment

- + There is a lot of roof top space for solar panels
- + There is open space around the B2 District that is worth preserving
- + Electric vehicle charging station at Cronig’s Supermarket
- + Drainage improvements and green catchment at the High School
- Is there contamination in areas that have been used for vehicle and equipment storage?
- Water is running off this area and into estuaries
- There isn’t enough sewer infrastructure



- **Businesses are encroaching into the natural setting; development at south-eastern edge of B2 area is threatening “wild” lands**
- Lots of space for development—compact and energy efficient development preferred
- It is not what you build, but how you build it—opportunity for net zero carbon emissions development, sustainable development
- Convert impervious paved surfaces to permeable pavement
- Opportunity to establish a stormwater utility
- Catch basins on Park and Ride in 2035 when available
- Install rain gardens along State Road and on private properties in area
- Opportunity to take advantage of Massachusetts DER Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program
- Establish Town compost program



Figure 7. A group discussing climate resilience at the Listening workshop.



## Downtown & Waterfront

### Overall

- + We are a water town—let's make more use and enjoyment of it
- + Programs exposing youth to maritime careers
- Must have Steamship Authority, so take advantage of it
- The harbor is the identity of the Town—public access is key

### Transportation

- + Ferry access
  - + Harbor access
  - + Neighborhoods uphill of Main Street are walkable
  - + Ancient ways provide access through neighborhoods and to the water
  - + Bulk shipping and fuel transport comes into the harbor on barges. This reduces need for semis on ferry
  - + Union St Mall to Cromwell Lane path is a “secret connector”
  - + Visitors who come by boat don't bring cars
  - + Skiff Avenue provides an alternative route for accessing the downtown and waterfront
- 
- Confusing arrival to town. Unclear to first-time visitors what is in Vineyard Haven or how to stay in town
  - Five-corners circulation is confusing, and the intersection is difficult to cross from many directions. The intersection is often congested.
  - Intersection of Edgartown Road, Look Street and State Road gets backed up
  - The intersection of Center and Franklin Streets is dangerous
  - The one-way roads uphill from Main Street are difficult to navigate
  - Sidewalks along State Road near Main Street are not sufficient
  - There is no pedestrian or bike connection between Lagoon Pond Road and Beach Road; need an official marked walking path to connect the two streets
  - The bike route along Skiff Avenue is steep and the road is narrow
  - Larger ferries result in more cars entering and exiting at once, leading to traffic congestion. On the other hand, the ferries are only at capacity for small portion of the year—so they are inefficient the rest of the year
  - The Steamship Authority does not compensate Tisbury enough for the burden it places on the Town
  - There is not enough parking in town
  - That people get parking tickets
  - Parking issues at Owen Park in July and August—resident parking stickers are problematic
- 
- Improve five-corners. Ideas: put in a roundabout and move roads, investigate reconfiguring lanes on the stretch of Beach Street between Main Street and Water Street



- Institute a continuous small shuttle from State Road through Main Street and to the ferry all day. Ideally powered by solar electric.
- Reduce or eliminate cars from Main Street
- Remove cars and parking from Beach Street Extension
- Need beautiful signs to tell people where to go downtown
- Need more connections for safe walking and biking
- Add biking and walking connections between Lagoon Pond Road and Beach Road. The existing private path from Lagoon Pond Road through the Safe Harbor Marina to the Tisbury Market Place is useful. Try to make it public
- Create a mandate for the connector road to Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road. Be creative and work with the private and publicly owned roads
- Improve the walking path network connecting Union Street to Veteran's Park via Union Street Mall and Cromwell Lane. Make it more visible, attractive, and complete.
- Opportunity for better bike paths. Even the existing bike path on Edgartown Vineyard Haven road crosses many driveway which is hazardous. The Outer Cape is a precedent. It has great, safe bike paths with bridges and tunnels.
- Add a bridge across the spits of land protecting the docks at Safe Harbor Marina (west side of Lagoon Pond)
- Better signage at the Steamship Authority
- The parking lot at the Tisbury School could be used for summer parking
- Regularly grade dirt parking areas—do not pave them

## Housing and Businesses

### Housing

- + Housing throughout district
- + Housing and businesses in proximity to each other, including mixed use. With increased work-from-home, it is nice to be able to accommodate both instead of separating
- + Houseboats
- Lack of affordable and reasonably priced housing
- Properties that have been historically residential between Lagoon Pond Road and Veterans Memorial Park are zoned for commercial use
- Change zoning to allow more housing density.
- Need to provide better info about accessory apartments
- Keep the housing in a year-round pool. Buy back houses through the housing bank.
- There are properties that are not in use along Beach Road. They could support housing for the waterfront workforce.
- Properties that are zoned for maritime use should be able to house maritime workforce

### Businesses

- + The Shipyard provides valuable services and employment
- + The Martha's Vineyard Museum



- + The Film Center
- + The Packard's facility is the single place for petroleum import for the whole island [this was mentioned as both a strength and a vulnerability]
- The Post Office generates a lot of traffic in an area that is already congested and difficult to navigate
- Some businesses do not have any space to expand because their lots are fully built out—for example on Lagoon Pond Road
- Noise from Main Street impacts adjacent houses
- Businesses have trouble finding employees, lack of housing for employees is a big part of the problem
- Need more places to eat! Expand food trucks. Explore food truck parks. Need more affordable food for all, especially workers, residents and visitors on State Road and downtown.
- Need more dining and restaurants. Beach Road is an appropriate location. The harbor doesn't have any restaurant overlooking it from its south side.
- Need more businesses to support island youth. "There is zero opportunity for teens aside from the Y."
- Need more art studios and gallery space for new and longtime artists
- Consider redesigning the Post Office area. It could be more efficient.
- Move the Post Office to reduce traffic, enable it to expand, and provide it with enough parking. Consider moving it to the State Road area
- Expand Safe Harbor Marina to keep boats stored on rocks
- Help the MV Shipyard. Expand the shipyard and provide services. Reduces pond impact with new project and provides jobs.
- Support new businesses that want to establish in the Waterfront
- Keep the working waterfront; no houses please
- Need the harbor to be more attractive, less industrial
- Activate the waterfront. Take advantage of scenic and historic resources
- Support the Shenandoah by providing a dock, for example, take advantage of Vineyard Wind project to create a permanent slip for Shenandoah
- Support visitors by boat (moorings) which support downtown businesses
- With Vineyard Wind hub planned, there are opportunities to support existing waterfront businesses and nonprofits
- Close Beach Street Extension to cars. It would be a great place for outdoor dining, music, etc.
- There is a desire for change at the Stop and Shop lot—both the supermarket and town residents want change. Can there be collaboration?
- Figure out how to redevelop the Stop and Shop and adjacent town owned property so it is better for all. For example, trade Police Station with Stop & Shop. Move the Police Department to a safer place. The Stop and Shop Area would be great for the town.
- The parking lot for Hertz Car rental (on Union Street across from the Ferry Terminal) would be an opportunity if Hertz would relocate. [The parking lot could have numerous functions from providing public parking, to serving as a welcome center, to being the site of future businesses]
- Opportunity for Aquaculture



- Another working movie theater would be incredibly welcome

#### Design and Placemaking (includes Open Space)

- + Town dock is a great asset
- + The waterfront near Beach Street Extension is a cultural gathering space for people that work on the water
- + First Fridays music
- + Owen Park is an accessible park in town.
- + Beach access right in town
- + The beach north of Owen Park is dog-friendly
- + Veteran's Memorial Park provides open space, recreation, and is easily accessible—a walkable sports and music venue
- + One of the highest concentrations of wood and traditional boats in the world
- + Town boat ramp on Lagoon Pond
- + Spaces for hanging out on Main Street—benches, micro parks (pocket parks)
- + The interior walkway from Union Street to Beach Street activates the back of all of Main Street
- + The working waterfront—the beauty of, and necessity of, the commercial harbor front
- + The open space with picnic tables next to Tisbury Market Place provides access to the shore of Lagoon Pond and is an asset
- + Preserved land near Lobster Alley
- There is a lack of wayfinding; poor signage at the Steamship
- The ferry terminal is not attractive
- Dilapidated buildings are a big problem. Gives the impression that the Town's identity is run down, "dying town." Hall-owned buildings were frequently mentioned.
- New parking lots downtown have bright lights
- Can't walk from Lagoon Pond Road to Beach Road
- The Lagoon is invisible to the public
- Inconsistent infrastructure in front of the Library

- Establish a Welcome Center near five corners
- Redesign Union Street to the park.
- Take over dilapidated buildings
- Transform the old wetland drainage "ditch" between Lagoon Pond Road and Beach Road into a greenway. Use it for stormwater and make the length of it a park. Question: Is this area a Chapter 91 drainage?
- Buy/take the vacant property next to Beach Road restaurant for public use
- Add a boardwalk so people can connect to the water
- Move Owen Park Way over to increase green space
- Redesign town dock to take more day boats, which would increase revenue and visitors;
- Improve access and visibility of Veterans Memorial Park
- Consider moving Veterans Memorial Park and allowing the site to return to wetlands to avert flooding from sea level rise





- Daylight the creek at Veterans Memorial Park, but keep the fields
- Work to secure easements along beach between Owen Park and the Steamship terminal
- Clean up beach front to encourage use
- Opportunity to connect the waterfront between ferry terminal and Shell Gas Station: figure out pedestrian access past docks; provide guaranteed walking on the beach on a sand trail or boardwalk
- Develop walkways along shore in segments
- Organize the public space around the ferry terminal
- Lagoon Park—there is \$400,000 available for park improvements; Develop Causeway Park (in an environmentally sensitive way)
- Could improve “Emergency Beach”
- Need more trees along roads in town
- Need more micro-parks (pocket parks) on Main Street
- Plant more native plants, for example beach plum
- Maintain integrity of architecture along Main Street and downtown
- Add space for food trucks and picnics near the water
- Acquire Boch Park
- Utilize the vacant lot with water access adjacent to the Beach Road Restaurant
- Create a place overlooking the harbor from the south (open space or restaurant)
- Create a home for MV’s tall ship (Shenandoah) at a dock so there is increased access to it

#### Climate Resilience and Environment

- + Breakwater makes the harbor safer
- Areas uphill of downtown lack drainage and so water feeds down to Five-corners
- Congested traffic on State Road wastes a lot of fuel, adds pollution and contributes to climate change
- Runoff issues in roadway along State Road
- Flooding of Five-corners,
- Flooding of Beach Street Extension
- Flooding of Water Street
- Flooding of Lagoon Pond Road
- Beach Road is a vital link between Vineyard Haven and Oak Bluffs (including Hospital) but is vulnerable to flooding and sea level rise. It is a weak link.
- Flooding of Veterans Memorial Park
- Lawn chemicals and fertilizer flowing into Lagoon Pond
- Shellfish decline in Lagoon Pond
- Harbor needs dredging. Getting shallower due to ferry engines running constantly (especially Island Home)
- Stay flexible to allow uses to adjust to sea level rise across different planning horizons
- Need a storm gate to protect Vineyard Haven



- Analyze the increased grade at Vineyard Wind facility. Will it make other land more vulnerable to flooding.
- Codify increased allowed building heights to account for raising floor levels to prepare for flooding/sea level rise
- Must preserve road to Hospital. Fix it for sea level rise and improve the bike path
- Use flood prone areas for event spaces
- Use Land Bank funding to denitrify Lagoon Pond
- Use shellfish to clean ponds
- Ban plastic turf installations
- Town should state explicitly what it wants for unimpeded shoreline [this is likely a reference to Vineyard Haven Harbor District of Critical Planning Concern (DCPC) Regulations]



Figure 8. Discussing housing and businesses in the Waterfront district.



## Visioning Workshop

The Visioning Workshop began with the Consultants summarizing the key takeaways from the previous day's Site Tours and Listening Workshop and key ideas for improvements that have been identified in previous planning. Notes from these reports are in Appendix 1. A brief question and answer session followed. The participants were then divided into four groups. Each group had a facilitated discussion of both the B2 District and the Downtown and Waterfront centered on the following questions:

- Which of the challenges facing the study area are most important to solve in the next 10-20 years?
- Where do you see the biggest opportunities for improvements over the next 10-20 years?
- Which of the ideas for improvements are particularly strong?
- Critical path: Are there any problems that need to be solved first because other improvements depend on them?
- Multiple objectives: Would any of the ideas for improvements fulfill objectives across more than one theme? For example, help with climate change and transportation.

The notes from these sessions are included in the Appendix 2.

In the final session of the Visioning Workshop, participants self-selected one of two stations—one focused on the B2 District and the other focused on the Downtown and Waterfront. At each station, facilitators presented the results from the four morning groups. Participants then prioritized the key issues and improvement ideas that arose from the morning's work. The notes from the final sessions are below.



Figure 9. A discussion of the B2 District during the Visioning Workshop



## B2 District (State Road Area) – Highest Priority Issues and Ideas for Improvements

- Improve connectivity between properties and between B2 and other parts of town.
  - Area has excessive curb cuts. Need cross-access between properties.
  - For example, connect Black Dog and Merchants Ct (Woodland Market, etc.)
  - Revive the Connector Road idea
    - People are already using roads and trails to make connections through this area, especially for walking and bicycling. Need to ensure the connections remain walkable and bikeable.
  - Should discourage connectivity on some other roads
- Expand sewer capacity to enable additional development.
  - Package plant—expandable
  - \$50 million
  - Probably need to expand plant
  - Use private package plants
  - Sewer district
  - The planned additional capacity is limited but since some existing buildings probably will not tie into the sewer right away, the expansion should be able to support some new uses.
- Potential for commercial node at where the connector road to State Road would come out
- Focus B2 on businesses that serve year-round community and additional housing.
  - Encourage and expand development while respecting residential character of adjacent areas
  - Optimize function for multiple uses
- How much density? How much height?
  - Appearance of commercial uses—participants like the traditional capes along State Road
  - Behind State Road, it might be ok to go taller
  - Height—architecture that captures residential feel
  - Building in back of existing buildings
  - Explore a form-based code
    - Market adapts to design guidelines
  - Disagreement on appropriate scale of buildings
- Industrial uses
  - Limited places for industrial in Tisbury and on Martha's Vineyard
  - Plan to continue to accommodate these uses in B2
  - Example: Cook Road—many trucks use it to access industrial areas. There are impacts of truck traffic, but not sure where else truck traffic could go.
- Need buffers between sewer plant, DPW, industrial and residential
  - Should have design guidelines for landscaping, fencing, cleaning



- Need better lighting
- Consider relocating parking behind buildings, especially for new development
- Explore municipal parking

## Downtown and Waterfront—Highest Priority Issues and Ideas for Improvements

- Make a plan for mitigating sea level rise
  - Town has been studying coastal flood protection. Decide which ideas are best and move forward with them.
  - It is time to start retreating from sea level rise? Or would that be premature?
- Address the housing shortage—especially need affordable and moderately priced housing. Need housing for employees of businesses and Town, young families, elderly.
- Get a handle on stormwater
  - Explore developing a greenway or canal where Bass Creek was
  - Improve stormwater management throughout downtown and waterfront and in areas that send stormwater into them (i.e. from up State Road)
- Figure out what to do about filled land between Beach Street and Lagoon Pond Road
- Address empty buildings, dilapidated buildings
- Protect Beach Road/Bridge—access to Hospital is key
- Infrastructure
  - wastewater
  - and solid waste management
- Develop welcoming gateways—improve accessibility, improve and/or relocate visitor's center, develop a consistent wayfinding system
- Stop & Shop/Police/Town parking lot
  - Key opportunity for Town
  - Need a spot for visitors to pause and get their bearings here
  - Work with Stop and Shop to see if the site can be redesigned to better meet everyone's needs
  - Separate bikes/cars
- Manage traffic congestion
- Improve and clarify vehicle circulation—one-way streets are confusing
- Improve 5 Corners
  - it is confusing and congested
  - need to address flooding
- Moorings—expand number of moorings, establish reservation system, provide launch
- Address post office congestion
  - Rural mail delivery
  - Move post office?



- Need better coordination with Steamship Authority
- Develop a Harbor Walk
- Develop more gathering places downtown
- Improve connectivity throughout downtown and waterfront:
  - Improve pedestrian connectivity from Union Street to Veteran’s Memorial Park
  - Connect Lagoon Pond Road to Beach Road
  - Improve small connections throughout areas. For example, black dog fence blocks movement from SSA to Black Dog. Black Dog doesn’t want it. Can it be removed?

## Conclusion

The Commercial District Vision Workshops generated extensive public input about the Downtown, Waterfront, and B2 Districts. Participants worked through a series of exercises that elicited detailed information about the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for the areas and then worked together to prioritize the key issues and opportunities for improvement facing the districts. The results of the workshops will inform the development of visions for the commercial districts.

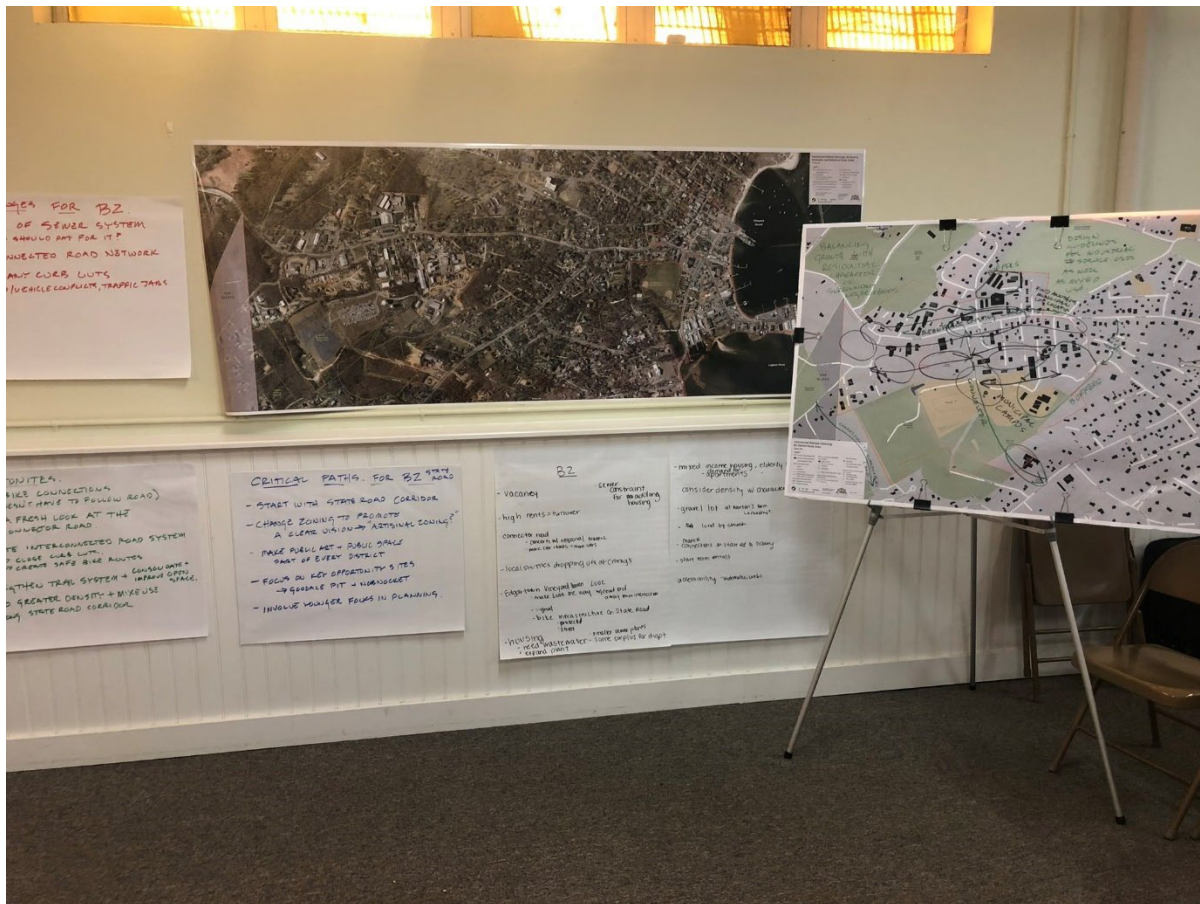


Figure 10. Notes from the final session about the B2 District



## Appendix 1

### Notes from Report Out of Takeaways from Listening Workshop (Report Out was the first activity of the Visioning Workshop on Saturday 10/22)

#### Transportation

Key ideas for improvements resulting from Day 1

- Limit vehicles
- Main street-convert to pedestrian only?
- Add a transit circulator—downtown loop
- Connector road and improve network of roads in B2
- Reduce trucks downtown—barges to lagoon pond
- 5 corners-round about and land use changes

#### Environment/Resilience

Downtown/Waterfront

*Issues*

- Flooding at 5 corners
- Sea level rise
- Drainage coming down to 5 corners
- High traffic and waste in water—shellfish decline
- Dredging-sediment transport
- Abandon parts of downtown due to flooding/sea level rise

*Opportunities*

- Green infrastructure
- Parks on Main Street/downtown
- Using shellfish to clean water
- Waterfront walkway/gathering space—temporary movable structures
- Acquire Boch Park
- Elevate buildings and roads
- Build berms/dunes

B2 District

- Make it more green
- Receiving area from waterfront—if businesses need to move from downtown because of flooding

#### Housing and Economic Development

- There is housing throughout the downtown/waterfront district



- Want more diverse housing—want affordable ownership units
- Waterfront businesses are a strength
- Unclear what additional businesses are needed or would be successful
- Sewer is a key question
- Want more restaurants
- Vacant buildings on Main Street—unclear what to do about them
- Master Plan can set direction for: policy, leadership, regulatory changes, infrastructure
- Relationship between town and government—an open question
- Commercial spaces/real property—what do you need? What do you have? Where are they aligned? Where are their mismatches?
- What is supporting businesses?

## Design & Placemaking

### Downtown and Waterfront

#### *Strengths:*

- Economy
- Sense of Place
- Walkable
- Historic
- Waterfront

#### *Challenges:*

- Lack of connections
- Lack of identity, or perhaps identity that's characterized as run-down and declining
- Lack of legibility/ability to find your way around. can visitors create a mental map of Vineyard Haven so they can navigate easily?
- Steamship authority—significant impacts on the downtown and waterfront. How to move vehicles through Water St, Five Corners, Beach Road, State Road, etc. without compromising those areas for other uses.

#### *Opportunities:*

- Make Connections!

### State Road/B2 District

#### *Strengths:*

- Green Corridor, with lawns and big trees
- Many year-round businesses
- Surrounded by open space

#### *Challenges*





- Narrow street, sidewalks and shoulders
- Lack of sewer hampers redevelopment
- Pattern of long narrow strips perpendicular to street without rear connections

### *Opportunities*

- Put parking behind buildings
- Don't build the usual mediocre suburban apartments
- Preserve and enhance existing historic pattern along State Road
- Village style – more compact, but not a lot taller than existing
- Build close together, but provide shared amenities
- Complete a rational grid of streets to connect everything together.
- Reinforce and support existing businesses.

### Questions and comments (after report out)

- Appreciates optimism, but be aware of long-term disappointments – e.g., the Steamship Authority never wants less traffic.
- Don't forget that the connector road was already discussed
- Don't forget the importance of net zero
- Nothing can happen without zoning changes!
- Divided authority (between town and MVC) is an issue

## Appendix 2

### Notes from Visioning Workshop, First Small Group Activity

#### Day 2, Exercise 1, Group 1 (Facilitators: Anna Sangree and Jeff Maxtutis, BETA)

##### Downtown/Waterfront

- Steamship Authority not paying enough for use of Tisbury—burden
  - Coordination with SSA
  - Role of SSA to serve as lifeline for Vineyard residents
- Limiting vehicles: Bermuda example
  - Rentals
  - Vehicles per household
  - Shared bikes and cars
  - Coordination with SSA, county, town, Nantucket, business community
  - Raising car fees especially at current peaks
  - Affects many transportation issues
- Improving biking and walking
  - Lanes and safety
  - Electric bikes and tricycles



- Bikes on ferry
- Flags at crosswalks
- Walkway from Union
- Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons
- Wayfinding
- Moving post office to bring traffic to B2 or beautifying it
- Limited parking
- Freight increasing—Packer's
- Main Street closure: there is already limited parking and closure would reduce foot traffic (Note: the idea closing Main Street was raised by participants on Day 1 of the workshop. Here, participants are pushing back against that idea).

## B2 District

- Vacancy
- Sewer constraint for additional housing
- High rents=turnover
- Connector road
  - Concern with regional traffic
  - More car roads=more cars
- Local shuttles dropping off at Cronig's
- Edgartown Vinyard Haven Road/Look intersection
  - Make Look Street one way with dead end away from intersection
  - Add a signal
  - Add bike infrastructure on State Road
    - Protected
    - Street
- Housing
  - Need wastewater—some surplus for development
    - Smaller sewer plants
    - Expand plant
  - Mixed income housing, elderly housing
    - Demand for apartments
  - Consider density with character
- Transit connections on State Road to Tisbury
- Short-term rentals
- Accessibility—sidewalks, curb cuts

## Day 2, Exercise 1, Group 2 (Facilitator: Carly Venditti, Barrett Planning Group)

### Downtown

- Where is the greenspace? -> Replace town parking lot with town center
- Parking Issues -> Let's talk about garages.
  - We love the Park N Ride but there is a lack of awareness of it
- Beach Street Extension.



- Why is it paved?
- Can we make it a space for food trucks
- Relocate Stop & Shop?
  - Replace it with a terraced park
  - Move it to Park N Ride area
  - But it serves an older population and is walkable. Need a grocery near water.
  - Move Stop & Shop to where the police station is?
- Layered design—agriculture/mixed-use/parking. Accomplish multiple goals on one site.
- Island-wide waste program—need one. This is a regional issue
  - Need business district waste infrastructure—recycle, compost, waste reduction
  - Rethink waste storage space—share waste storage
  - Year round challenge
- Real map @ Steamship Authority terminal
- Relocate Post Office and Police Department
  - Post office is a big traffic generator. At a location that has traffic issues
  - Police Department impacted by traffic congestion, flooding
- Artisan location (village/small mobile shops)
- How do we change the steamship authority site to benefit traffic to Main Street?
- Service truck locations and throughways

## B2 District

- Wastewater \$ is voted on
  - Adding pipes in the ground
  - For increased density need more treatment capacity
- Connect streets down to Eleanor Street
  - Rezone and increase wastewater treatment
  - Use permeable paving in B2 development
- State Road—need consistent architectural design
- Should not try too hard to make B2 tourist-centered
- Need more services—Vets, Dentists + service area
  - 2-3 story with mixed residential and commercial
- Define affordability in zoning
  - Ex. Planned development districts
- Build a connector road
- Vineyard Haven-Signage for Steamship Authority terminal
- Truck throughways—can they avoid the hill?
- B2 Paid parking for commercial vehicles
- Temporary housing solutions
  - Incentivize modular or shipping container housing
  - Hold a design contest?

## Day 2, Exercise 1, Group 3 (Facilitator: Jill Slankas, Barrett Planning Group)

### Waterfront

- Not sure of residential possibilities



- Empty maritime buildings
  - Would be nice to add housing for maritime workforce
- Challenge-flooding
- Main Street Residential—good amount of housing, fully occupied
- Economic Development
  - Do we want more people?
  - How do we attract them and keep the people who grew up and live here
  - Cultural/arts center in current empty buildings would be a catalyst
- Moorings
  - Could add more and add revenue
  - Need a launch service (passenger)
- Critical path?
- Metered parking
- Public entry points (eg Owen Way), but need to improve wayfinding
- Signage to direct people off the boat to Main Street
- Lack of enforcement for environmental regs on the water

#### B2 District

- Keep trees on State Road. Keep buildings 1-2 stories
- But off/behind the road possibility for 2-3 stories
- Need regs that require a house to be built if one is taken down
- State Road right of way widening. Even one foot of eminent domain taking can make a huge and positive difference (E.g. Beach Road)
- Bike path to connect to West Tisbury would be good in space in B2 off of State Road + across street in cemetery
- Connector Rd had 3 outlets onto State Road
  - Needs to include a bike path and be wide enough
- In B2, would like businesses that are geared for year-round residents
  - Retail experience
  - More pedestrian friendly vs. car-centric
  - Add lighting

#### Day 2, Exercise 1, Group 4 (Facilitator: Peter Flinker, Dodson & Flinker)

##### Downtown/Waterfront

##### *Opportunities*

- Coordinated vision and strategy for special events
  - Business, marketing, branding between businesses and also between businesses and town/community
- Physical improvements, including seasonal decorations, twinkly lights, etc.
- Better communication—websites up to date
- Invest in key public places



- Beach St Extension—art installations
- Build on first Friday event
- Build more housing to support businesses & employees

### *Challenges*

- Flooding
- Traffic at 5 Corners
- Lack of connectivity, especially for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Vacant anchor buildings—former Capawock and Bowl & Board spaces (Hall Properties owns both)
- Confusing arrival sequence in Tisbury—no clear entry

### *Critical Paths*

- Who gets sewerred?
- Encouraging mixed-use, walkable/bikeable neighborhood
- Balance redevelopment with risk—build for the future to prevent future problems
- Ferry questions need to be resolved

## B2 District

### *Opportunities*

- Pedestrian/Bicycle connections—doesn't have to follow State Road
- Take a fresh look at the connector road idea
- Create interconnected road system
  - Close curb cuts
  - Create safe bike routes
- Strengthened trail system + consolidate and improve open spaces
- Build at greater density and mix uses (housing and commercial) along State Road corridor

### *Challenges for B2*

- Lack of sewer system—who should pay for it?
- Disconnected road network
- Too many curb cuts—pedestrian-vehicle conflicts, traffic jams

### *Critical Paths*

- Start with State Road corridor
- Change zoning to promote a clear vision->"Artisanal zoning?"
- Make public art and public spaces part of every district
- Focus on key opportunity sites
  - Goodale pit and Nobnocket Property (conere of Holmes Hole Road and State Road)
- Involve younger people in planning

