



CHAPTER 7: Chappaquiddick

Chappaquiddick's Unique Character
Public Safety
Vehicle and Bicycle Access
Communication and Energy
Climate Change

CHAPTER 8: Implementation

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Acknowledgements

The development of this Master Plan would not have been possible without the engagement and commitment of many residents and stakeholders who know and love Edgartown. These individuals believe in the future of Edgartown and provided invaluable insights to the planning process. Thank you to the following individuals.

- EDGARTOWN PLANNING BOARD: Lucy Morrison (Chair), Michael McCourt, Glen Searle, Scott Morgan, Fred Mascolo, James Cisek
- MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE: Juliet Mulinare (Chair), Jeff Agnoli, Jonathan Blum, Doug Cooper, Gail Croteau, Paulo DeOliveira, Jack Ensor, Madeline Fisher, David Ignacio, Marcel LaFlamme, Mike Mackenty, Robert Strayton, Pia Webster
- CONTRIBUTING TOWN DEPARTMENTS: Affordable Housing, Beautification, Building, Climate, Conservation, Fire, Harbormaster, Health, Historic, IT, Parks, Police, Shellfish, Wastewater, Water
- CONSULTANTS: Dover Kohl & Partners, Howard Stein Hudson, MV Commission
- THANK OTHER CONTRIBUTORS: Alan Strahler, Julia Livingston

The Planning Process

WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 41, section 81D requires that, in any Town that has established a Planning Board, that board shall make a Master Plan as the Planning Board may deem advisable, and from time to time extend or perfect that plan.

The Municipal Master Plan is a statement, explored and explained through text, maps, illustrations or other exhibits, designed to provide a basis for decision making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality.

The current Edgartown Master Plan provided this guidance for about ten years after its development and adoption in 1990. It addressed present and future concerns, and provided recommendations regarding land use, housing, economic development, natural and cultural resources, parks and open space, community services, community facilities, municipal utilities, and transportation.

This revised Master Plan reflects a balancing of competing interests in the Town – and on the Island – and endeavors to address the complex and intertwined issues that Edgartown will face over the next decade and beyond.

This Master Plan looks towards Edgartown's future to meet the needs of all members of the community. The Master Plan includes elements such as land use, housing, economic development, natural and cultural resources, open space and recreation, services and facilities, as well as goals and action items to assist in implementation to help guide Edgartown's future.

THE MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

In February of 2020, the Edgartown Planning Board named fourteen members to a Master Plan Steering Committee and charged them to prepare a Request for Proposals for Master Plan Consultant Services, conduct interviews, and submit a final recommendation to the Planning Board for review and approval.

Then, Covid-19 hit, the Town Hall was locked down, and the Master Planning effort was put on hold for more than twelve months.

In May of 2021, funding for the Master Plan consultant was appropriated at Annual Town Meeting. The Steering Committee issued the RFP a few months later. In September of 2021, more than sixteen months after receiving its charge, the Committee recommended Dover, Kohl and Partners to assist with the Town's Master Plan efforts.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS SUMMARY

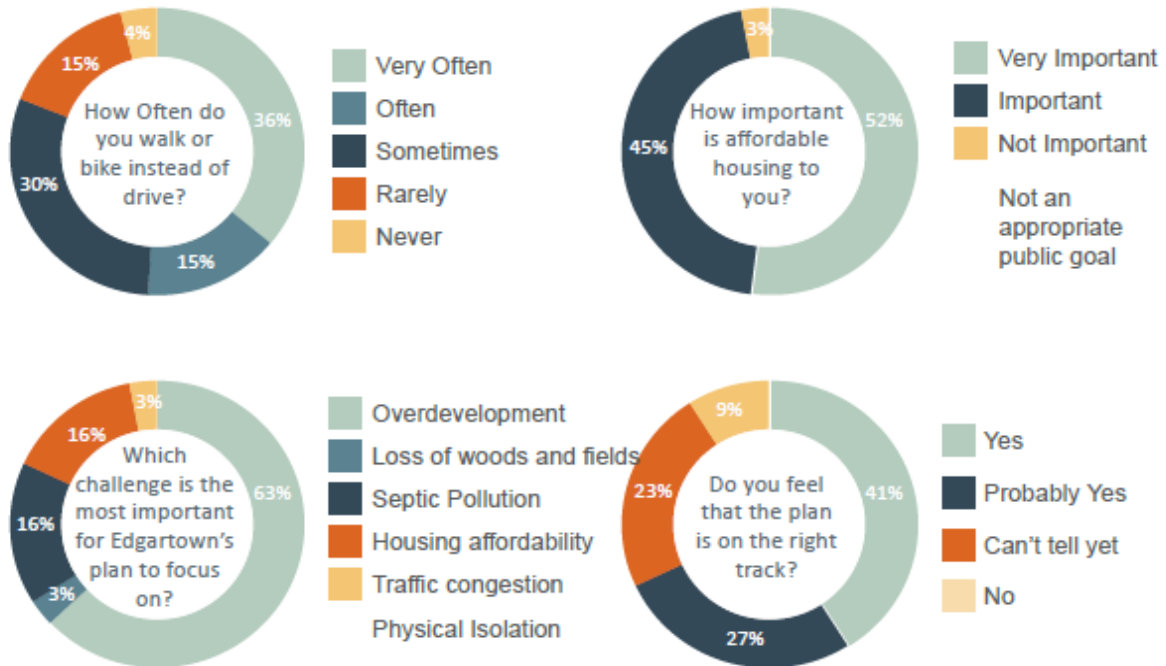
- Fall Committee Meetings – with Consultants
- Chapter Sub-Committee meetings with Town staff, business owners, contractors, residents
- Community Workshops & Stakeholder Meetings:
 - February 16th – 19th, 2022 at the Edgartown Library



- June 15th – 17th, 2022 at the Edgartown Library, Town Hall and various on-site meetings with Town Departments including, Water, Wastewater, Highway, Dredge, Parks, Building, Health, Historic
- Meetings with Town Departments to refine plan sections
- Creation of surveys for community input
- Presentations to Planning Board, Selectboard

COMMUNITY CONCERNS IDENTIFIED DURING ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

WORK-IN-PROGRESS SURVEY



ONE WORD CARD

During the kick-off presentation and hands-on design session, participants were asked to write down one word to describe Edgartown as it is now and a different word to describe how it could be in the future. The words that are used more often become bigger while the rarely used words are smaller.

NOW (WINTER CHARRETTE)



IN THE FUTURE (WINTER CHARRETTE)



NOW (SUMMER CHARRETTE)

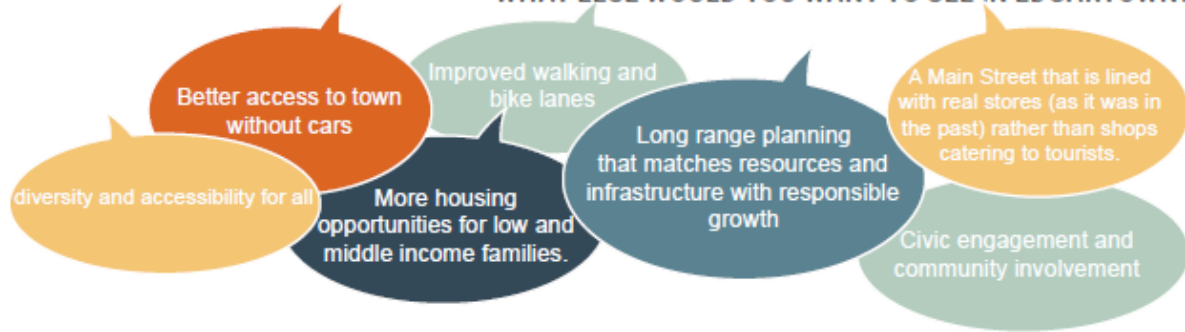


IN THE FUTURE (SUMMER CHARRETTE)



SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

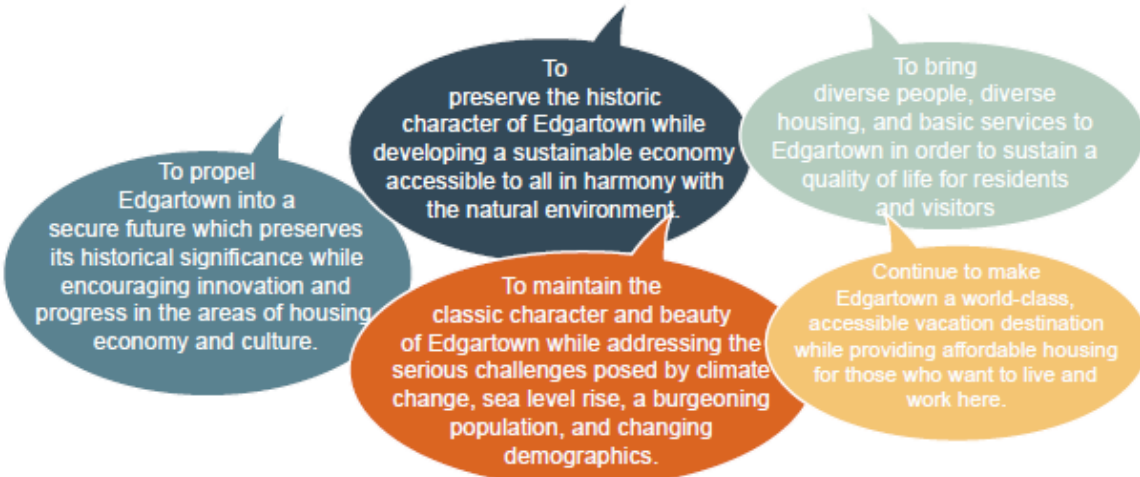
WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU WANT TO SEE IN EDGARTOWN?



WHAT DESIGN FEATURES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE AS PART OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN COMMERCIAL AREAS?



HOW WOULD YOU WORD THE NEW PLAN'S GOAL?



CHAPTER 2: Setting the Context

A Shared Vision of Edgartown

Edgartown's vision is to continue its role as both a summer destination and year-round home to many, while growing in a sustainable manner that respects its long history, small-town culture, and beautiful environment. This Master Plan aims to both protect and enhance: defending the seaside community's identity while increasing the Town's accessibility, appeal, and quality of life.

Edgartown's Cultural Heritage

WAMPANOAG HISTORY

The last great North American glacier began its retreat some 10,000 years ago, leaving behind the accumulation of boulders, sand, and clay that is now known as Martha's Vineyard. There, it is said, a benevolent being named Moshup roamed the land. One day, Moshup was making his way across the mainland to the headlands of the Aquinnah Cliffs. Weary from his journey, Moshup dragged his foot heavily, leaving a deep track in the mud. At first, only a silver thread of water trickled in the track. But gradually, the ocean's force of wind and tides broadened and deepened the opening, creating an island named Noepe. The Wampanoag were the first people of Noepe.



The ancestors of Wampanoag people have lived for at least 10,000 years in Aquinnah (Gay Head), Chappaquiddick and throughout the island of Noepe (Martha's Vineyard), pursuing a traditional economy

based on fishing and agriculture. The Aquinnah Wampanoag share the belief that the giant Moshup created Noepe and the neighboring islands, taught the people how to fish and to catch whales, and still presides over their destinies. Beliefs held by the Natives and a hundred million years of history are imprinted in the colorful clay cliffs of Aquinnah.

The Chappaquiddick Wampanoag Tribe is a historic Massachusetts tribe. Its ancestral homelands are Chappaquiddick Island, Cape Pogue, and Muskeget. The Chappaquiddick Wampanoag were a tribe at the time of first contact, when the United States became a country in 1776, and when Massachusetts became part of the Federal Union in 1789.

Today, Chappaquiddick Wampanoags live on Martha's Vineyard, the larger island next to Chappaquiddick, on the mainland in Massachusetts and Rhode Island (ancestral homelands of the larger Wampanoag Nation), and throughout the United States.

The tribe filed several petitions to the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the State of Massachusetts over a period of years prior to 1869. Tribal citizens visit and use the traditional lands at Chappaquiddick, and many of them are or were parties to petitions to register land by non-Indians within the last 20 years.

The tribe had two reservations on Chappaquiddick until the Massachusetts Indian Enfranchisement Act of 1869 was passed. At that time, the tribe's lands were allotted to Chappaquiddick Wampanoag individuals, and Chappaquiddick Island was absorbed by the town of Edgartown. The two reservations are documented as the Cleared Lands Reservation on North Neck and the Woodlands Reservation south of Chappaquiddick Road; over 800 acres.

Though the Tribe's ancestral homeland is Chappaquiddick, the Chappaquiddick Wampanoag people routinely interacted with the Aquinnah, Mashpee and other tribes on the mainland. All the enrolled tribal members descend from individuals listed in the Briggs Report of 1849 or the Earle Report of 1859.

The Chappaquiddick Wampanoag believe in the cycle of life: coming together is the beginning, keeping together is progress, and working together is success.

WHALING HISTORY



Chappaquiddick's William A. Martin commanded the Golden City for two of his whaling voyages.

NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM

For 156 years — from 1738 to 1894 — whaling dominated the economy on Martha's Vineyard. Learning from the native population how to capture whales, Vineyard men were renowned, not only from the pages of Moby Dick, but in whaling ports worldwide.

Edgartown was the island's center for whaling activities, reaching its height between 1820 and 1865. Between 1835 and 1845 alone, 110 whaling captains built homes and lived in Edgartown.

Southern New England was known for the oil derived from the capture of whales. In the early years the oil from sperm whales was used to produce smokeless candles for wealthier Americans. Over time the oil lit streets lubricated the American Industrial Revolution. In later whaling years, the baleen from whales was used like plastic and spring steel to manufacture a host of products. One Edgartown whaleship, the Mary Frazier, returned from a whaling expedition in 1883 with a 25-pound piece of baleen that alone may have been worth as much as \$500 per pound — in today's dollars that would translate to \$300,000.

The largest single maritime-related enterprise which grew up around whaling was the production of whale oil and candles by Dr. Daniel Fisher & Company. This company became Edgartown's largest industry in 1850 and the success is evident in the elaborate Greek Revival dwelling built for Dr. Daniel Fisher on Main Street. The affluence and influence of the area's ship captains is apparent in the extensive number of captains' houses, public buildings and churches that also were built during this period. Particularly noteworthy examples are the Captain Holmes Smith House on South Summer Street and the Captain Abraham Osborne House on Main Street (both circa 1840), the Dukes County Courthouse (1859) and the County Jail (circa 1860s), the Federated Church (1828) and the Whaling Church (1842).

Men of color were full participants in the whaling industry, a business so difficult and dangerous that most people only went out once. In an era when there were few options for advancement among men of color on land, at sea the experience they gained from whaling made promotion achievable. Captains who managed to return home safely with crew and cargo were captains above all else — few cared about the color of their skin.

The American whaling industry lasted from 1715 to 1928, a 213-year period during which over 2,700 ships conducted 15,913 whaling trips. Martha's Vineyard's whaling captains and crewmen were prized worldwide and sailed from virtually every port used for whaling.

HISTORY OF TOURISM

The Islanders' future looked uncertain after the whaling industry sank almost overnight with the discovery of vast quantities of petroleum in Pennsylvania in 1860. However, in 1872, the Old Colony Railway extended their train service to Woods Hole; this was the beginning of the tourist era and tourism on Cape Cod exploded. In 1874, Old Colony Railroad founded the Martha's Vineyard Railroad. At one point, there was a railroad that ran on nine miles of track between what is now the Oak Bluffs Ferry Terminal to the long-gone Mattakeset Lodge in Katama, Edgartown. There was only one locomotive and she was originally named 'Active' but later renamed 'South Beach'. The Martha's Vineyard Railroad ran until 1896.

MARTHA'S VINEYARD RAILROAD

1874 — 1896

(Illustrated)



PHOTOGRAPH OF "THE ACTIVE"

BY COURTESY OF DUKES CO. HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EDGARTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS

Downtown Edgartown has always been a picture-book setting with its harbor, lighthouse and pieces of the past at every turn. The waterfront is an integral part of Edgartown's past and its vibrancy plays a key role in its future. The harbor front is a popular destination drawing crowds from all across the country and the world. For the past hundred years Edgartown has been one of the world's great yachting centers and home to some of the most beautiful boats and esteemed sailors. The Edgartown Harbor continues to bustle with activity from early spring through late fall.

The first "summer cottages" appeared in Edgartown Village in the early 1880s, although the largest number and most lavish examples were built between 1895 and 1920. Edgartown and all of Martha's Vineyard gained widespread recognition as a resort community between the late 1920s and the early 1940s, when bungalow cottages and Colonial Revival style buildings began to appear as infill among the earlier buildings in the district. The Edgartown Village Historic District remains a popular resort area today.

The world really began to take notice when the Kennedy's started vacationing here and Senator Ted Kennedy had his fatal incident with Mary Jo Kopechne on July 18th, 1969. Then, on June 20th, 1975, the picturesque setting of the island was cemented in the annals of Hollywood with the release of JAWS.

Thousands of visitors have since come to the island to see the movie's iconic imagery in-person, including the famed Jaws Bridge.



Edgartown Today



LOCATION AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

- Facts and Figures

The total area of Edgartown is 122.7 square miles (318 km²), of which 27.0 square miles (70 km²) is land and 95.8 square miles (248 km²) (78.01%) is water. Edgartown is ranked 103rd out of 351 communities in the Commonwealth by land area, and is the largest town by land area in Dukes County. Edgartown is bordered by Nantucket Sound to the northeast and east, the Atlantic Ocean to the south, West Tisbury to the west, and Oak Bluffs to the north. The town also shares a common corner with Tisbury (along with West Tisbury and Oak Bluffs).

Edgartown is located at the eastern end of Martha's Vineyard (referred to as "down-island", a vestige of the island's traditional maritime manner of speaking in that as a ship travels east, it is said to be traveling "down east" as longitude decreases towards the Prime Meridian).

The town of Edgartown includes the smaller island of Chappaquiddick, sometimes connected to the rest of Martha's Vineyard only by a barrier beach which can be breached during storms. Chappaquiddick is separated from the town center by Edgartown Harbor and Katama Bay.

- Population/Demographics

Edgartown's population as of 2022 is 5,266 year-round residents. From 1935 to 1970 there was little growth, but the past 50 years have revealed a denser town, with abundant construction on the outskirts. From 2010 to 2020, the U.S. Census reported a 27% increase in full time residents, an increase of over 1,000 people.

Edgartown is the largest Town on the island in terms of area and has the largest percentage of residents in the summer. It occupies about 26% of the land mass of Martha's Vineyard and the Town's year round population makes up approximately 25% of the Island's year round citizenry.

There are 197.41 year-round residents per square mile, compared with Tisbury at 747.56, and Oak Bluffs at 735.59. Population density in all of Dukes County is 201.08.

As of 2023, there are 404 Edgartown children enrolled in the island school system. There has been nearly 15% enrollment growth in the Edgartown School in just the past five years, amounting to upwards of fifty new students. In any given year, between 30 and 50 babies will be born to Edgartown residents.

The older adult population in Town has grown the most. As of 2022, over 2,000 community members are 60 years or older, up nearly 30% from the same Street Listing source in 2015. This segment as a whole is up 25% across the island, with Edgartown trending the fastest.

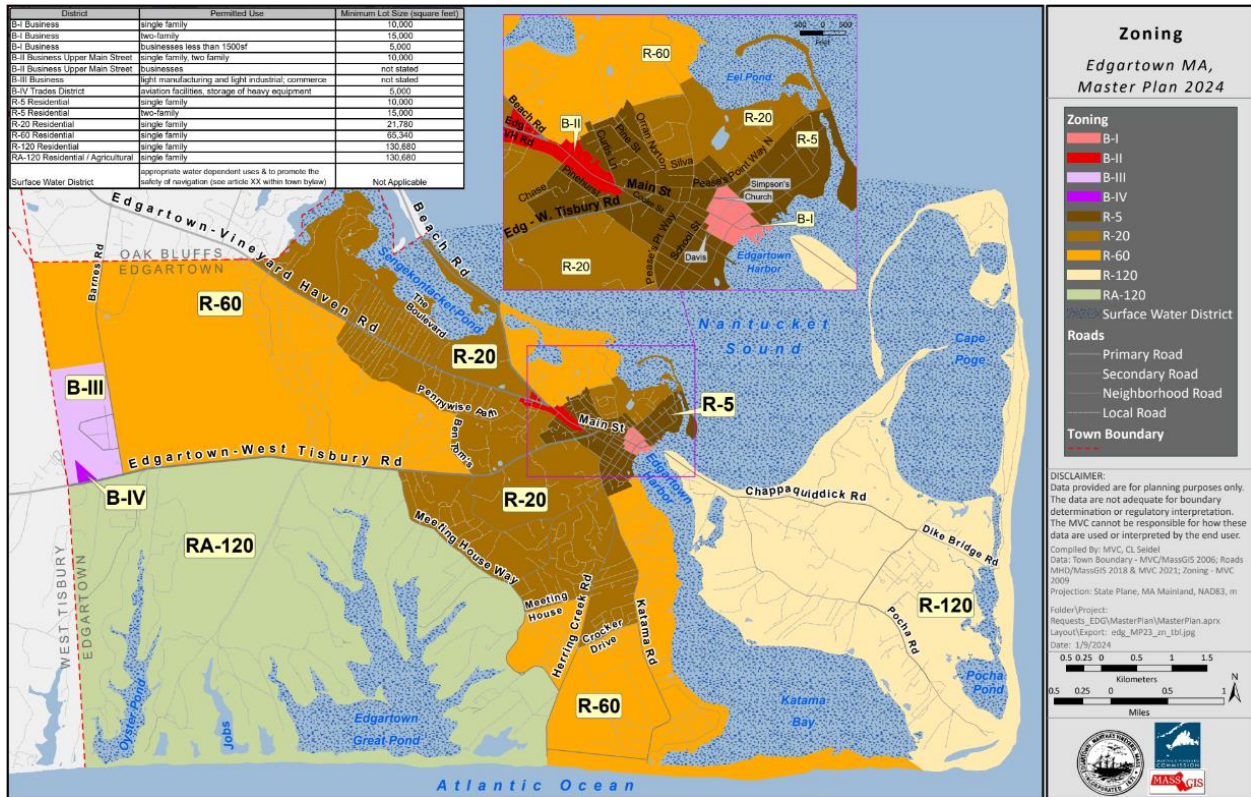
Population growth at the rates noted above is impacting services, character, habitats, schools, and traffic as well as open space with immediate and long lasting transformations. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly 14% of Town residents were unemployed during the Winter months. This number declined to less than 5% during the tourist-driven summer months.

LAND USE

Edgartown is simultaneously a small New England Town, a fishing village, an agricultural village, and a popular resort town. The ocean, ponds, beaches, salt marshes, harbor, bays, forests and fields combine to make Edgartown a town rich in natural endowments as well as an historic Town center. Edgartown center is a densely populated grid of charming narrow ways characteristic of New England maritime villages, a compact area of bustling pedestrian-oriented activity, which abruptly gives way to quiet residential and open space lands that dominate the remainder of the Town. The terrain is one of flat-forested stretches of outwash slopes that descend gently south at about 20 feet per mile, which are only disrupted by occasional meadows, farm fields, subdivisions, and streams leading to the heads of the coves on the ponds. Elevations in Edgartown do not reach above 95 feet. The high points in Town are Mill Hill at 65 feet above sea level, Washaqua Hill at 70 feet and Sampson's Hill at 94 feet above sea level.

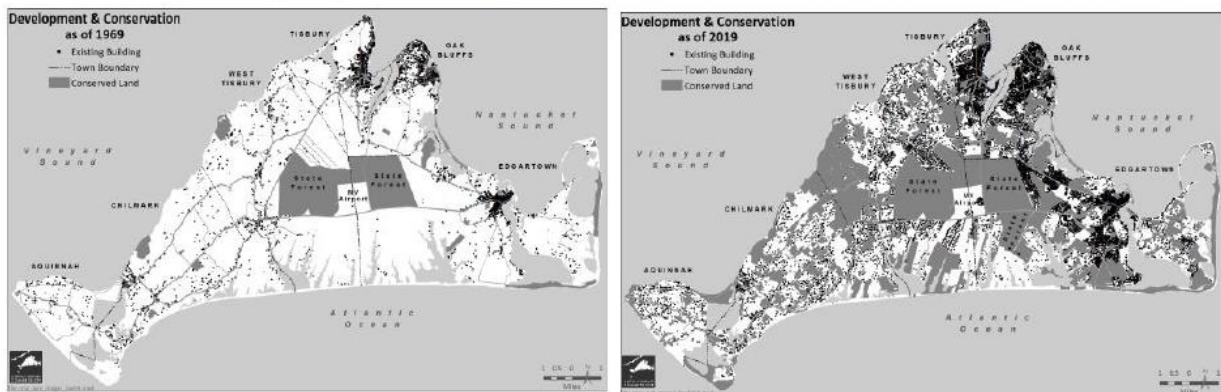
There are many challenges that are unique to Edgartown simply because it is located on an island and it has an economy that relies heavily on the tourist industry. The rising cost of land has been primarily due to the tourist and seasonal nature of the Vineyard. Second homebuyers are able to outbid many year-round residents causing a sharp increase in real estate values. Other development constraints to housing relate to Edgartown's existing infrastructure.

The Town of Edgartown has five residential districts and four business districts. The five residential district requirements are as follows: 10,000 square feet minimum lot size, .5-acre minimum lot size, 1.5-acre minimum lot size, and 2 districts of 3-acre minimum lot size.



For purposes of directing growth, the Island Plan of 2009 delineated a town and rural distinction for Edgartown, which was drawn along the lines of the R-20 (½ acre zoning) and R-120 districts (3-acre zoning). Most of Edgartown’s growth over the past two decades has happened within the Town zone with much future growth expected there as well; that said, there is certainly development potential remaining along a number of coastal ponds on the rural side of Town. A more modest amount of development is anticipated on Chappaquiddick; this is appropriate given the limited capacity of their sole source aquifer.

A meteoric building boom took place in town – and islandwide - between 1969 to 2019. This is illuminated through the snapshots in time:



Future residential development of land is limited by the lack of access to Town water and sewer services within Edgartown. For this reason, many developable lots are restricted to a development density of one

bedroom per 10,000 square feet of lot area. If developable lots are located within wetlands or nitrogen sensitive areas, there are further limitations to the development's size and density. In addition to stricter regulations that could require advanced de-nitrification wastewater treatment systems, the installation cost and maintenance of these systems can be a financial constraint to development.

ECONOMY

Median income for household (2021): \$73,849

Median income for a family (2021): \$111,667

The cost to live in Edgartown is high compared to the rest of the State, and especially the Country. Estimated monthly housing costs for owner-occupied units with a mortgage are \$2,836 in Dukes County, compared to \$2,323 State-wide, and \$1,672 nationally.

Edgartown is comprised of 73% owner-occupied units, and 27% rental units, which is comparable to other towns on the island (Tisbury is 62% owner-occupied, and Oak Bluffs is 72% owner-occupied). The average household size is 3.58 people.

The median rent in Edgartown was \$1,408 in 2021. The average home price has grown 69% since 2018, with the average price of an Edgartown home at \$2,560,319 and the median price at \$1,675,000 in 2022.

The Island's socio-economic diversity is eroding as lower income households are dwindling in number and in proportion to the population, beyond normal inflationary trends. Many of these residents are essential to the Island's seasonal, tourist, and service economy.

Between 2000 and 2019, year-round households with incomes of less than \$35,000 decreased by 59% while those with incomes of more than \$150,000 increased by 558%.

A total of 724 seniors, or 31% of those age 65 or older, had incomes of less than \$35,000 based on 2019 census estimates. There were also 694 households in this income range with heads younger than age 65. Consequently, there are significant numbers of households who have very limited financial means and are likely confronting enormous challenges affording to live on the Island.

In 2019, the Island's average weekly wage of \$1,094 was 70% of the state average and the median home price was more than double the state's, clearly signaling the disparity between what residents can afford and existing housing costs.

Edgartown has a largely visitor-based economy. Almost all activity is directly or indirectly related to providing services to seasonal residents and visitors through shops and restaurants, real estate, construction, and landscaping. Many of these are service jobs at the low end of the pay spectrum, with wages somewhat better than off-Island (although this is often offset by the high cost of living). For the Vineyard, being so dependent on one cluster of industries means our economy is less resilient to economic ups and downs. The fact that this cluster is so seasonal makes it difficult for our year-round businesses to remain viable. Compared to the rest of the Commonwealth, we have relatively few jobs in the most high-paying or fast-growing fields: professional, technical, health, or education.



The proliferation of Short-Term Rentals (STRs) has demonstrated that there is great demand to visit Edgartown in the summer months, and the island represents a marquee destination for mainland residents.

A considerable portion of spending, estimated at two-thirds of expenditures by year-round residents, is off-Island, meaning these funds are not available to support local businesses and jobs. Nearly all food, energy, and manufactured goods are imported. A high proportion of businesses are small and locally owned, but this is threatened by off-Island competition through the Internet, off-Island big-box stores, and the arrival of, and increasing number of, chain stores on-Island.

There is no single dominant employer, making for a diversified – and resilient local economy. That said, a number of these sectors have fates affected by the seasonal economy.

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

The Town of Edgartown website is: <https://www.edgartown-ma.us/home>

The public can access publicly posted meeting agendas, committee minutes and other information on the website. The website offers a calendar of typical monthly meetings as well as information on every department, including contact information for those who work in the department. The website displays a banner that announces community workshops and important meetings, as well as updates on events or emergency preparedness. The Town also utilizes a text service that sends out updates to anyone who chooses to subscribe. The text service is also offered with Portuguese translation.



AGENDAS MINUTES DEPARTMENTS DOWNLOADS CALENDAR FAQs

- Agendas
- Online GIS
- Online Payments
- Tax Maps
- Zoning By-Laws

**Community Preservation Committee
Town of Edgartown
P.O. Box 5158
Edgartown, MA 02539**

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, December 5, 2023, at 4pm in the Fred B. Morgan Jr. Meeting Room of Town Hall, 70 Main St. Edgartown. The Purpose of the Hearing is to review the applications for CPA funds that the CPC are considering for recommendation to the Annual Town Meeting in April of 2024. All interested parties are welcome to attend and participate.

CPC Information
[Click here to view CPC applications, guidelines, and the 12/05/2023 Public Hearing Notice](#)

| UPCOMING MEETINGS | | NEWS | |
|-------------------|---|------------------|---|
| Nov 20 | Selectboard 04:00 PM - 04:59 PM | Nov 21 | Planning Board 05:30 PM - 07:30 PM |
| Nov 27 | Board of Health Meeting 10:00 AM - 10:59 AM | Nov 28 | Board of Health Meeting 02:00 PM - 02:59 PM |
| | | Nov 22 | Park Department Meeting 10:00 AM - 11:59 AM |
| | | Nov 28 | Edgartown Zoning Bylaw Review Committee Meeting 04:00 PM - 06:00 PM |

Edgartown is the county seat of The County of Dukes County.

On the state level, Edgartown is represented in the Massachusetts House of Representatives as a part of the Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket district, which includes all of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, as well as a portion of Falmouth. The current State Representative is Dylan Fernandes.

The Town is represented in the Massachusetts Senate as a portion of the Cape and Islands district, which includes all of Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket and most of Barnstable County (with the exception of Bourne, Sandwich, Falmouth and a portion of Barnstable). The current State Senator is Julian Cyr. All of Dukes County is patrolled by the Fifth (Oak Bluffs) Barracks of Troop D of the Massachusetts State Police.

On the national level, Edgartown is a part of Massachusetts' 9th congressional district, and is currently represented in Washington D.C. by William R. Keating. The state's junior (Class II) member of the United States Senate is Ed Markey, and the senior (Class I) Senator is Elizabeth Warren.

Edgartown is governed on the local level by the open Town Meeting form of government and is led by a Town Administrator and a Selectboard. The Town has its own police and fire departments, both located

just west of the historic center of Town. The Town's Free Public Library is located next to the Edgartown School. Edgartown is also the site of the Dukes County Courthouse, the only courthouse on the island, which also houses the Registry of Deeds.

Edgartown has an active contingent of year round residents who supplement the work of staff on formal payroll. This provides a healthy balance of engaged citizenry and capable Town staff. Virtual meetings have helped to boost awareness and involvement by a number of groups in Town, most notably older adults (who may otherwise avoid driving at night), seasonal home owners (who can remain apprised of island developments when not on island), and parents (who can attend meetings without needing to secure childcare).

Elected Boards, Commissions and Offices in Edgartown:

- Town Moderator
- Selectboard
- Board of Assessors
- Board of Health
- Planning Board
- School Committee
- Park Commissioners
- Wastewater Treatment Commissioners
- Water Commissioners
- Constables
- Financial Advisory Committee
- Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Representative

There are many community members with exemplary dedication to public service, who serve on a number of different boards and committees. This affords a model that benefits information sharing and awareness across the Town's apparatus of decision-making bodies. In turn, dedicated joint meetings between boards are not as critical as some members have crossover capacity. This prompts a heightened awareness for potential conflicts of interest, but community members and/or staff are typically very forthcoming about these instances. Furthermore, the Town also possesses strong leadership that is adroit at making sure the right department heads and staff are in productive communication.

Appointed Boards and Commissions in Edgartown:

- Affordable Housing Committee & Trust
- Airfield Commission
- Beautification Committee
- Board of Fire Engineers
- Board of Registrars
- By-Ways Committee
- Cape Pogue District of Critical Planning Concern Advisory Committee
- Capital Programs Committee
- Cemetery Commissioners
- Chappaquiddick Ferry Steering Committee
- Christmas Decorations Committee
- Climate Committee
- Community Preservation Committee

- Conservation Commission
- Council on Aging
- Dredging Advisory Committee
- Energy Committee
- Fisherman’s Landing Stewardship Committee
- Harbor Planning Group
- History District Commission
- Independence Day Committee
- MV Land Bank Advisory Board
- Marine Advisory Committee
- Master Plan Steering Committee
- Personnel Board
- Shellfish Committee
- Sign Advisory Committee
- Wharf Restoration Committee
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Zoning Bylaw Review Committee

EDGARTOWN FINANCES

Edgartown has an annual operating budget of \$42,696,353 for fiscal year 2024.

The tax rate in Edgartown in 2023 is 2.52 per 1,000 of assessed value. The tax rate is the same for Residential and Commercial Property, as well as Personal Property. The residential tax rate in Tisbury is 7.32, and in Oak Bluffs it’s 5.28. As of 2023, the Town of Edgartown has the lowest tax rate out of the 351 municipalities in the State. The average single-family tax bill is \$5,499.

Vehicle excise collections in 2022 were \$1,440,812.

Local option rooms tax collections in 2023 were \$3,822,128.

As of 2022, Edgartown’s outstanding long-term debt is \$8,565,636, which accounts for 3.7% of the Town’s overall operating budget.

The Town was assigned an ‘AAA’ with a “Stable” Outlook Bond Rating by Standard & Poor’s (S&P) on October 20, 2022. The Town was previously assigned Aa2 by Moody’s Investors Services in 2016. The AAA rating is confirmation of the Town’s proactive fiscal management policies and disciplined budgetary practices.

Free Cash for Fiscal Year 2023, beginning July 1, 2022, was certified by the Mass DOR in the amount of \$12,129,506. The Free Cash balance at the end of FY23 was \$4,848,329.

The balance of the Town’s Stabilization Fund is \$3,861,342.

Total appropriations and transfers for FY23 were \$40,980,140.

Total appropriations and transfers for FY24 are \$42,696,353.

Learning from the Past, Looking to the Future

PREVIOUS PLANNING INITIATIVES

This Master Plan builds off a number of previously conducted planning processes and documents. It aims to bring attention to these existing plans and to utilize the vast community involvement and investment that has already taken place.

Here is a list of the plans that supported the information contained in this Master Plan.

1. 1990 Edgartown Master Plan:

<https://www.edgartown-ma.us/home/showpublisheddocument/12090/637404240445270000>

2. 2022 Open Space and Recreation Plan:

https://www.mvcommission.org/sites/default/files/docs/EdgartownOpenSpaceRecPlan_approved.pdf

3. 2023 Harbor Plan – Not Yet Completed
4. 2014 Harbor Plan Update:

<https://www.edgartown-ma.us/home/showpublisheddocument/12038/637404230421100000>

5. 2018 Dredge Plan:

<https://www.edgartown-ma.us/home/showpublisheddocument/14367/637553176869870000>

6. 2020 Climate Change Adaptation Context:

<https://www.mvcommission.org/sites/default/files/docs/Edgartown%20Climate%20Change%20Context%202020%20FINAL.pdf>

7. 2022 Island Climate Action Plan:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rMiZ24AfHWcX-j9tW4eixd67-ZNwF1_P/view?pli=1

8. 2021 Edgartown Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/tna0czz3vbjvf0a/EDGARTOWN_CCVA_Report_Final.pdf?dl=0

9. 2004 Edgartown Community Development Plan:

https://www.mvcommission.org/sites/default/files/docs/edgcdplanfinal_hotlinks.pdf

10. 2021-2026 Edgartown Fire Department Strategic Plan

11. 2022 5 YR Plan for Aging and Dementia Friendly Island:

https://www.hamv.org/files/ugd/c951bb_8636a0eca29043579a6523c65411f744.pdf

12. 2010 Island Plan:

https://www.mvcommission.org/sites/default/files/docs/Island_Plan_Web_Version.pdf

13. 2019 20 YR MV Regional Transportation Plan:

https://www.mvcommission.org/sites/default/files/docs/Martha%27s%20Vineyard%20RTP%202020-2040%20FINAL%20%28APPROVED%29%208-22-19%20opt_0.pdf

14. 2018 – 2022 Edgartown Housing Production Plan:

<https://www.mvcommission.org/sites/default/files/docs/Edgartown%20HPP%20Draft%20Consolidated.pdf>

15. 2020 MV Housing Needs Assessment:

<https://www.mvcommission.org/sites/default/files/docs/MV%20Housing%20Needs%20Assessment%202020%20Update%201-20-21.pdf>

16. 2016 MVY Master Plan Update:

<https://archive.org/details/mvy-master-plan-11-15-2016-5-1>

17. 2021 Nantucket Coastal Resilience Plan:

<https://www.nantucket-ma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/40279/Nantucket-Coastal-Resilience-Plan-Existing-Conditions--Coastal-Risk-Assessment---November-2021-PDF#:~:text=It%20provides%20a%20detailed%20overview,island%2Dwide%20coastal%20risk%20assessment.>

18. 2015 Dukes County Hazard Mitigation Plan:

<https://www.mvcommission.org/sites/default/files/Dukes%20County%20Multi-Jurisdictional%20Hazard%20Mitigation%20Plan%20Update%202015%20smaller%20file.pdf>

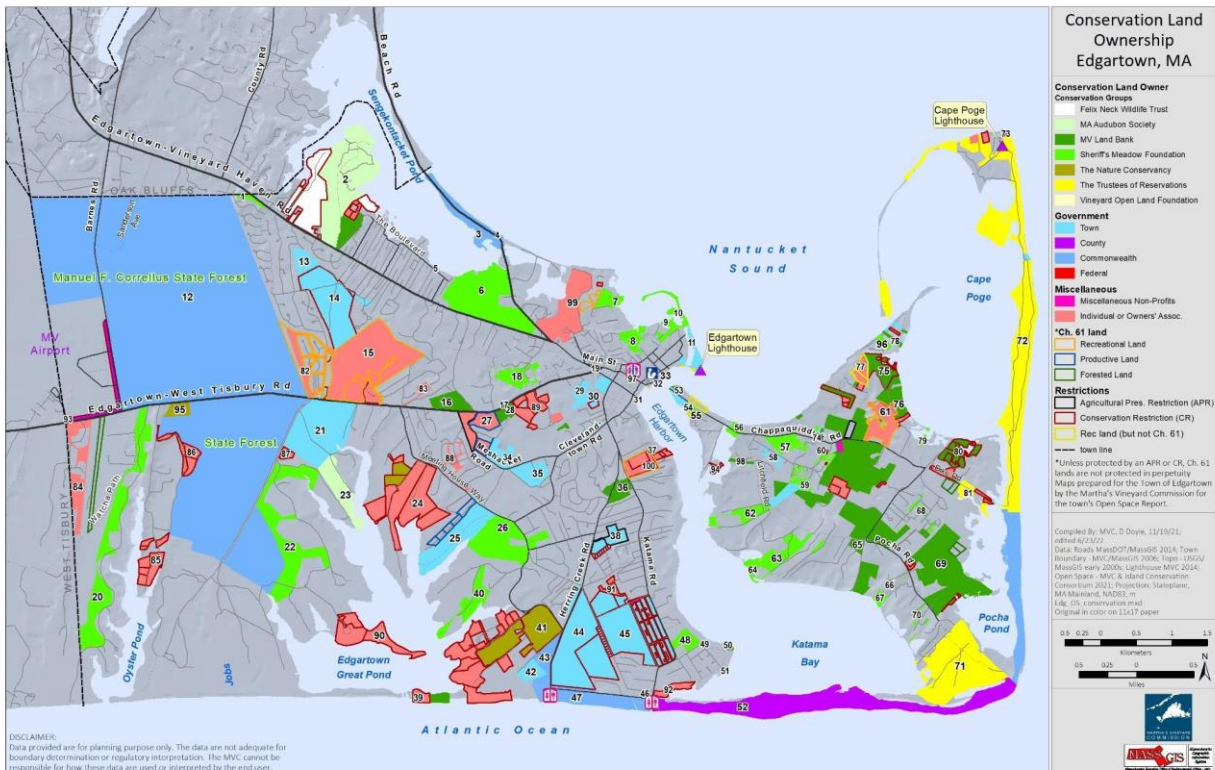
19. The Impacts of Climate Change on Chappaquiddick

CHAPTER 3: Edgartown's Natural Resources

Edgartown has a vast array of natural resources including beaches and ponds, forests and farmland, and a sole-source aquifer shared by all six island towns.

Edgartown is bounded by several significant and unique bodies of water including the Atlantic Ocean, Nantucket Sound, Edgartown Great Pond, Sengekontacket Pond, Oyster Pond, Edgartown Harbor, Katama Bay, Cape Pogue, and Muskeget Channel. It also hosts a portion of the State Forest, hundreds of acres of active farms and myriad conservation-restricted areas, including the land where the Katama Airfield is located.

Numerous entities own land that is available for public access in Edgartown.



Publicly Accessible Open Space

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The following are the main publicly-owned open spaces in Edgartown. The lists are organized by the entity that owns the land.

Property Owned by the Town of Edgartown:

1. Bend in the Road Beach – 2 acres of beach, parking available, also accessible by bus and bike

2. Chappy Point Beach – 3 acres, jointly owned by the Town and MV Land Bank (MVLB); easy access from the Chappy Ferry
3. Gardner Beach – 9 acres, located on Chappy and includes trails
4. The Boulevard Boat Landing – 2-acre access to Sengekontacket, ability to launch small boats
5. Wilson’s Landing – 84 acres along Edgartown Great Pond which includes a boat ramp; access road is unmarked
6. Collins Beach & Landing – just under a half acre, in the downtown area, ability to launch small boats
7. Eel Pond Landing – just under a quarter acre accessible from downtown, small boats only
8. Lighthouse Park – 17 acres, accessible on foot or bike from downtown Edgartown
9. Cannonball Park – 1-acre park in central location between Upper Main Street and Cooke St., which includes benches & shade
10. Robinson Road Recreation Area – 10 acres, within a short walk from downtown, includes public tennis and basketball courts, a playground and an outdoor workout area
11. Town Cemetery – 21 acres, limited shade given small stature of trees
12. Memorial Wharf – just under a half acre which includes a scenic lookout, shade, and fishing opportunity
13. Katama Air Field – 23 acres, jointly owned by the Town and The Nature Conservancy (TNC); affordable landing strip
14. Muskoday Farm – 28 acres that includes active farming, trails within a short bus ride from downtown
15. Katama Farm – 189 acres, jointly owned by the Town and the county and leased to nonprofits and private farms; includes educational programming
Caleb’s Common – 8 acres, located on Chappy and jointly owned with Sheriff’s Meadow Foundation (SMF)
16. North Neck Headlands – 9 acres, jointly owned by the Town and MVLB; located on Chappy and includes trails
17. Mytoi Gardens – 18 acres, jointly owned by the Town and The Trustees of Reservations

Sheriff’s Meadow Foundation (SMF):

1. Dodger’s Hole (5 acres)
2. Caroline Tuthill Wildlife Preserve (155 acres)
3. Sheriff’s Meadow (18 acres)
4. Ox Pond Meadow (9 acres)
5. Little Beach (14 acres)
6. Pocketapaces (127 acres)
7. King Point (39 acres)
8. 18 Navy Point Way (half acre)
9. Huckleberry Barrens (17 acres)
10. Bittersweet Hill (3 acres)
11. Slater / Ames (22 acres)
12. Sampson’s Hill Area (10 acres)
13. Long Point Chappy (15 acres)
14. Packard Preserve (7 acres)
15. Tighman Preserve (3 acres)

The Martha’s Vineyard Land Bank (MVLB):

1. Pennywise Preserve (124 acres)
2. Ben Tom’s Preserve (28 acres)
3. Sweetened Water Preserve (13 acres)
4. Norton Fields Preserve (21 acres)
5. Edgartown Great Pond Beach (19 acres), jointly owned with TNC
6. Katama Point Preserve (2 acres)
7. Poucha Pond Reservation (152 acres)
8. Tom’s Neck Preserve & Farm (38 acres)

The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR):

9. Wasque Reservation (189 acres)

Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR):

10. Joseph Sylvia State Beach
11. South Beach (90 acres)
12. Manuel F. Correllus State Forest (2725 acres)

Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game:

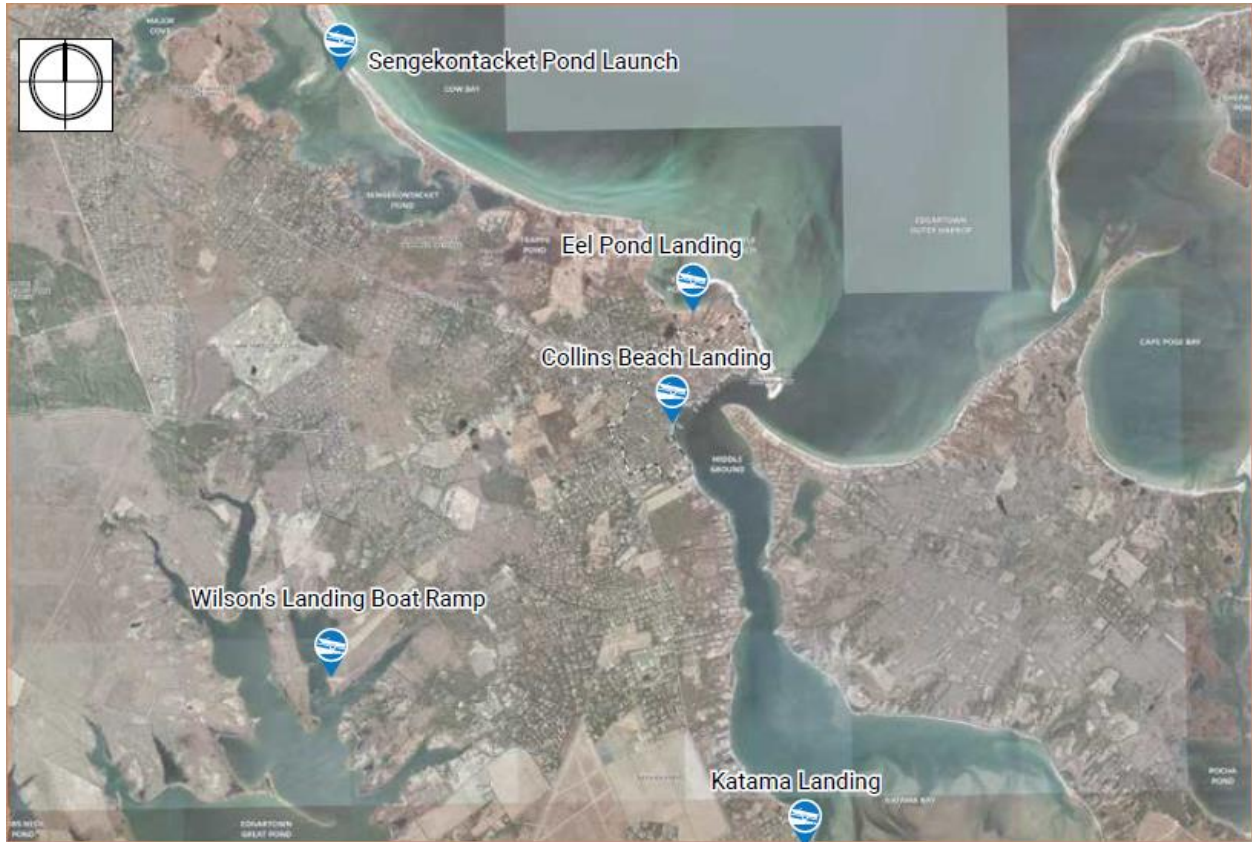
13. Katama Plains Natural Heritage Area (23 acres)
14. Katama Boat Landing – 2 acres, with a boat launch and recreational shellfishing access point; small beach included

County of Dukes County:

15. Norton Point Beach (243 acres)



PUBLIC LANDINGS



Boat landings and launches are important components of water access. As listed above, the five public landings in Edgartown are: The Boulevard Boat Landing (at Sengekontacket Pond), Wilson's Landing (at the Edgartown Great Pond), Collins Beach & Landing (downtown), Eel Pond Landing (accessible from downtown) and Katama Landing,

The Boulevard Boat launch is a sand beach launch where smaller boats can be put into Sengekontacket Pond. There are moorings available at the location, however, access to the ocean is limited by the height of the big bridge. There is some parking available at the beach, and some additional parking along the Boulevard.

Wilson's Landing gives boaters access South Beach via the Great Pond. Collins Beach is next to the Reading Room, off South Water Street. Small boats can be launched from the beach for direct access to the Harbor. The Eel Pond ramp is currently an asphalt ramp located at the end of Pease's Point Way. The Town has plans to demolish the ramp, which was never properly permitted, and return the area to sand until new launch plans are developed.

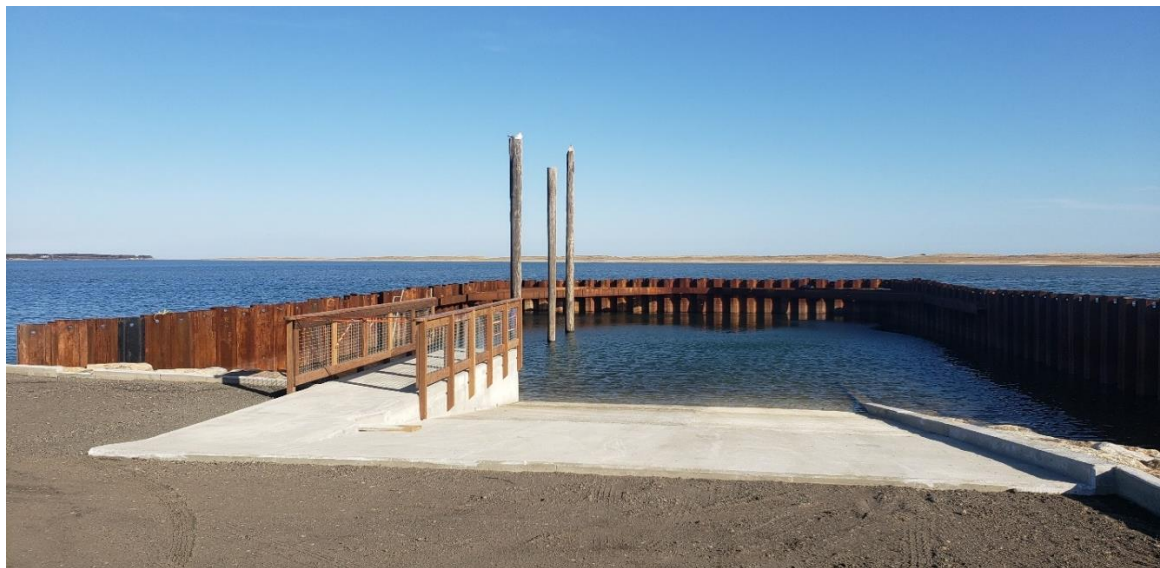
The Katama Boat Launch is a paved boat ramp for all types of boats and with a parking lot for over 20 vehicles with trailers. The landing was recently reconstructed; the double-wide launch that is capable of launching the Town dredge by trailer, was open in time for the 2023 summer season. The

project was mostly funded by the State, which owns the landing; the Town contributed \$295,000 to the project total of \$1,460,709.

Katama Landing before 2022/2023 Reconstruction:



Katama Landing After Reconstruction (before silt barrier was removed and floating docks installed):



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Edgartown's various open spaces should be conserved to every extent possible. Existing areas, such as Lighthouse Park, can be improved to enhance the visitor's experience. Additional important areas should be identified and prioritized for conservation to ensure that Edgartown sustains its beautiful vistas and abundant flora and fauna. The recreational potential of existing open space should be documented so that if regulations or restrictions are needed, they can be implemented to protect the resources and ensure they remain accessible for many years to come.

Currently, there is no public launch on Chappaquiddick. Based on feedback from residents, there is a desire to have a public boat launch for Chappaquiddick residents to be able to launch their boats from the smaller island. It is recommended that the Town explore building a boat launch for public use on Chappaquiddick.

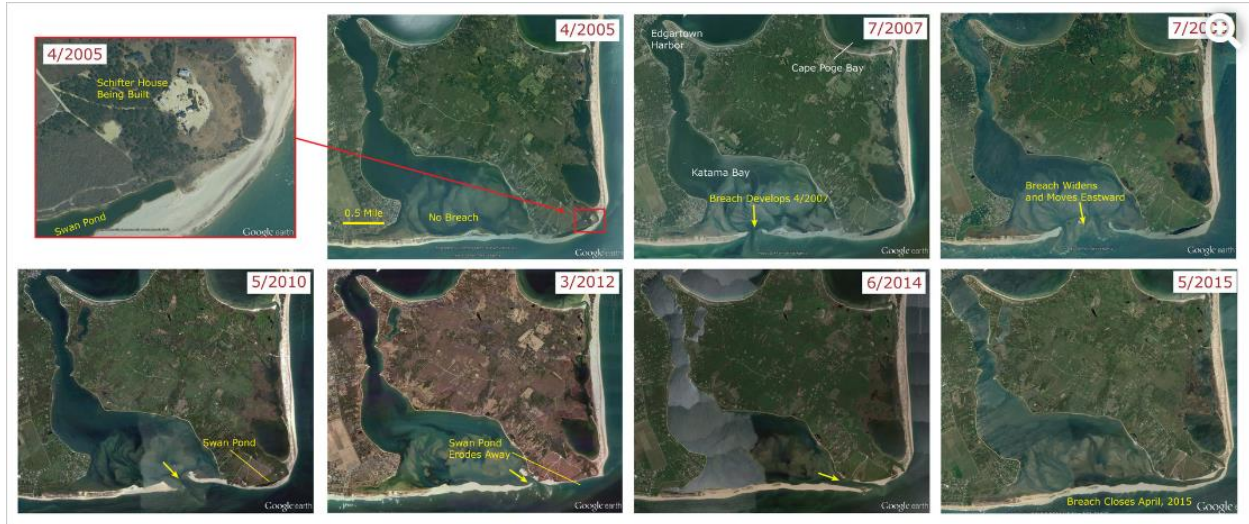
Beaches

The Town of Edgartown has been at the forefront of coastal management practices for over three decades and prides itself on managing and maintaining healthy beaches for recreational purposes as well as protection of infrastructure and roadways along the developed shorelines. The Town works tirelessly to enhance the resiliency of the many miles of coastline to protect private and public property from the effects of coastal hazards, climate change and sea level rise. The Town has spent thousands of dollars over the past thirty years on numerous beach nourishment and dune restoration projects with beneficial reuse of sand from local dredging projects. The Town often partners with other local stakeholders including The Trustees of Reservations, Dukes County, MA Department of Conservation & Recreation, Sheriffs Meadow Foundation, Martha's Vineyard Land Bank, the Great Pond Foundation and local homeowners on coastal resilience projects to maximize effectiveness and provide cost savings for all project proponents.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Beaches in Edgartown include:

- Norton Point



Norton Point Beach is an important barrier beach between Katama Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. It is approximately 2.5 miles long, and its width varies from 95 feet to approximately 300 feet. Owned by the County of Dukes County and previously managed by TTOR for nearly 2 decades, the Edgartown Parks Department took over management in early 2023. Since that time the Town has drafted a Beach Management plan and hired a Beach Director.

Norton Point Beach provides over sand access to Chappaquiddick and vehicles can park with a day or season permit during summer. The beach provides important nesting habitat for variety of bird species and is a popular fishing location, especially during the annual Martha’s Vineyard Striped Bass and Bluefish Derby.

Overall, Norton Point is losing an average of 10 feet per year, but this is a localized phenomenon. The eastern part of the beach has eroded significantly in the past five years. The large dunes (up to 16 feet above sea level) that survived Hurricane Bob in 1991 and remained stable through the 1990s are now completely gone, and the beach that was 500 to 600 feet wide is now 200 to 300 feet wide. This erosion contrasts to the western half of the beach, which generally has re-established a wide beach between the dunes and ocean. There is also an annual cycle of erosion and accretion. Storms with strong southerly winds tend to take sand from the beach and deposit it in an off-shore sand bar, while calmer seas tend to move sand back onto the beach from the off-shore bar. Generally, this means that the beach erodes between the hurricane season that starts in August and the middle of winter, while it accretes between the middle of winter and early summer. This conveniently leaves a wide beach for the summer.

- South Beach

South Beach (also known as Katama Beach) is a free public beach that extends 3.5 miles east of Norton Point Beach. South Beach is watched over by lifeguards and park patrol in the summer season. There are portable restroom facilities but no concessions or refreshments. Parking for the beach is free along Atlantic Avenue and in two large lots at the western end of the beach, known as Right Fork. (The eastern end of the beach is referred to as Left Fork). To avoid the ordeal of finding a parking spot during the busy summer months, visitors can use the public #8 bus from downtown Edgartown. Alternatively, there is a paved bike path that begins at the intersection of Pease’s Point Way South (which turns into Katama Rd.) and South Water Street (which becomes Clevelandtown Rd.)

South Beach suffers from erosion, and the Town has utilized dredge renourishment material numerous times in recent years to reinforce the dunes. Stabilizing the dunes and protecting Atlantic Drive has become a priority for the Town as sea level rise and storm events threaten the integrity of the dunes, and thus the road and residences that are currently protected by them. Damage to Atlantic Drive from a January 2024 storm is shown below:



A culvert along Atlantic Drive in Edgartown failed, closing the road indefinitely.

- Lighthouse Beach & Fuller Street Beach

Looking out over the Edgartown Outer Harbor toward Chappaquiddick Island, Lighthouse Beach has calm waters in the summer and splendid views. One of the main attractions is the Lighthouse, which many people come to see. The beach is otherwise pretty quiet and a great spot to enjoy the views of sailboats in the harbor and the ocean. The beach is dominated by anglers during September and October due to its prime location for fishing the tides as they ebb and flow from the Harbor.



Fuller Street Beach connects to Lighthouse Beach to the north. Accessed by following Fuller Street to the very end, there is minimal parking for this public beach but its proximity to downtown makes it easily accessible by foot or bike. The Town works hard to maintain this dynamic beach with nourishment material dredged from nearby Eel Pond and by trucking in sand from other dredged locations.

- **Bend in the Road**

Bend in the Road Beach is located immediately south of State Beach (which is owned and managed by (Dukes County). It has Cow Bay and the Atlantic Ocean on one side and the sheltered inland Sengekontacket Pond on the other. Families can enjoy safe swimming due to the gently sloping shoreline and calm waters. It's a top spot for fishing in summer and fall. Bend in the Road Beach is managed by the Edgartown Parks Department, who employs lifeguards for the summer months. The beach is in desperate need of toilet facilities from June – August.

- **East Beach**



East Beach is located on Chappaquiddick Island. The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) acquired the property in 1993. DMF preserves fishing access to the legendary Wasque Point surf-fishing waters. Bluefish and striped bass are common targets among recreational fishermen. The property is over 100 acres with a half mile of prime beachfront. The beach links the Wasque Reservation and the Cape Pogue Wildlife Refuge. The Trustees of Reservations manages the area. The group applies a coordinated ecological management effort to the barrier beach ecosystem.

- Wasque

Wasque (“way-skwee”) or Wasque Beach is a 200-acre nature reserve on Chappaquiddick. The site was established as a reservation for the public in 1967 and is one of five conservation areas on the Vineyard managed by The Trustees of Reservations.

Wasque is a land of shifting sands and changing ecology, where sea level rise, ever-fiercer storms, and strong long-shore currents demonstrate their impacts all along the coastline. Today, Wasque is experiencing rapid changes from what many native Vineyarders remember from long ago. Its dry, acidic, sandy soil nurtures an oak and pine forest, sandplain grasslands, and heathlands. Windy conditions, grazing, and fires have kept forests from taking hold here. It’s a place in a constant state of flux, where no two visits are ever quite the same. This southeastern corner of Martha’s Vineyard is a saltwater angler’s paradise. It’s also a superb spot for birdwatching and for strolls along a beautiful shore.

- Chappy Point

This beach, which is owned by the MV Land Bank, is on the Chappaquiddick side of Edgartown Harbor, adjacent to the Chappaquiddick ferry. There can be swift tidal currents and the beach quickly drops off into deep water. Seven hundred feet of beach are preserved here at a location that is easily accessible from the center of Town. The Edgartown Lighthouse and the North Neck Bluffs sit opposite the beach and the Harbor entrance is a parade of boats all summer long. The Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group leases the beach-house here and uses it as a satellite nursery, supplying shellfish spat to seed the Island towns' ponds and lagoons.

- Gardner Property

Purchased by Town in 1976, this 7.9-acre parcel is a potential site for public access development. It has been discussed for many years, including in the 1997 Harbor Plan, as a suitable location for additional dinghy storage or as a possible site to build a public landing/launch for residents of Chappaquiddick.



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Erosion is no surprise anywhere sand can be found along the shore. It is often most pronounced in areas bereft of vegetation as there is nothing to stabilize the dune or beachhead in these areas. Major storm events can punctuate this process, transporting vast amounts of sand out to sea, onto roads or further down the shoreline. Some damage can be restored, but the mounting frequency of these events, compounded by sea level rise, that increasingly puts Edgartown in the crosshairs of climate change. The ocean-facing, southern shore witnesses the fastest rate of erosion across Town, often surpassing an annual loss of 10'.

One important factor is that both sandy beach and dune erosion typically follow a pattern of erosion (storm or seasonal) followed by a period of recovery during which they are naturally replenished. Conversely, bluff erosion is generally episodic, occurring during significant storm events, and once the bluff slope is eroded there is no recovery. It should be noted that some bluff erosion factors, like wind, precipitation, and runoff, may be more constant and not episodic. Additionally, structures such

as residences on cliff tops increase the bearing weight which can cause cliff slope failure. Property owner landscaping practices like replacement of stabilizing vegetation with shallow root species such as grass can also accelerate bluff erosion.

Ponds

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Edgartown has both saltwater and brackish ponds that are vital to the health of the ecosystem and essential to shellfishing and fishing industries. Coastal ponds are unique habitats where the salinity in the pond is reduced by freshwater input. The five main coastal pond systems in Edgartown are:

- Cape Pogue

This 115-acre pond has an average depth of 7.4', with a tidal range of 2'. The water quality is good and eelgrass is present. There are shellfish restoration projects underway and presided over by the Town's Shellfish Department. The area grew in popularity during the pandemic's first summer as boating's popularity trended upward and vessel sales spiked. On a single summer day in 2020, over 400 boats were tallied inside of Cape Pogue.



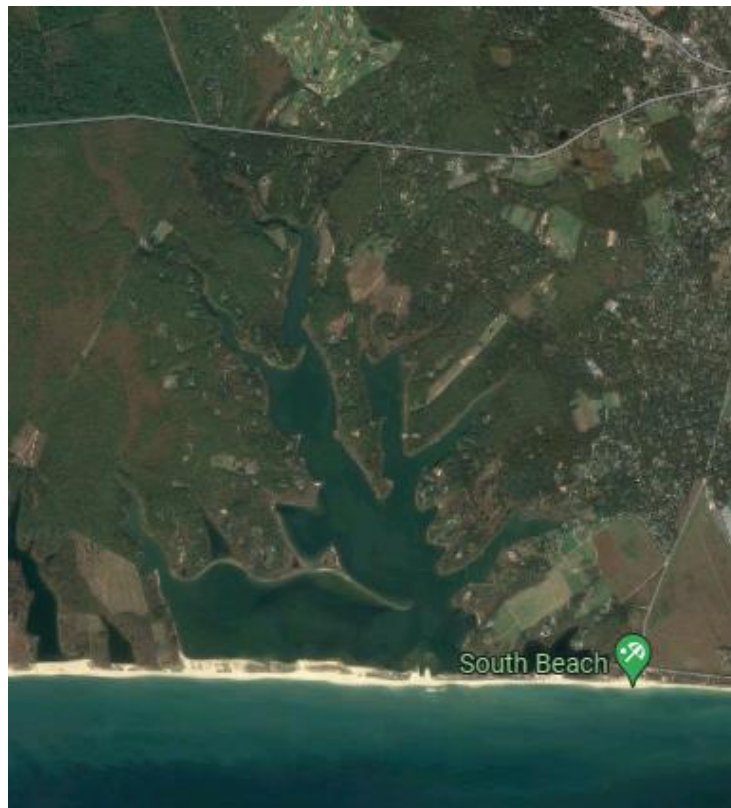
As scallop harvests plummeted across the State in recent decades, Cape Pogue became a source of envy for many former hotbed communities. This area does not yield what it once did, but it still posts between 5-7 thousand bushels/year. This is paralleled by a major uptick in the number of recreational permits issued by the Town – and catch limits have been adjusted accordingly.

Just prior to the pandemic, the Town’s Marine Advisory Committee proposed to cap the number of boats entering the Cape Pogue Bay. The Board of Selectmen opted to forego such a restriction for the summer of 2020, expecting the pandemic to reduce, not increase, traffic in the sensitive area. Yet the summer season played out differently, and competing uses taking place in this area have only come into sharper focus over the past couple of years.

The newfound intensity of use in Cape Pogue has prompted some Town officials to question whether there were existing provisions in place to legitimately enforce the existing guidelines and zoning bylaw regulations. A consensus was reached that they are inadequate; changes to the District of Critical Planning Concern regulations were approved by the Martha’s Vineyard Commission and at the Edgartown Town Meeting to address this issue through charging specific parties to enforce the bylaw, while also reconstituting the District’s Advisory Committee. A subgroup of the members has now been tasked with creating additional rules that will effectively regulate uses in accordance with the goals for the area.

Most recently, a moratorium has been issued for anchoring inside of Cape Pogue. This is expected to protect vulnerable eelgrass stands and reduce the overall volumes of pleasure boaters descending on this sensitive coastal zone.

- Edgartown Great Pond



The Edgartown Great Pond (EGP) is a shallow depression formed in the glacial outwash approximately 10,000 years ago at a time when sea level was more than 300 feet lower than what it is now. As of 1993, the area of the pond was 2.2 km² (544 acres) at low pond with an average depth of 0.9 meters, and 3.6 km² (890 acres) at high pond with an average depth of 1.3 meters. Several finger like coves radiate north out

of the main pond extending deep into the island's interior creating an unusually long total shoreline of 15.5 miles (25 km). The pond generally lies one meter above sea level at high pond except for the three to four times a year when it is artificially opened to the ocean for flushing in the interest of the shellfish harvest. On the ocean side of the pond a narrow barrier beach bravely holds back the mighty Atlantic. The ocean has time, however, and for the last 95 years the beach has moved northward an average of 8.9 feet per year. This northward migration of the beach has cut off Crackatuxet Pond and Job's Neck Pond which both were once part of the Edgartown Great Pond. Since DesBarres mapped the Edgartown Great Pond for the first time in 1776, it is estimated that 60% of the high pond area has been lost to transgression of the shoreline and isolation of the lateral coves.

Because of the pond's large area and shallow depth, it has a very high surface to volume ratio ($A/V == 762$) which provides a relatively large area for exchange of gasses and heat with the atmosphere, evaporation, and penetration of wind and light. This creates an environment that is amenable to benthic organisms (bottom dwellers) such as shellfish. Salinity within the pond varies widely both spatially and temporally. The coves generally have less salt content than the lower pond due to their proximity to the groundwater discharge. Climate and openings to the ocean also affect the salinity of the pond throughout the year.

Edgartown Great Pond is periodically opened to the sea using an excavator in order to lower the Pond level and raise the salinity of the Pond to enhance shellfish production. Three to four times per year is the typical benchmark for maintaining Pond health and preserving the eelgrass ecosystem. Usually the breach in the barrier beach remains open to the sea for several days to several weeks until it is closed by the natural action of the surf. Generally, artificial creation of inlets in barrier beaches is discouraged by law in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. However, in the case of Edgartown Great Pond a special law was enacted in 1949 (Acts, 1949, Chapter 311) permitting this practice. Occasionally, the pond is opened naturally, as it was in early 2024.

- Sengekontacket Pond

Sengekontacket Pond is a complex estuary located within the Towns of Oak Bluffs and Edgartown. Two permanent, constructed inlets connect Sengekontacket Pond to the adjacent Vineyard/Nantucket sound allowing for tidal exchange. Sengekontacket Pond has two embayments that don't fully flush because of their distance from the inlets and restricted channels: Trapp's Pond, and Major's Cove. Sengekontacket supports a thriving commercial and recreational shellfishery, Town aquaculture projects, recreational swimming, and boating.

Public access is provided along 38% of its shore with beach facilities operated by the Town and Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Audubon Society manages 350 acres with 7000 feet of natural shoreline. Parking along the barrier beach accommodates 500 cars providing access to the Pond and Nantucket Sound for boating, fishing, swimming, and shellfishing. Two private golf courses have several holes along the shore, and kitesurfing has become a popular pastime in the Pond.

Water quality in the main basin of Sengekontacket Pond has improved. However, some areas furthest from the inlets continue to have high nutrient levels. This is due to excess nutrient input and limited flushing, which makes these areas more impaired than the sites in the main basin. Commercial and recreational shellfishing in the main basin is supported and has been successful in recent summers. Eelgrass, typically associated with the highest quality waters and estuarine habitat, is found in several areas of Sengekontacket, but with nitrogen levels higher than the threshold of 0.35 mg/L, the existing eelgrass is showing signs of stress and decline.

- Katama Bay

Katama Bay is a coastal pond that lies entirely within the Town of Edgartown, watershed included. This body of water separates the main Island from Chappaquiddick. Katama Bay has been productive for many species of shellfish including oyster cultures, quahogs, soft-shelled clams, and some bay scallops. There are also twelve commercial oyster aquaculture farms in the pond.



Katama Bay's only outlet when the southern barrier beach is closed is the Harbor entrance. Water quality in Katama Bay has been commendable the past couple of summers. Although nutrient levels and pigment are low, they continue to slowly mount with each successive year following closure of the southern breach. Monitoring should continue to ensure conditions remain at a sustainable level in the Bay. The commercial oyster farms are likely a factor in helping to keep the water quality high and the nutrients under control; aquaculture in the Bay should continue to be supported by the Town.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

The water quality of Martha's Vineyard's ponds has received significant attention in recent decades. With the exception of Cape Pogue and Katama Bay, all of Edgartown's remaining ponds are nitrogen-impaired. Given the ubiquity of Title 5 septic systems, nitrogen contribution will remain a threat to the ponds' ecologic stability until higher performing systems reach critical mass.

On the other hand, Edgartown has invested mightily in a wastewater treatment plant and dredging activities. These are the two forces best poised to neutralize the many sources of nitrogen. Yet for all their treatment and flushing capacity, the ponds remain at risk of being impaired. This could change in the upcoming decades if the barrier beaches are overtaken by sea level rise and the ponds are no longer surrounded in near entirety by shoreline. The ability to migrate backwards with rising seas depends on the rate of sea level rise. A gradual increase can be sustained, but the beaches' integrity is in jeopardy if the rate of erosion accelerates.

Water quality is a common concern for coastal water bodies that are poorly or infrequently flushed by the tides. The four primary categories of concern include: nutrient enrichment; toxic metals; fecal material; and hydrocarbons and pesticides. In 2020, cyanobacteria – a type of blue- green algae - became a highly charged issue owing to a bloom found on Chilmark Pond. Wintucket Cove in EGP was sampled shortly thereafter and alarmingly high concentrations of cyanobacteria linked with a troubling neurotoxin was found. Yet, the Pond made gains on the pathogen reduction front as its waters were delisted from MassDEP’s impairment list in 2020, poising shellfish to once again be harvested and the Pond to return to recreational use.

Salt Marshes



—Photo by Alison Shaw

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Extensive marshes remain in Edgartown: on Chappaquiddick, in Pocha Pond and Cape Pogue Bay, and between Oak Bluffs and Edgartown, in Sengekontacket, where they are protected by a long barrier beach (State Beach). Other patches can be found hugging inlets and shorelines of Katama Bay and scattered in nooks across the ponds.

These landscapes are more protected now, and their losses have slowed thanks to federal and state legislation. But drawing lines around the marsh doesn’t prevent it from migrating and changing in dramatic and sometimes alarming ways. Marshes are highly adaptable, but one thing they have not evolved to do is stay still.

Edgartown’s extensive saltwater resource nourishes its rich shellfish industry, provides wildlife habitat, and offers many recreational opportunities. Although the Town owns very little salt marsh, enlightened private ownership has historically protected such areas. Regulations serve to protect the salt marsh community and adjacent land from uses that could impair their value to the shellfish industry or destroy the coastal environment. The important legislation protecting these resources include: the Town’s Wetlands Protection by-law; the state’s Coastal Wetlands Restrictions Act (Ch. 130:105); the state’s Wetlands Protection Act (Ch. 131:40) administered by the Conservation Commission; and the Martha’s Vineyard Commission’s Coastal DCPC; the Cape Pogue DCPC, and the Edgartown Ponds DCPC.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

The Vulnerability Plan notes that salt marshes have important benefits, including coastal flood protection for inland areas. The Vulnerability Plan predicts a significant loss (50%) of Edgartown’s salt marsh areas by 2070. Areas that are now irregularly flooded are likely to become more regularly flooded or to become tidal flats. The open water areas in Edgartown are predicted to increase by 671 acres by 2070. Edgartown’s salt marsh systems have limited ability to migrate in response to sea level rise due to steep topography in some areas. Therefore, it will be important for the Town to support salt marsh migration where it can occur by removing barriers and limiting development in potential future salt marsh areas. Some of these locations are on existing conservation land (e.g., Sheriff’s Meadow Foundation, Trustees of Reservations, etc.), one is on Town owned land (at the southeastern end of Sengekontacket Pond), and some are on private property. Undeveloped land already protected for conservation purposes will likely need no additional action. For the Town owned parcel, steps should be taken to provide additional protections if they are not already in place. For privately owned property with the potential to support future salt marsh migration, the Town can take steps to ensure that these areas remain undeveloped. Not only will avoiding development in these areas promote all the benefits of salt marsh migration and continued health, but it is also likely to be in the property owners’ best interests to avoid developing portions of their property that will likely be intertidal in the coming decades. The Edgartown Planning Board and Conservation Commission should review their bylaws and regulations to determine whether required setbacks should be increased or other changes should be made.



The Vulnerability Plan notes that Massachusetts currently makes it very difficult to add dredged sand or other material to raise the elevation of existing salt marshes. This means that eventually the salt marsh platforms may become too low in the tidal range to support salt marsh vegetation. The Plan says that elevation enhancement (e.g., thin layer deposition) could be a long-term management action if changes in Massachusetts regulations allow it in the future.

Dunes & Bluffs

Different strategies will be applicable for dunes as opposed to bluffs. Dunes can be replenished and rebuilt, either as sand-only dunes or with a core of either natural or synthetic material to increase their ability to resist intense storms. The sand that covers the core may erode, but the core material will resist, and the sand can be replenished. Dune building is an important tool to improve coastal resiliency at many areas and different shoreline types in Edgartown.

Bluffs are different from dunes because they were formed by glacial action. They cannot be rebuilt once lost. They can be stabilized by “toe protection.” This can be sand, rock, or geotextiles placed along the lower portion of a bluff to protect it from direct wave energy. Selection of a type of toe stabilization will depend on a combination of site needs, engineering guidance, stakeholder input, and regulatory requirements.

Preserving Edgartown’s beaches and coast into the future for as long as possible should be a primary goal. Nature based breakwaters to reduce exposure to waves should also be considered for some locations.

HIGHLIGHT: EDGARTOWN DREDGING PROGRAM

The Edgartown Dredge Department was established in 1995 and dredging has occurred every dredging season since that time. The Dredge Department has three primary objectives: Maintain and improve navigation, promote water quality, and protect Town beaches through utilization of dredged sand as renourishment material.

The Dredge Committee considers projects on an annual basis and utilizes the guidance of the Shellfish Constable and the Harbormaster to determine dredging locations. The Department also relies on guidance from the Conservation Agent and the Parks Department to determine the areas that are most in need of nourishment. The Town has a 10-Year Comprehensive Permit that includes 14 dredging sites and over 18 nourishment locations, so the dredged material is utilized as renourishment material whenever possible, even if it has to be trucked to the nourishment site. The Comprehensive Permit also includes a few dredging locations in the Town of Oak Bluffs, so the permit is jointly held between the two Towns. For projects in other towns, the Committee welcomes requests for dredging from the island's Harbormasters and Conservation Agents at any time.

The Dredge Committee balances the priorities of the Town of Edgartown beaches and waterways with the financial benefit of revenue-generating projects in other towns, as well as considering the exposure of certain areas to winter storms and winds and other risks to the equipment, and the scope of the project being requested.

The Vulnerability Plan approves of the Edgartown dredging and beach nourishment programs, and says the Town should continue to nourish key public beaches into the future, especially the Fuller Street Beach

which protects the harbor, the areas that protect Beach Road, and Norton Point because it is the access point for the only over-land route to Chappaquiddick and it protects Katama Bay. These beaches provide important protection, and they are also some of the main income generators for the Town as most visitors come to Edgartown for the coastal experience. Nourishing these beaches improves their resiliency and longevity and ensures the continuation of these vital economic drivers.



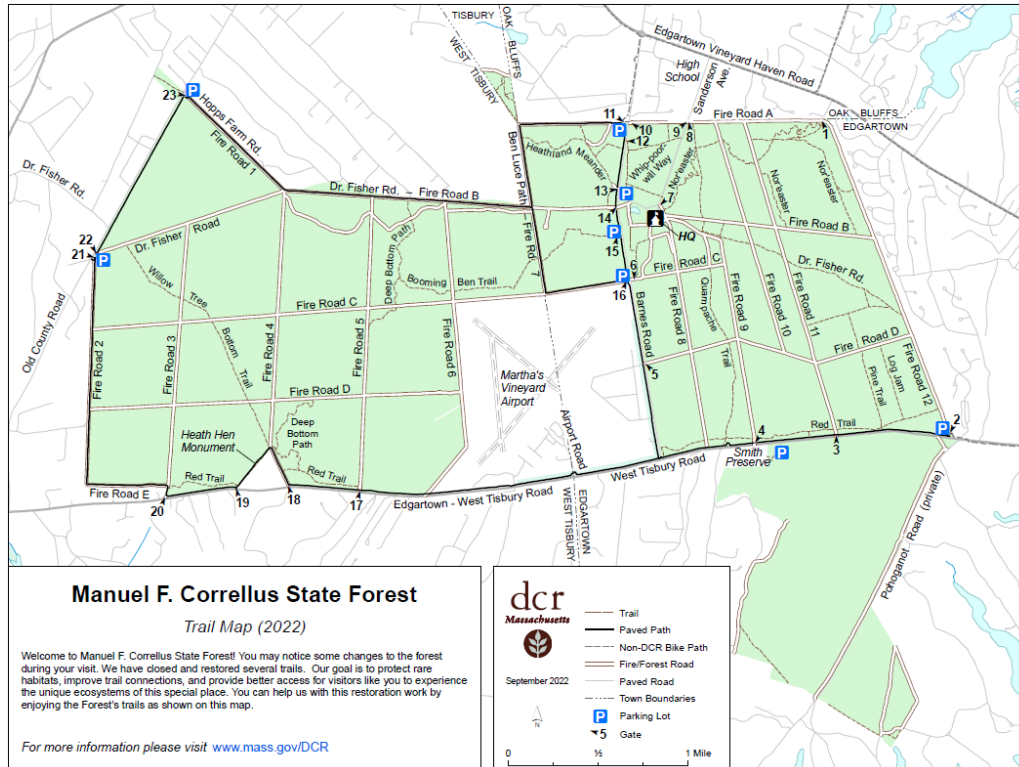
State Forest

EXISTING CONDITIONS

This over 5,300-acre forest sits in the center of Martha's Vineyard. The forest borders Martha's Vineyard Airport on three sides and is chiefly in the Towns of West Tisbury and Edgartown. The forest is managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR). It offers miles of trails, a paved shared-use path, and a disc golf course.

The State Forest as a “forest” is a relatively recent development; for thousands of years the area was a low-growing sandplain habitat, maintained through controlled burns by indigenous people to encourage the growth of berries and medicinal plants. The area has also been subject to widespread land clearing for farming and other purposes, and is not considered old-growth. It is sandy, its soil nutrient poor and fast draining, its scrub oak prairies prone to ferocious wildfires. And yet, against all odds, the 5,300-acre property at the heart of the Island is a flourishing refuge of biodiversity. It is home to the most diverse plant and insect and animal species of any state property; about 30 species living in the forest are endangered or threatened in the state. Most of those species depend on the property’s unique ecological conditions.

It's perhaps more known for the heath hen, the famous denizen that went extinct in 1932, than for any of its surviving species. At the center of the park, there's a statue honoring the last habitat for the heath hen, Created in 1908 as the Heath Hen Reserve, the original purpose of the reservation was to prevent the extinction of the heath hen, a type of grouse that lived in the pine barrens of New England. Unfortunately, by late 1938 the last heath hen had disappeared from the forest and the species was officially classified as extinct. The forest later took the name of the superintendent who ran it from 1948 to 1987, Manuel F. Correllus.



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

There are some non-native evergreen plantations on the Edgartown side of the State Forest. DCR would likely only permit their removal if it were coupled with a concerted effort to propagate more native vegetation. This may get additional traction if it can be paired with wildfire risk reduction.

Frequent fires have been a problem in the Correllus State Forest. Between 1867 and 1929 there were sixteen fires of more than 1,000 acres (400 ha) each on Martha's Vineyard. In 2003, the DCR, in conjunction with the University of Massachusetts began evaluating methods for controlling fuel sources in the pitch pine and scrub oak areas. Methods included thinning of pitch pine stands, mowing of shrub understories, and grazing of regrowth by sheep. In 2008, about 110 acres (45 ha) of dead red pine were removed to reduce fuel loading and to restore pitch pine–scrub oak sand plain through USDA Forest Service funding. The island's climate, seasonal weather patterns (i.e. drought), dry soils and expansive areas of forest and shrub lands make wildfire a significant potential threat. The MVC estimates that close to 2,000 privately-owned properties may be vulnerable to damage by wildfire. Public awareness and vegetation management within the State Forest feature prominently in the MVC's wildfire mitigation strategy.

To mitigate that risk, the State maintains a grid of fire lanes throughout the forest, sandy roads regularly mowed for emergency vehicle access and to break up the forest into discrete sections, preventing unfettered fire spread. An unintended side effect of lane maintenance has been to preserve some of the old sandplain conditions. The Town should actively encourage DCR to do more to manage vegetation because prevailing winds will bring embers from a fire towards Edgartown.

Agriculture

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Agricultural activities, once central to the Island's economy and lifestyle, have seriously declined. In the 19th century, most of the Island was farmland. Now there are only about 1,000 acres of farmland left, only a third of which is permanently protected. This translates into a loss of jobs and availability of local foods. It also undermines the rural character of the Island represented, in part, by the presence of farms along roadsides, the Farmers' Market and the Ag Fair.

Although representing just a fraction of the land from previous generations, many areas of the Vineyard are still strongly associated with farming. Farming evokes scenic, economic, and cultural sensibilities. These are among the reasons to work to preserve the remaining working farms and to provide for the possibility for prime agricultural land to be returned to farming.

Ensuring that farming continues to flourish in Edgartown is a multifaceted challenge involving land preservation, the logistics and economics of farm operations, and processing, distribution, and marketing, as well as the difficulty of finding and housing workers. Securing permanently affordable land for farming is by far one of the biggest challenges. It is difficult to conserve working land and make it available at a reasonable cost for uses that have difficulty competing economically with other kinds of development. The creation of farm fields and community garden plots for growing food on the island should be promoted through public investment and private partnership.

- Morning Glory Farm

Morning Glory Farm (MGF), started in 1975 by James and Deborah Athearn, grows about 70 acres of vegetables and small fruits. Small successive plantings of a wide variety of crops supply the farm stand from May through December. Crops include sweet corn, lettuce, carrots, beets, tomatoes, melons, potatoes, beans, squash, pumpkins, and more. The farm also cultivates four acres of cut flowers and small plantings of strawberries, grapes, peaches, and beach plums.

Beef cows are kept on pastures in Chilmark and at Katama Farm. MGF harvests 45 acres of hay and manages 130 acres of rotationally grazed pastures; eggs, pork, lamb and fresh, pasture raised chickens are also raised to sell at the farm stand.

Twenty-five acres of vegetable fields are farmed using only natural fertilizers and no synthetic pesticides, and the rest of the land is treated with a minimum of pesticides utilizing sound soil management techniques and with attention to the long term health of the soil.

- Slough Farm

Slough Farm is a nonprofit educational farm and gathering place named for Slough Cove of the Edgartown Great Pond. Regenerative agriculture is practiced and taught on the working farm,

which is committed to the integration of small-scale, sustainable farming and the arts through place based educational programming.

Poultry, sheep, and cattle provide meat and eggs, much of which is donated across the Vineyard in collaboration with Island schools, The Family Center, Island Grown Initiative, the Island Food Pantry, and other fellow members of the Food Equity Network.

- Katama Farm

The Town has doubled down on its commitment to preserve its agricultural heritage through a recently revamped lease arrangement for the largest working farm owned by a municipality on the Island. This public-private partnership now ensures the site and operations are primarily focused on active farming.

For all its hardscrabble trappings, the opportunity to cultivate this vast piece of windswept land generated compelling proposals from different private entities and public mission driven organizations in 2020. The Town amplified the active farming priority for this tract, instigating great interest from entities – both incumbent and burgeoning - across the local food economy.

The previous tenant – The Trustees of Reservations - remains part of the fold and this next chapter in Katama Farm’s story is off to a great start. Alongside the South Shore, the land is being put to work. There are dedicated zones for grazing, acreage for growing, and seasonal hay harvesting, all of which is managed with a newfound commitment to soil stewardship. The Trustees aim to sublease portions of their tracts, with preference given to Island-based growing operations.

The Trustees will also build on their educational programming efforts. This facet is an apt complement to the farm’s agricultural production in that the farm is high profile in the community – not just for its size, but for its visibility. Any form of education or programming showcasing the working farm is likely to reach a community that is keenly aware the farm is a cornerstone of the Town’s culture and heritage.

- Muskoday Farm

This 28-acre farm is a cooperative acquisition between the Town of Edgartown and the MV Land Bank. The land was conserved because of its superior soils — which would have been wasted by more suburban development. Trails loop around the field and connect out to the Herring Creek Road, the Katama Road and Crocker Drive.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

In order to protect the Island’s rich agricultural heritage, all of the towns should encourage local food production and acknowledge the importance of working to improve access to adequate storage and distribution areas.

Simple ways to encourage food production can be achieved by repurposing smaller, otherwise unbuilt lots, as community garden spaces for small-scale gardening operations. Edgartown can also make more downtown locations available for local grocers and farmers’ markets to sell their goods. On a larger scale, it should be a priority to enhance infrastructure for the marketing of locally grown produce and to improve the distribution system by working with local food producers and buyers. One way to tackle this in conjunction with the other towns, would be to create an overarching Vineyard Agricultural Commission (AgCom) to help coordinate ongoing efforts by individual organizations and take on new responsibilities to further agriculture on the island: advocate for the local agricultural community, encourage the pursuit of agriculture, promote agriculture based economic opportunities, preserve, revitalize, and sustain

agricultural businesses and land, develop trust and a working relationship among farmers, residents, Town boards, and other institutions

Amendments to zoning can be used to support and encourage agritourism activities and the production of value-added agricultural products.

Waste Reduction

The volume of waste the Island disposes of is an energy intensive and, thus, costly operation. Currently the Island ships 33,500 tons of trash off Island each year, accounting for 15 percent of the Steamship Authority's freight traffic, or one in seven freight trips. The Vineyard's generation of waste is growing much faster than its year-round population.

Edgartown is a member of the Martha's Vineyard Refuse Disposal & Resource Recovery District (MVRRD), which handles waste management for Edgartown, West Tisbury, Chilmark and Aquinnah. In addition, several private companies are involved in collection, consolidation, and off Island shipment of waste, independent of any governmental functions. Each Town has its own waste transfer station, often at former landfill sites, all of which incorporate options for recycling.

The Towns should be cooperating with the other five towns and MVRRD to develop high-volume composting operations. Other operations to reduce waste transport off island should be explored, such as ways to process woodchips for mulch, trees for firewood, and the reuse of construction materials.

CHAPTER 4: Economic Development in the Historic District & Beyond

The Town of Edgartown has a seasonal and tourist based economy driven by the Town's natural environment, most notably, the expansive Harbor. Edgartown has a stunning and economically vibrant downtown that is fueled by the harbor, which contributes to many open space and recreation activities as well as water transportation needs. The attraction of the harbor and historic downtown Edgartown bring in hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Town annually, supporting businesses, many of which are local businesses.

The Harbor & Working Waterfront

Harbor operations include the administration of over 900 moorings, including both annual permits and transient rentals, 75 docking slips, the Town's pump-out service, launch services, oversight of anchorage areas, and emergency response, to name a few. The operations of the Harbormaster Department bring in nearly \$800,000 a year in revenue for the Town.

There are 10 commercial fishing boats operating out of the harbor, as well as 8 charter fishing boats, several tour boats, and two ferries. The Edgartown Police and Fire Departments, as well as the Massachusetts Environmental Police, maintain a year-round presence on the harbor.

The Harbormaster Department, physically located at North Wharf, employs four full-time year-round employees and an additional 18 full-time, seasonal employees. The Harbormaster Department maintains the public bathrooms and showers located at North Wharf, as well as the transient dockage available to visitors.

While providing crucial economic benefit, the expanding visitor-based economy is occupying an ever-increasing proportion of the land and buildings once utilized by true working waterfront functions. This competition for space exacerbates an already existential challenge for the remaining working waterfront operations in Edgartown.

MEMORIAL WHARF

Located across from the Old Sculpin Gallery on Dock Street, is a former steamboat dock which the Town undertook a grassroots effort to purchase in 1938. It was an important effort as the wharf is now the only deep-water public access point to the harbor. Memorial Wharf has served as the Town's connection to the world for the past century; it provides a public space for recreational activities such as fishing, as well as a berthing spot for recreational and commercial boating, and a landing for the Falmouth - Edgartown Ferry (the "Pied Piper") which operates from Memorial Day to Labor Day. In addition to providing shelter for those waiting for the Pied Piper passengers, the wharf is also located directly next to the iconic Chappaquiddick ("Chappy") Ferry.

The wharf hosts a two-story pavilion with benches and picnic tables and is one of the Town's most prized public assets. It is a popular gathering spot for artists, tourists, musicians, and residents who seek stunning views of Edgartown Harbor. It also serves as the home base for Kids' Fishing Derbies as well as the elementary schools' outdoor class for environmental educational programs.

In the past six years the wharf has undergone two significant renovations. In 2017, the pavilion was upgraded and brought to code. Improvements included new railings, stairs, decking, roofing, siding and a reinforcement of the existing structure with custom steel brackets. Then, in September 2021, in anticipation of rising seas, the Town kicked off a multi-million-dollar project to raise the entire pier structure. The upgraded pavilion was relocated to the parking lot while the pier was raised two feet. The project was completed in early July 2022. The second phase of construction was supported by the MA Seaport Economic Council who awarded the Town a \$1 million grant to complete the work. The photo below shows the wharf under construction right after the pavilion was moved back onto its new bulkhead and pier.



NORTH WHARF

The North Wharf is a Town-owned public pier at the end of Morse St. in downtown Edgartown. The site hosts a building that is shared between the Edgartown Harbormaster Department and Safe Harbor Marinas, which has an easement for use of a portion of the building and a portion of the bulkhead for marina operations. Safe Harbor operates a Travelift on site, which provides the only deep-water hauling capability on the harbor.

The location also hosts the only fuel dock in Edgartown Harbor. The fuel dock has been operated by R.M. Packer Fuel since 1946. The North Wharf fuel dock attracts boaters from Nantucket, Cape Cod and Southeast Massachusetts because it consistently provides reasonably priced fuel.

For the past 25 years, the bulkhead, timber walkways and parking lot have remained in poor condition and the area has needed repairs to improve public safety and maintain the essential harbor operations that are provided at the site. Repairs began in November 2023 and will include removing the timber walkways adjacent to the wharf on the southern and eastern faces, and a portion of the Travelift pier to allow for sheet pile to be driven as close to the wall as possible. The sections of the Travelift pier that

need to be removed will include the decking, pile caps, and 15 piles. These sections need to be replaced to maintain the function of the Travelift pier. The northeast and southeast corners of the parking lot will be excavated to add in a tieback system for the sheet pile. Once the sheet pile is driven and tiebacks are installed, the timber walkways, section of the Travelift pier, and fender system can be replaced, and the parking lot will be re-graded and paved. The new bulkhead has been engineered so that additional height can be added (up to 4 feet) in the future to protect the area from storm surges and rising sea levels. The rehabilitation project is expected to be completed in early April 2024.



The North Wharf under construction, January 2024

THE EDGARTOWN LIGHTHOUSE



The Edgartown Lighthouse is located on the western side of Edgartown's inner harbor, opposite Chappaquiddick Island. Originally the lighthouse was on a granite block foundation off the beach and reached by a wooden walkway. Because of frequent damage by storms, the wooden walkway was replaced by a stone breakwater. Today the area has been filled in by shifting sand.

Edgartown Lighthouse possesses integrity of design, materials, setting and workmanship, as well as associations with the development of aids to navigation in Massachusetts. Constructed in 1875, it is a well-preserved example of the cast iron lights which typify that period. It was moved from Ipswich to Edgartown in 1939 and has therefore lost integrity of location, it still retains some associations with its original site (Ipswich) and also continues to mark a site (Edgartown) which has been characterized by a beacon since 1828.

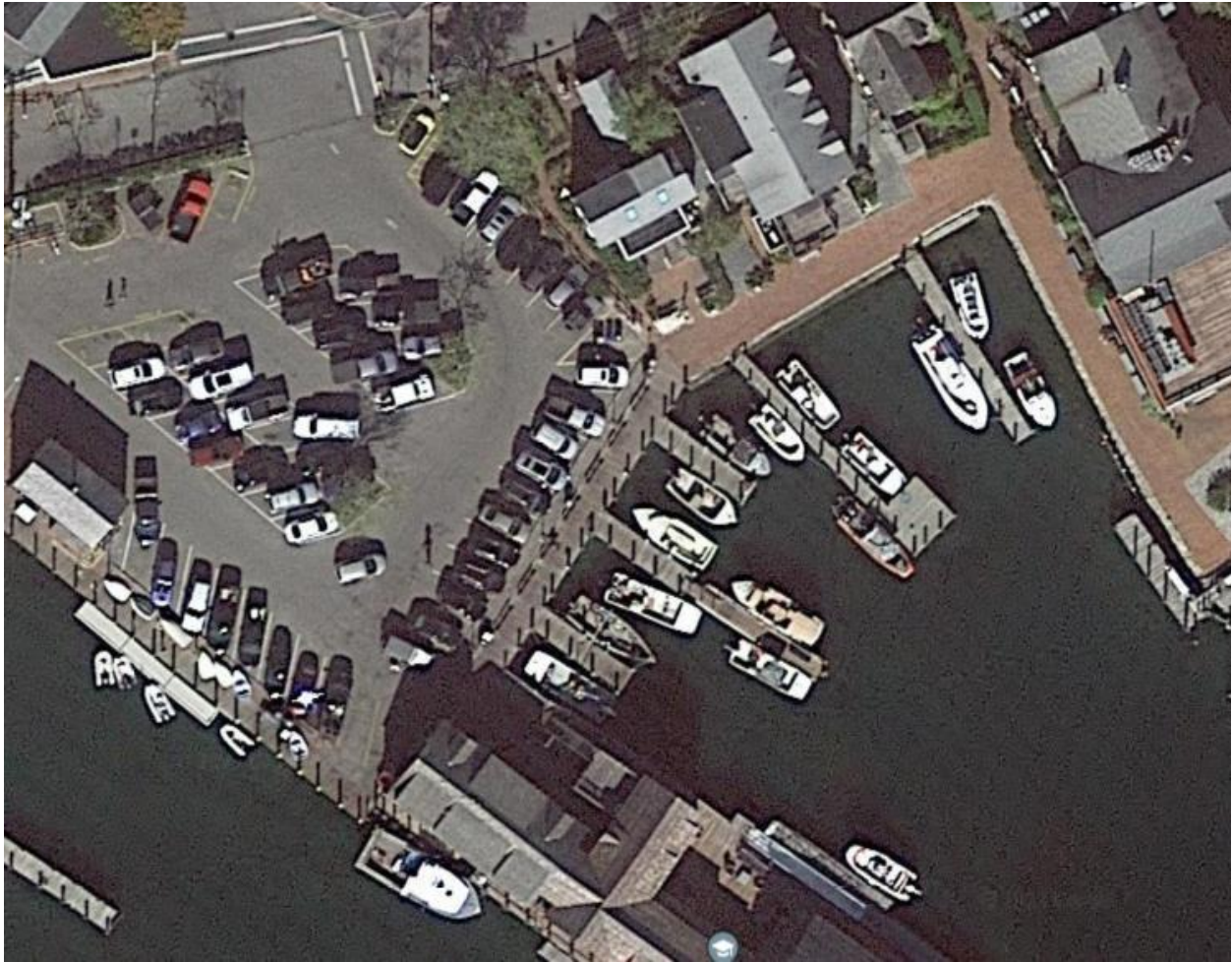
In 2023, Edgartown voters approved funding for a complete overhaul of the Lighthouse. The Town will oversee construction with support from the MV Museum, which has managed the Lighthouse's annual operations and maintenance since 2004.



FINGER PIERS/DINGHY DOCK

In addition to Memorial and North Wharf, the Town owns two downtown access points to the harbor. The first is the area between the Edgartown Yacht Club and the next bulkhead over. This area is commonly referred to as the “Finger Piers”, and it offers a pick-up and drop-off location for charter and fishing boats. It is also the pick-up location for the launch service, which delivers people to their moored vessels in the inner and outer harbor.

The other access point is the area between the Atlantic Restaurant and the Yacht Club. This area is where transient dinghy dockage is offered. In the summer months, dinghies can be stacked four or five deep in this area. As noted in the 2024 update of the Town’s Harbor Plan, additional locations for dinghy tie-up should be explored.



OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKING WATERFRONT FUNCTIONS

Edgartown should work to expand its economy past its current mostly visitor based economy and should vigorously pursue efforts to support working waterfront functions. Every effort should be made to ensure that the harbor and its related infrastructure are adequately reserved for these uses. New uses near the

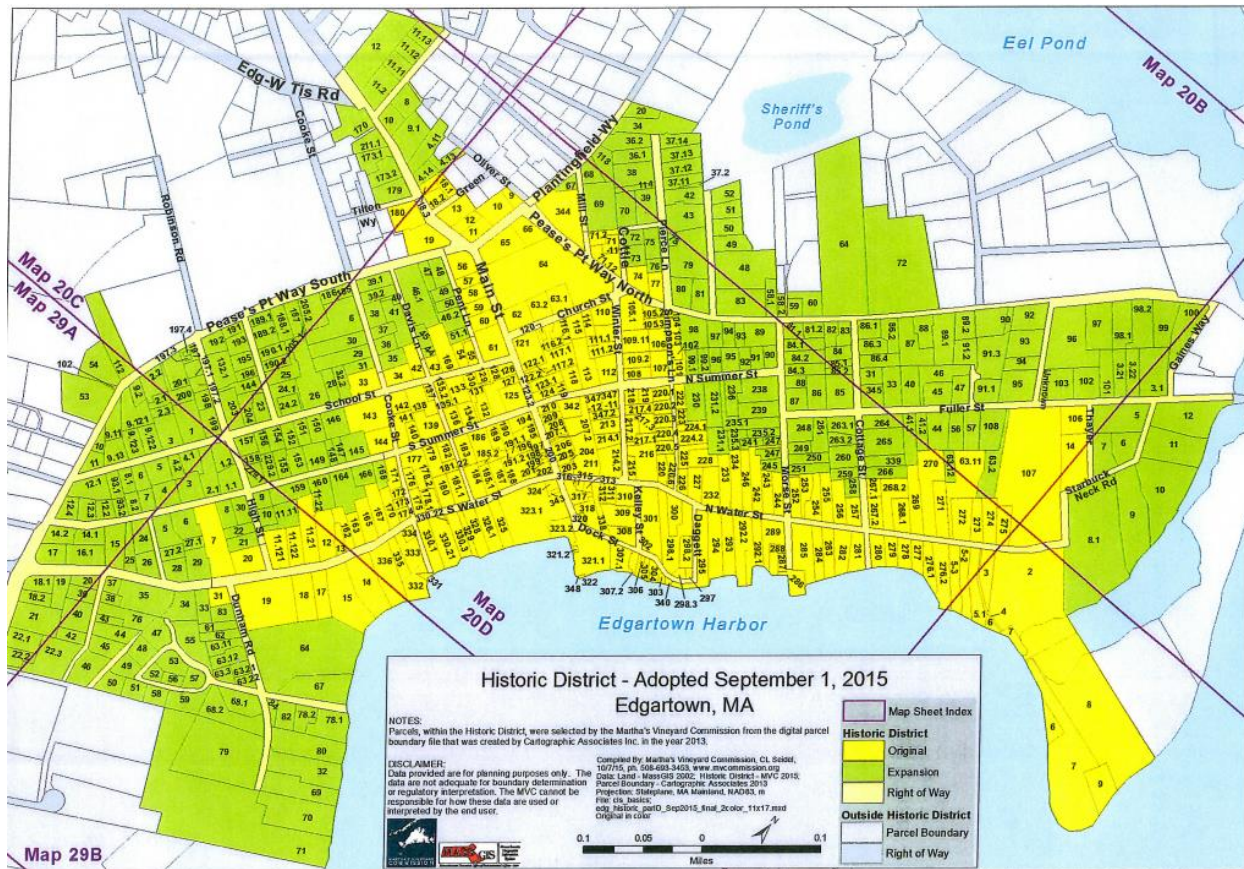
waterfront should be considered, including small-scale processing structures and facilities that provide the necessary infrastructure for commercial fishing and seafood farming. The design of parks located near the Edgartown shoreline can incorporate features that highlight and celebrate the working waterfront activities.

- **Maintain Village Character.** Proactive planning for the harbor has focused on ways to provide improved appropriate access to the water from the land and to the land from the water, while maintaining the cultural integrity of the “village waterfront” and surrounding “quiet harbor” waterways and surrounding open lands.
- **Encourage Business Diversity and Waterfront-Dependent Businesses.** While providing crucial economic benefit, the expanding visitor-based economy is occupying an ever-increasing proportion of the land and buildings once utilized by true working waterfront functions. This competition for space is exacerbating an already existential challenge for the remaining working waterfront operations in Edgartown.
- **Access for Commercial Fishermen.** Fishing, scalloping, aquaculture, marine industry, and transportation rely on coastal access. Every effort should be made to ensure that the harbor and its related infrastructure are adequately reserved for these uses.
- **Enhance Visiting Boater Experience/Public Facilities.** Effective harbor management requires careful consideration of available options to provide services to the boating public. Direct services to the boating community include dockage and moorings, launch service, fuel, restrooms, launching ramps, loading areas, holding tank pump-out, etc. Indirect services include dredging to maintain navigability and the promulgations of harbor rules and regulations. In Edgartown, consideration must be given to the need to maintain the “quiet harbor” ambience, small-town village waterfront and destination port identity, while providing appropriate facilities and services. Essential toilet facilities are distinctly lacking at the Edgartown Harbor waterfront. The Harbor Plan recommends construction and maintenance of toilet facilities as a priority. The Harbor Planning Group recommends expansion of the Chappy Ferry house on the Town side, as a highly appropriate location to provide public toilets.
- **Harbor Walk.** The waterfront boardwalk area is one of the most popular destinations in Edgartown. However, currently the boardwalk is not continuous and only accessible in a few locations. The Town should investigate the possibility of creating a longer and continuous boardwalk. The proposed boardwalk along the edge could be elevated to be developed as an integrated barrier and protect the Downtown area from tidal inundation over time.
- **Leverage the Fishing Derby** through competitions with other nationwide derbies

The Historic District

ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Edgartown Village Historic District has been on the National Register since 1983. A local historic district was established by the Town in 1987 and expanded in 2016.



The local historic district includes 676 buildings and 185 acres of land. The Edgartown Historic District Commission (HDC) can prevent demolition or inappropriate alteration of exterior building features as seen from any public way. New buildings within the district are required to comply with the historic aspects or architectural characteristics of the historic buildings.

The Commission encourages the maintenance and development of historic architectural types to preserve the architectural heritage of Edgartown. In most cases, property values tend to increase in historic districts, which benefits property owners and the Town.

Buildings built before 1900 are mostly concentrated in the historic district area in downtown Edgartown. The downtown contains a variety of building styles, the most well represented are timber frame houses and cottages, Greek Revival, and Federalist buildings. The Greek Revival style accounts for approximately 125 houses and is the dominant architectural style in Edgartown. Other styles range from Early English through Log Cabin, Colonial, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, and various Victorian interpretations of Empire. The diverse collection of architecture styles creates a visual display of the tastes and economic status of past generations in the community. Buildings in downtown Edgartown have a unifying character, because many are painted white to blend into the building context. The street facades usually have white painted clapboard siding with classical details. Buildings are located close to the edge of the street. The details of the architectural elements enrich the visual experience walking along a street. Buildings are usually no more than two or three stories with many commercial buildings being only one or two stories in height.

At least twelve buildings are associated with the early settlement of Edgartown, or Great Harbor as it was first called. Several of the village's earliest houses retain settings that reflect their construction prior to the development of the village's grid of streets and the more usual local custom of building houses close to the street. Characteristic of houses that preserve elements of their original settings are the Captain Daniel Fisher house on North Water Street, the Coffin-Dunham house on South Water Street, a central chimney cottage at 119 South Water Street, and the Thomas Cooke house of on Cooke Street.

In the second period, when Edgartown became a more densely settled village, there were several variations on the styles, including half houses and cottages, three quarter houses and cottages, and full facades. Some examples of this period are the Obed Fisher house on South Summer Street, the R. Coffin house on South Water Street, and the Simpson house on Simpson's Lane.

The Greek Revival style is all over downtown Edgartown. The Greek Revival style is by far the dominant architectural style in Edgartown. "The popularity of the style, its concurrence with a period of local prosperity due to whaling and the strong local building traditions that had developed by the mid nineteenth century combined to produce a distinctive and idiosyncratic set of house plans and details that appear throughout the village. Examples of this period include the Thaxter house on Davis Lane, and the Captain John Morse and Tristram Butler houses on North Water Street.



The Victorian period includes several styles such as Queen Anne and Italianate. The Italianate style is represented by several undecorated side hall cottages and by several ambitious houses of which the Charlotte Inn of 1865 on South Summer Street with its central gable, paired brackets, arched windows, and cupola is the most fully developed example. Other well-preserved examples include the Victorian Inn and the Captain Smith house.

The institutional buildings in Edgartown, also part of the national listing, were all designed by Frederick Baylis Jr. Mr. Baylis, the son of a Vineyard missionary, was born in 1795 in Edgartown and educated at Harvard. Mr. Baylis designed the Old Whaling Church, the Edgartown Town Hall (formerly a Methodist church), the Federated Church, and the Dukes County Courthouse. Most of the houses within Edgartown village were not designed by architects, but by local builders and carpenters as well as ship builders and whaling captains, assisted by popular published builders' guides of the time.

Since 1975, the Vineyard Preservation Trust has acquired, restored, and maintained iconic landmarks of Martha's Vineyard to preserve the island's unique character, cultural history, and heritage for the community and its visitors.

LANDMARK BUILDINGS

Landmarks have long been considered as one of the most important Town planning components. Landmark Buildings are often tall, large, monumental, and distinct. Landmarks stand out from the overall building fabric, offer references for wayfinding, and enhance the character of a community. A series of landmarks have developed over time marking the connection between the harbor and the center of Town. The Edgartown Lighthouse marks the entrance to the harbor. The Yacht Club sits at the terminating end of Main Street and is an important visual reference to the heart of downtown. The towers of the Whaling Church and the Federated Church weathervane spire are visible when approaching the Town by land and water. The Whaling Church, built in 1843, is located within the first block on Main Street and creates a welcoming scene as visitors approach downtown from the west. The Federated Church is the oldest church building on the island that is still used for worship. Thomas Mayhew established the First Church of Christ on Martha's Vineyard back in 1642. The church became the Federated Church in 1925.

- Dr. Daniel Fisher House & Gardens (*Built 1840*)
- The Carnegie Heritage Center (*Built 1904*)
- The Old Whaling Church (*Built 1843*)
- The Federated Church (*Built 1828*)
- Desire Osborne House (*Built 1776*)
- John Coffin House (*Built 1703*)
- Cooke House (*Built 1766*)
- Norton Boathouse (*Built 1840*)
- Old Sculpin Gallery (*Built 1840*)
- Osborne Wharf (*Built 1840*)
- Village Green
- Vincent House & Gardens (*Built 1672*)
- Vineyard Gazette Building (*Built 1760*)
- Historic Marshall Farmstead, Chappaquiddick (*Built 1790*)
- Chappy School House, Chappaquiddick (*Built 1850*)

VILLAGE PRESERVATION

There are many opportunities to preserve the historic character and whaling legacy of the historic downtown.

- **Share Edgartown's History.** The downtown has a great historical story to tell visitors – business history, religious history, whaling, etc. Edgartown needs to share this history better through house tours, kids' tours, historical markers, public tours around Town, etc. The idea of utilizing QR codes on markers has been suggested.
- **Expand the design guidelines for renovation and development.** The Town should consider expanding the regulatory tools utilized by the Historic District Commission to include more about

commercial buildings and to regulate more than just the aspects of a building visible from the street.

- **Improve Signage.** Develop signage that is consistent throughout town and appropriate for a historic village. This includes street signage and wayfinding signage.
- **Develop a lot density formula.** There are no guidelines that prevent total lot coverage. The 5-foot setbacks are all that exist. Absent a lot density formula, our zoning encourages building out lots and thus losing views not just of the harbor but of gardens and other historic buildings.
- **Visual Continuity.** The scale of the buildings and their relationship to the street is what gives Edgartown its charm. Continuous building frontages, fencing and gardens create a visually pleasing streetscape. When the building walls are disconnected by parking lots or vacancies, the visual continuity is broken. The gaps created by the parking lot on Winter Street, for example, detract from the overall character of downtown.

IMPROVING THE DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCE

- **Adopt a Downtown Streetscapes Plan.** The Town should consider creating and adopting a downtown streetscape plan to rethink how Edgartown's downtown streets can better meet today's needs. The wonderful quality of downtown streets predominantly results from their overall narrow dimensions, numerous street trees, and adjacent historic buildings, which should be maintained. However, the streets could be rethought in how they allocate the space that exists within these confines. During the busier months, the street's narrow sidewalks become overcrowded and leave little to no room for outside dining, window shopping, or pausing for a conversation. Utility poles and curbs provide additional challenges for those using wheelchairs or pushing strollers. The slow vehicle speeds and high pedestrian volume result in many people walking in the travel lane. Reallocating street space could create a more functional street that better serves current needs. During peak months, most people enjoy downtown on foot. Rethinking downtown streets with more flexible designs can allow for more space to be given to pedestrians and outside dining when the weather is nice, and people are more apt to walk, while still allowing for more parking and room for vehicles during the colder off-season months. One solution could be to create a shared street to allow more walking space for pedestrians while slowing vehicles or only allowing them at certain times of the year, or of the week. Curbless streets could be used to allow for maximum flexibility and accessibility. Improving streets can be a challenging task of balancing the priorities of many stakeholders and agencies.
- **Bury the Power Lines.** Space for more trees is created by relocating the power lines underground. This not only protects the visual integrity of the streetscape but also minimizes potential damage during storm events. Most communities decide not to place utilities underground due to cost and maintenance concerns. However, in select areas, like Edgartown's historic core, the aesthetic and functional benefits may be worth the cost of installation and occasional repair. Any redesign of Main Street should apply inclusive and universal design approaches that go beyond the American Disabilities Act requirements. Engaging landlords is critical to success in any efforts to improve Main Street.
- **Add Street Trees.** Street trees provide a natural border to street space, create shade for pedestrians, decrease traffic speed by creating visual friction that results in more cautious driving,

and increase property values. Ecologically, street trees reduce heat island effects and filter airborne particles and groundwater pollutants. In Edgartown, there are many shade trees nearing the end of their natural lives. The Town should actively work to ensure a smooth transition to the next generation of shade trees. In areas where trees cannot be planted directly in the ground, planters can be used.

- **Encourage Parking Outside of Town.** Downtown Edgartown is highly walkable and easy to navigate on foot. Parking in downtown Edgartown is limited. Yet, data from August 2022 shows that a substantial number of vehicles traveling down Main Street, Dock Street, and Winter Street were people circling downtown looking for a parking space. During the crowded summer season, parking for the downtown can be located outside of the downtown core. The remote parking areas should be clearly marked from roadways entering Town and easy to find from the main road. The Town should work to increase public transportation services through downtown, possibly with small electric buses, or a trolley. This will strengthen downtown Edgartown's function as a walkable center.
- **Test Dock Street Parking Lot with a Temporary Design.** Public spaces bring people together in new and different ways and create a sense of community. The concept of a designing a public space at the Dock Street parking lot was introduced during the development of this plan. This area could be a testing ground for small events or installations that would enable the Town and businesses to test ideas without permanent commitments. A semi-permanent project can evolve into a substantial part of a Town's fabric, but a temporary design allows the Town to experiment with ideas and ensure those are accepted by the community before fully committing to anything.
- **Improve Dock Street Parking Lot.** The foot of Main Street should be the focus of the effort to draw pedestrians to the waterfront. Rehabilitating the parking lot would also give the Town an opportunity to address and manage the frequent flooding of the area and to enhance the public's experience of Edgartown's waterfront. The location at the terminus of Main Street makes it a uniquely desirable destination.
The initial design proposal, shown below, allows for thirty of the existing fifty parking spaces to remain along the edges of the square. These spaces are designed to be flexible, so that when they are not in use, they can become an extension of the square. Combined with other strategies to divert visitor parking to the edge of Town, these remaining spaces could be restricted to users of the adjacent boat docks and Yacht Club to discourage traffic from circling in search of free parking spaces. The edge of the plaza along the water can include bulwarks to protect the lot and square against high tides, storms, and rising seas.



- **Enhance the Downtown Village Green.** The Village Green is a part of Edgartown’s original village settlement in 1642 and has been preserved as a common open space for more than 350 years. Over the years the village has become less of a public park and more like a hidden backyard for the surrounding businesses. This area is a great resource (owned by the Preservation Trust) in the middle of downtown that could be more actively used. The Village Green can be improved by strengthening connectivity to space and incentivizing storefronts to present a “face” to the green would make the space more memorable. This could be great for merchants and help to make the green a vibrant place. Other improvements would be to create a pedestrian walking center that would draw more people into the park. Winter Street and Nevin Square could be more integrated into the downtown area by connecting the Village Green with a pathway to Winter Street
- **Pedestrian Only Areas.** The Town should conduct an assessment of downtown areas that could be designated as “Pedestrian Only” during certain times during the high season.
- **Improve Wayfinding with Signage and Maps.** A well-functioning wayfinding system creates a sense of arrival, enhances the aesthetics of a place, and facilitates vehicular and pedestrian movement in an efficient way. When touring Edgartown, it is not uncommon for visitors to get confused when looking for the Edgartown Lighthouse or Memorial Wharf; an improved wayfinding system can address some of the issues. The Board of Trade recently secured a grant to look at the signage downtown and implement improvements. The study funded by the grant will create an inventory of existing signage that informs where additional information is needed.

Once the baseline information has been assembled, community input will be sought for input on design and implementation.

- **Increase shoulder and winter season events.** Additional emphasis should be placed on the shoulder season with more events such as music or art festivals. Give people things to do, and they will come. Edgartown used to be much more vibrant year-round, but the Town needs to give people more reasons to be downtown in the off season. Programming events throughout the year, such as events in the Dock Street parking lot or the Village Green, would attract people back to downtown.
- **Offer free Wifi.** Other towns offer free Wifi in dense areas. Edgartown should consider whether the cost of doing this is reasonable.

Supporting Downtown Businesses

- **Work with the Board of Trade (BOT) to enhance the existing brand, Visited Edgartown.** The BOT has been behind many successful ideas in the past but gets no financial support from the Town. In other Towns, the board of trade is part of the Town government. The Edgartown Board of Trade is one of the most prominent voices for businesses in Edgartown and is dedicated to fostering economic vitality that enhances and improves the quality of life in the community. The Town should consider helping to fund the Board of Trade in order to expand event programming and increase the number of events year-round.
- **Create a True Visitor Center.** A number of options for a “Visitor Center” have been discussed, including enhancing the existing VTA terminal on Church Street, installing a kiosk of some kind near the Dock Street parking lot, or creating a virtual visitor center. The Town should work with the Board of Trade to provide a location for visitors to access maps, brochures, menus, etc.
- **Improve and increase accessibility.** Anytime the Town undertakes a road or sidewalk improvement project, accessibility issues should be addressed to the extent possible. Downtown sidewalks are narrow and uneven in places, creating dangerous areas. The Town should prioritize sidewalk improvement projects to reduce potential for injury.
- **Consider a fast ferry year-round** to make it easier to bring tourism and year-round commuting labor to Edgartown from off-island.
- **Conduct a Business Gap Analysis.** A business gap analysis would determine which businesses are lacking, and what types of businesses could stimulate economic development. A merchandise mix plan could then be created between the Town and the local business community to guide the downtown retail sector to attract a diversity of businesses and create a more vibrant downtown.
- **Develop/Provide More Family-Friendly Areas and Activities.** There are limited places for families to gather outside when downtown. The Town should work to enliven potential family-friendly areas with picnic tables or other activities for kids.
- **Fund an Economic Development position.** This position should be coordinated closely with the Board of Trade of Trade and the Planning Board. This could also be accomplished with a

volunteer board that works with the results of the Business Gap Analysis to attract new businesses and to support existing essential businesses.

- **Create Parking Benefit District.** Parking Benefit Districts are areas with paid parking, where the revenue goes towards a specific cause in perpetuity (ie, Economic Development Position, above)
- **Create Business Improvement Districts.** Business Improvement Districts (BID) are special assessment districts in which property owners vote to initiate, manage, and finance supplemental services or enhancements above and beyond the baseline of services already provided by their local city. A special assessment, or common area fee, is levied only on property within the district. The assessments are collected and expended within the district for a range of services and/or programs. A BID creates a stable local management structure that provides a sustainable funding source for the revitalization and long-term maintenance of downtowns and city/town centers.
- **Create a Legacy Business Fund.** Legacy businesses provide character by making a significant impact by being known staples of the community. A registry of legacy businesses can be created that includes businesses which are 20 years or older or have been nominated by Selectboard Members. Businesses on the registry would agree to maintain the historical name and essential business operations, physical features, crafts, and traditions of their businesses. Local governments are recommended to create a Legacy Business Historic Preservation Fund that provides grants to both Legacy Business owners and property owners who agree to lease extensions with Legacy Business tenants.
- **Create Incentives for Owner-Operated Businesses.** Owner-operated businesses are an important part of keeping the downtown authentic and vibrant. Owner-operated businesses could be included with legacy businesses in a combined registry.
- **Commercial Property Maintenance.** The Edgartown Historic District requires owners of all structures and buildings in the district to provide sufficient minimum maintenance. The maintenance of historic structures pose unique challenges as materials are often natural, hand-crafted, and many cannot be directly purchased from a manufacturer. The Town should pay special attention to properties that show evidence of deferred maintenance, as these properties can create negative impressions on the image of downtown Edgartown and hurt economic vitality.
- **Vacant Commercial Building Ordinance** requires the registration of all vacant properties and would create an inventory of vacant structures and a line of communication between the Town and the owners of such structures. Sometimes a town will charge building owners an annual registration fee based on the duration of vacancy. The ordinance would require a plan to keep vacant structures safe and ultimately work to reopen stores, restaurants, and offices.
- **Make Outdoor Dining Easier.** Outdoor dining was well received during Covid despite it not being visually attractive. Leveling the streets and sidewalks, better design and encouragement of this activity could only enhance the Town. Outdoor dining creates convivial streetscapes and helps small restaurants gain the revenue that might just keep them in business. Onerous regulations have not permitted on-street dining in the past, however, during the COVID-19 pandemic many cities issued emergency rules that allowed dining outside, including expanded

alcohol sales. As the pandemic went on, the rules became increasingly stringent. Adopting principals similar to the ones they had when restaurants needed to serve people outside would provide the opportunity to expand local dining options.



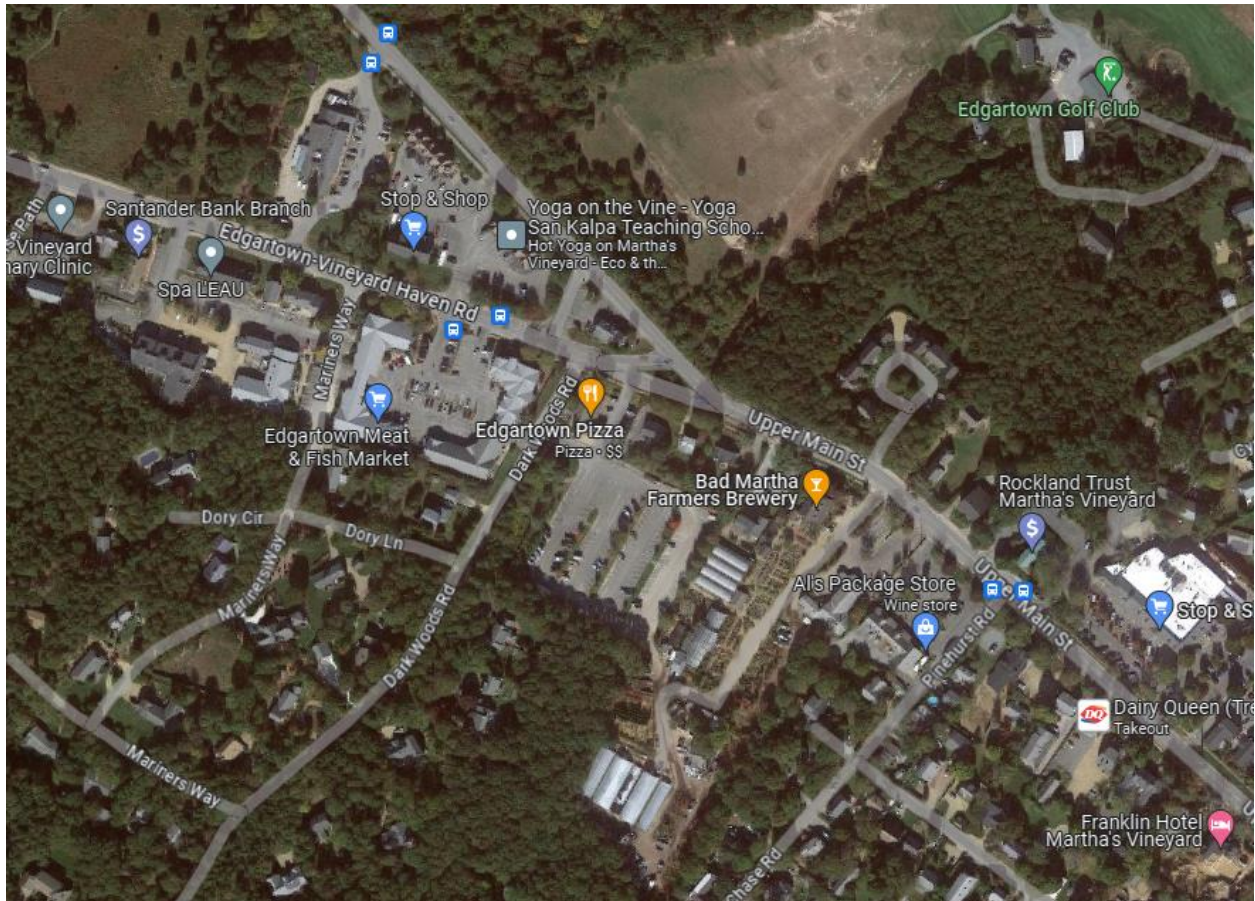
Business Beyond Downtown

DEVELOP UPPER MAIN ST. & THE TRIANGLE

The Town should consider supporting a committee of business property owners and business owners for the area between Pinehurst Road and Pennywise Path. This area could benefit from a coordinated plan for development and redevelopment. Some of the ideas discussed above in this Master Plan for the downtown business area could be profitably applied to this Upper Main Street/Triangle, especially the ideas about improving pedestrian accessibility, conducting a business gap analysis, creating an economic development zone, requiring commercial property maintenance and establishing a registration fee for vacant properties.

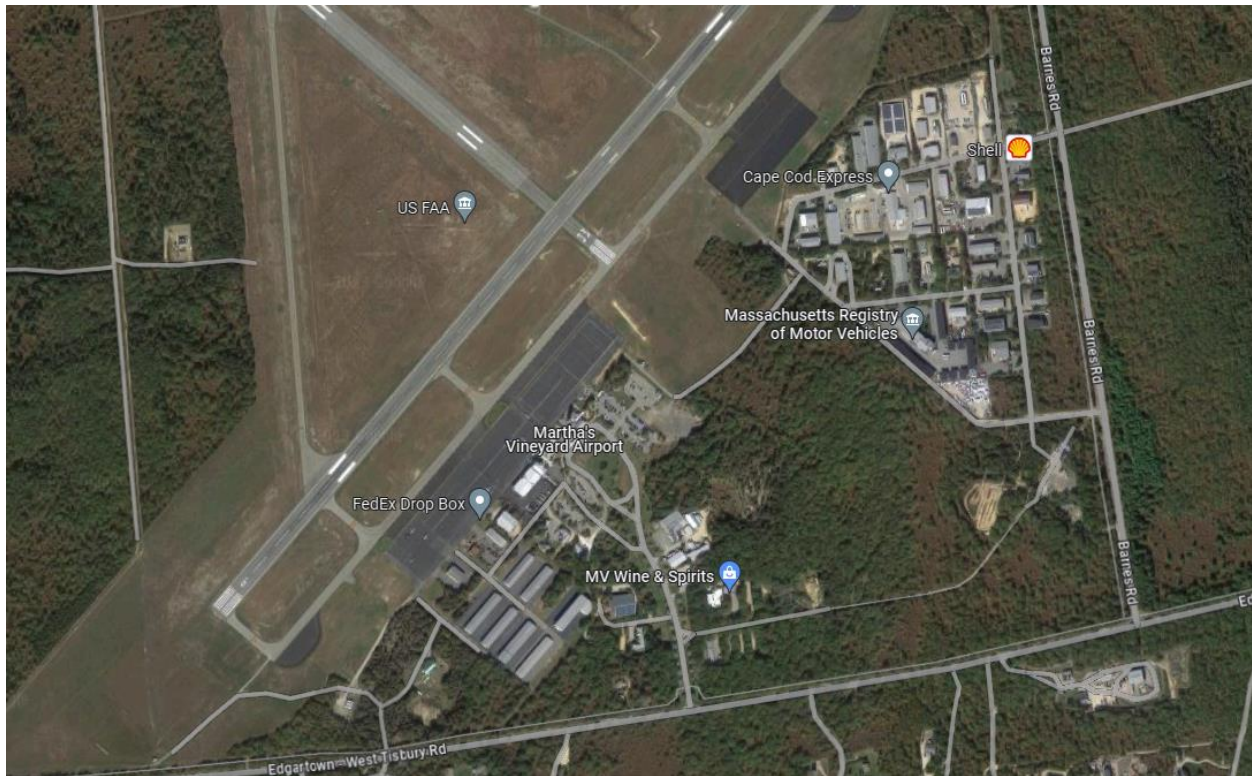
It is recognized that it will not be possible to add more food service businesses until there is more capacity at the Wastewater Treatment Facility, but this seems to be a good time to begin a planning

process. If an Economic Development position is established as discussed above in this Master Plan, the Upper Main Street/Triangle Area could be within the purview of that position.



DEVELOP AIRPORT BUSINESS PARK

The Airport Business Park has over 100 businesses with leases to operate. The land is owned by Dukes County and land leases are managed through the Martha's Vineyard Airport Commission. The area presents a valuable location for businesses that need space for storage of materials and equipment. Due to its proximity to the Airport, there are also very few residences nearby, so businesses that generate noise disturb fewer people when operating there. The Airport Business Park should also be examined as a possible location for commercial vehicle storage.



SUPPORT FISHERMEN

Edgartown has a robust aquaculture program administered through the Town's Shellfish Department. It supports the growth and cultivation of a variety of species including scallops, oysters, and quahogs. Aquaculture has become a significant contributor to Edgartown's local economy, providing jobs and income for the community. In 1995, the Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group (at the time referred to as the Martha's Vineyard "Private Aquaculture Initiative") offered a program to retrain 15 displaced fishermen in shellfish aquaculture; the fishermen were trained and then awarded leases to develop oyster farms. Then, in 1998, The Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group (MVSG) provided funding for Jack Blake, owner of Sweet Neck Farm, to build and demonstrate a floating shellfish hatchery prototype in Edgartown. Through trial and error, Mr. Blake developed homemade upwellers and tumblers to farm oysters. He is widely credited for his impact on the development of private aquaculture in Katama Bay and has shared his knowledge with many who followed in his footsteps. There are now 12 oyster farms in Katama Bay, each one an acre in size, which collectively produce between 1.5 to 2 million oysters per year. Currently, the town allows a maximum of 1% of the bay to be apportioned for aquaculture. There is a waitlist for new oyster farms in the Katama Bay area.

The Town also offers leased areas for aquaculture in Middle Flats, outside the Harbor. The Shellfish Department recently approved an application for a kelp farm to operate, diversifying the types of aquaculture utilizing the leased areas. The Shellfish Department is also working with the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) to expand the number of leased areas in Middle Flats so that oyster farmers in Katama can access back-up locations should the water quality in Katama Bay render the oysters unfit for consumption.

Edgartown hosts aquaculture programs for oysters, scallops, and quahogs in a variety of locations including Cape Pogue, Caleb’s Pond, Middle Flats, Edgartown Harbor, Edgartown Great Pond, Eel Pond, Katama Bay, Oyster Pond, Poucha Pond, Sengekontacket and Trapps Pond. The Town's Comprehensive Dredge Permit includes dredging locations in 8 of the areas listed above. The flushing and circulation of water that dredging provides helps to grow shellfish faster and more sustainably than in areas where sand build-up impedes the growth of shellfish beds and causes damage to shellfish equipment.

Summary of Economic Value of Edgartown Shellfish/Aquaculture Programs since 2019:

- ❖ 2019: Commercial catch: 5,863 bushels, valued at \$806,560.
 Farmed Oysters: 11,700 bushels, valued at \$3,510,000.
 Recreational catch: 2,480 bushels, valued at \$850,800.
- ❖ 2020: Commercial catch: 4,018 bushels, valued at \$675,795.
 Farmed Oysters: 5,600 bushels, valued at \$510,000.
 Recreational catch: 2,297 bushels, valued at \$740,310.
- ❖ 2021: Commercial catch: 5,431 bushels, valued at \$1,102,035.
 Farmed Oysters: 11,400 bushels, valued at \$2,288,000.
 Recreational catch: 3,277 bushels, valued at \$722,700.
- ❖ 2022: Commercial catch: 7,725 bushels, valued at \$1,799,925.
 Farmed Oysters: 11,900 bushels, valued at \$2,348,266.
 Recreational catch: 1,403 bushels, valued at \$310,063.
- ❖ 2023: Commercial catch:
 Farmed Oysters: 12,400 bushels, valued at \$
 Recreational catch.

The economic value of the Town’s aquaculture program is three-fold: It provides town residents with an opportunity to generate income by harvesting local resources; the town generates income through the sale of shell-fishing permits, and the catches are often provided to local restaurants who benefit from being able to sell fresh, local seafood to their customers. In addition to the tangible economic benefits, there are numerous ecological benefits for the harbors, ponds and bays that host these species, including improved water quality and nitrogen mitigation.

SUPPORT THE ARTS

- **Increase possible locations and frequency of pop-up events for local artists.**
- **Encourage the local galleries, retailers and restaurants to feature local artists.**
- **Display the work of local artists in public buildings.**

EMERGING TRADES AND BUSINESS MODELS

- Home-based Businesses

Edgartown as a popular tourist destination offers ample opportunities for home-based businesses. Typical tourism-related businesses include short-term vacation rentals, private tours, boat trips, and concierge services. Edgartown assesses a 4% tax on short-term rentals; an article to increase this to 6% has been submitted by the Affordable Housing Committee for the 2024 Annual Town Meeting warrant.

Edgartown also has a strong arts community and there are artists that create home-based businesses based on selling handcrafted products such as jewelry, pottery, or clothing.

Landscaping and construction businesses in residential areas are often a source of conflicts. When a small home business becomes a dominating presence in a residential area, often because of traffic or noise, issues are created for enforcement. The Edgartown Zoning Board of Appeals has the authority to grant and review permits for home-based businesses, but the relevant zoning bylaw is out of date and should be reviewed.

CHAPTER 5: Sustainable Growth & Change

The Aquifer

The Martha's Vineyard's aquifer (underground reservoir of water) is the sole water source for the Island, although Chappaquiddick has its own aquifer. The yield from the Martha's Vineyard aquifer exceeds the projected water demand for the foreseeable future. Protecting the aquifer from contamination is a priority.

Edgartown's water for domestic, commercial, agricultural and all other uses is sourced from a large, stratified drift, unconfined aquifer, located under the island's central "outwash" plain. The aquifer consists of porous sands and gravels, that extend to an estimated depth of 70 feet below mean sea level (MSL) and encompasses an estimated 29,558 acres. (Wilcox, 2009)

The aquifer receives recharge solely from precipitation that percolates into the soils and geologic materials. The aquifer can yield approximately 144.5 billion gallons of water annually. Approximately 70% of water withdrawn from the aquifer is returned to the aquifer via on-site wastewater disposal systems.

Water & Wastewater Management

WATER SUPPLY

The Town of Edgartown is supplied with high quality water through a public water supply system managed by the Edgartown Water Department. The Town of Edgartown's public water supply infrastructure consists of:

- five municipal water supply wells
- ±74 miles of water supply lines
- a standpipe tank with a 2.2-million-gallon capacity, located on Mill Hill Road
- 350 hydrants

The Town currently demands approximately 1.5 billion gallons of water annually. In 2021, the Edgartown Water Department reported 355,283,800 gallons of water pumped to 3,500 service connections, of which 87% are residential users and 13% are commercial/industrial users. Of the existing parcels of land in Edgartown (excluding Chappaquiddick), ±68% are served by municipal water. The remaining ±32% utilize private wells for their water supply.

Water line extensions are accomplished both by the Town Water Department and private owners/developers. In 2021, 2,640 feet of new water main were installed, of which 1,840 feet were installed by private landowners.

Approximately 1,700 individual private water supply wells serving residences, commercial properties, institutions, golf courses, and agricultural operations in Edgartown also tap approximately 750 million gallons of water per year from the Island's primary aquifer. Chappaquiddick is served entirely by on-site private wells, supplied by an aquifer which is separate from the primary aquifer that serves the rest of Martha's Vineyard.

In summary, current withdrawals from the aquifer are less than 1% of its projected safe yield. This indicates that the available groundwater supply is abundant and is not a growth-limiting factor for the

foreseeable future.

SOURCES OF CONTAMINATION (Mass DEP, 2003)

As prolific as the aquifer is, it is still vulnerable to potential contamination and impairment due to the highly permeable nature of Island soils. Consequently, all available measures and best management practices must be utilized to ensure protection of the drinking water for both municipal water users and private water supply wells.

Potential sources of contamination of the aquifer can come from residential, commercial, institutional, and agricultural land uses. These include:

- hazardous chemicals (paints, automotive fluids, and solvents)
- microbial contaminants
- fuel and oil spills
- pesticides and herbicides
- fertilizers
- leachate from landfills, waste transfer station, and dumps
- discharges from Town owned and private on-site wastewater treatment facilities
- storm water drains, basins, and roadway runoff

Historically, relatively few episodes of groundwater impairment have occurred on Martha's Vineyard. Examples of impairment include:

- dry cleaning chemicals and "forever" chemicals at Martha's Vineyard Airport
- capped municipal landfill on Meshacket Road
- local on-site septic system impacts to private wells on Whaler's Walk
- nitrogen plumes from the Edgartown Wastewater Treatment Plant prior to the 1990's upgrades
- old, abandoned septage lagoons

PROTECTING THE AQUIFER

Protecting groundwater quality will always be a priority for citizens and municipal officials. The primary methods to ensure that groundwater is not contaminated will be through proper management and regulation of land uses. Foremost is the protection of Zones I and II for the municipal water supply wells. Zone I for each well is a 400 ft. radius around the well head, as required by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Drinking Water Regulations. Zone II encompasses the primary recharge areas for each municipal water supply well. Edgartown owns all the properties within Zone I of each municipal well. The Zone II areas for each well fall largely under private ownership. The Edgartown Water Department conducts regular surveys and inspections within each Zone I, along with comprehensive water testing at the wells. Land uses within Zones I and II are strictly regulated under DEP and local regulations.

The Edgartown Board of Health has adopted "Town Wide Groundwater Protection Regulations" to limit the introduction of potential contaminants from on-site septic systems, hazardous materials, floor drains, and fertilizer application.

The Town of Edgartown Water Department and associated land use and regulatory Commissions provide a high level of vigilance and protection of water quality within and outside of the Town's water supply

zones through implementation of existing policies, procedures, and regulations. The Town of Edgartown operates a corrosion control program at all active well sites. Additionally, sodium hydroxide is used to reduce lead and copper levels by raising the pH. Disinfection is available when needed.

One recommendation by the DEP is that the Town establish a Wellhead Protection Committee. This may be a prudent measure as future development and re-development occurs within existing various supply regions of the Town. While typically such committees are made up of citizen volunteer members, the technical issues surrounding water quality protection might more readily be served by Town technical staff. The Water Department Superintendent, Town Health Agent, Conservation Agent, and Planning Board Administrator possess the knowledge and skills to serve this purpose and should be encouraged to hold quarterly meetings to discuss issues of common interest.

Another recommendation by the DEP is that the Town provide public education regarding wellhead protection. The citizens of Edgartown (and Martha's Vineyard in general) are very engaged in water quality and environmental issues. The Town Water Department and the Edgartown Board of Health provide significant public information via the Town's website that is accessible to all citizens.

FUTURE WATER PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

One of the most important considerations for future planning, development and conservation in Edgartown will be water quality and water supply. Future water supply planning should include:

- protecting the existing aquifer
- upgrading existing water supply withdrawal, storage, and distribution infrastructure
- protecting and/or acquiring additional lands, as may be required for protection of water supply wells
- extending distribution lines to areas of Town currently served by on-site wells, where density and on-site wastewater disposal may warrant provision of municipal water service
- supplementing existing zoning, conservation, and health regulations to preserve and protect water resources, and to optimize the allocation of municipal water
- planning for new wells and storage facilities to provide needed redundancy

WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

The Town of Edgartown has approximately 4,386 residential and non-residential buildings that generate approximately 72,000,000 gallons of wastewater flow annually (2021). The seasonal fluctuations in flow are substantial due to the highly seasonal variation in population in this resort community. Residential homes generate the greatest portion of wastewater, much of which is treated via on-site wastewater disposal systems (aka septic systems.) These systems include archaic cesspools, septic tank and leaching systems, and more modern on-site disposal systems, utilizing advanced treatment technologies. Owing to generally good soil and hydrologic conditions, on-site septic systems have been a successful means of wastewater disposal for most residential properties for many years.

Over 1,400 buildings (both residential and commercial) are served by a municipal wastewater treatment facility (WWTF). The WWTF is comprised of a treatment plant located on the Edgartown-West Tisbury Road, and a collection system that serves primarily the "downtown" area along with certain less centralized residential areas.

The WWTF was constructed in the 1970's to deal with immediate water quality issues of the more densely developed downtown area, where lot sizes and proximity to the harbor and associated coastal waters make on-site disposal imprudent. The WWTF received a significant upgrade in 1996 to provide increased flow capacity (up to 750,000 gallons per day (GPD) and tertiary treatment. The WWTF can

process wastewater and septage utilizing an activated sludge treatment with final effluent disposal to rapid sand filtration beds. All wastewater effluent, both from on-site systems and the WWTF, is recharged into the stratified drift aquifer. These discharges contribute pollutants to “sensitive receptors”. For example, the WWTF discharges within the watershed of the Edgartown Great Pond. Many on-site septic systems are located within Zone II of Edgartown’s public water supply wells. Densely developed residential neighborhoods, such as Ocean Heights and Arbutus Park drain toward Sengekontacket Pond. Recent studies by the MA Estuaries Project (MEP) identified nitrogen loading from both the WWTF and on-site septic systems as a significant threat to coastal water quality.

MA DEP has recently proposed regulations that would require towns to either implement watershed plans or require the upgrade of septic systems as a means of reducing nitrogen contribution to coastal waters. Edgartown, to its credit, has imposed restrictions on septic systems within the Sengekontacket watershed, and other sensitive areas, and enforces applicable regulations within Zone II of municipal wells.

WWTF

The WWTF’s collection system conveys wastewater from all users via gravity sewers and pump stations to the treatment plant. The plant provides a high level of nutrient and other pollutant removal, and regularly meets its discharge permit requirements. While it operates well below its design capacity for most of the year, peak flows during the summer season occasionally approach two-thirds of plant capacity. Future collection may need to double to meet nitrogen reduction requirements from projected growth. (Wright-Pierce, 2010).

Infrastructure improvements (including plant equipment and pump station upgrades, replacement of antiquated piping, and sewer line extensions to serve new users) are a continual element of successful plant operations.

The WWTF has historically treated septage (the product of septic tank pump outs) from Edgartown residents, as well as other island towns. Recently, the Town has severely restricted the amount of septage accepted, resulting in a 75% decrease in septage received. Consequently, septic haulers are now trucking septage off the island. This has resulted in improved performance of the treatment plant processes, and a reduction of nitrogen entering the Edgartown Great Pond watershed.

AIRPORT BUSINESS PARK

The Martha’s Vineyard Airport business park lies within the corporate limits of Edgartown and comprises nearly 100 businesses. These businesses are served by a wastewater treatment facility situated in West Tisbury and operated by Dukes County. This facility is in the process of being upgraded. The Town of Edgartown should consider opportunities for cooperation with the County and the Town of West Tisbury so that this airport facility could address some of Edgartown’s future wastewater needs.

COMPREHENSIVE WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Edgartown Wastewater Department is in the process of developing a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Program (CWMP), which will be an important guide to assessing plant capacity, treatment efficiency, existing on-site wastewater treatment systems, and future expansion of sewer service. The CWMP will provide Edgartown with some vital planning tools, including:

- present and future treatment plant and infrastructure needs
- projected flow requirements
- priorities for service area expansion
- septage handling options
- sewer avoidance for areas where septic systems are viable, long-term options

- meeting nitrogen reduction goals for sensitive receptors
- assessing the need for satellite treatment facilities
- assessing cost effectiveness of individual advanced treatment units vs. sewer expansion
- pinpointing properties that could connect to existing sewer lines and have not done so, and encouraging property owners to do so.

Based on the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan being prepared by Tighe & Bond, the town’s wastewater consultant, the Town of Edgartown will need to anticipate implementing the following measures.

1. Expanding the existing wastewater treatment facility’s treatment capacity. It is not unreasonable to assume that doubling the treatment plant capacity will be needed to meet future community development and water quality protection.
2. Expanding the sewer collection system. Priority should be given to extending sewers into areas that impact sensitive receptors (Sengekontacket Pond and Edgartown Great Pond watersheds).
3. Requiring innovative/alternative septic systems for areas where sewerage is not feasible.
4. Developing and enhancing town planning and health regulations to: address nitrogen reduction requirements; and manage potential growth and development that may be stimulated by an expanded sewer system.

Tighe & Bond has prepared a “Edgartown Sewer Needs Ranking Map” that provides a guide for environmental protection priorities.

Groundwater and Storm Water Management

GROUNDWATER EXISTING CONDITIONS

Groundwater table rise refers to the increase in the level of groundwater underneath a landmass, primarily driven by an increase in sea levels. Sea level rise can push the water table above the surface, resulting in a phenomenon called groundwater emergence. Groundwater may eventually pond above the land surface, causing inundation even though the area is not at, or directly connected to, the shoreline. The higher groundwater table could create new wetlands and expand others, change surface drainage, expand saturated soil conditions, and/or inundate the land. A rising groundwater table can cause destabilization of soils and building foundations and subsidence, as well as infiltrate underground utilities. This can result in significant structural damage as soils lose their capacity to bear weight, and can cause corrosion and other operations and maintenance challenges for subsurface utilities and foundations.

STORM WATER EXISTING CONDITIONS

Flooding, whether caused by coastal storm surge or excessive rainfall, presents a major threat to the Town’s infrastructure, facilities, neighborhoods, and individual homes and property. Recent flooding events have prompted residents to consider the future impact of coastal flooding events when compounded by sea level rise. Of particular concern are the erosion and property damage that result from coastal flooding. Also, flood waters transport nutrients and toxins that run off into nearby waterways. Natural shorelines can accommodate flooding more easily and, while Edgartown has vast swaths of this interface, it also has its share of built environment along the coast. The 2021 Edgartown Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan (the Vulnerability Plan) prepared by the Woods Hole Group identified Dock Street, Main Street near Dock Street, the Chappy Ferry, Chappaquiddick Road, Bend in the Road, and North Wharf as the municipal assets most vulnerable to coastal flooding.

In addition to chronic flooding in low lying areas due to high tides, sea level rise will also impact the ability of the storm water system to provide adequate drainage as outfall pipes will be submerged more frequently, causing drains to surcharge during heavy rainfall events. This can impede emergency vehicles and cause property damage.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Resilience strategies may include tide gates on outfall pipes, construction of water storage basins, developing large rain garden bioswales, and adding pumps to pump storm water away from the ocean.

In addition, the Town should consider zoning bylaw changes to increase setbacks, limit the portions of a lot that can be covered by buildings, pools, and other impervious surfaces, reduce clear cutting of trees, and require replacement of removed trees with new trees.

The Town should also consider adding street trees and other trees on Town-owned land.

Trees decrease the amount of storm water runoff and pollutants that eventually reach local waterways. Trees perform this important service through evapotranspiration and retention. The leaves and branches of trees intercept rain and prevent a portion of it from reaching the ground. The root structure of trees improves conditions for the infiltration of storm water into the soil, further reducing the amount of runoff. Trees are also capable of absorbing certain pollutants.

The Town should consider new landscaping for Cannonball Park so that it could serve as a green carbon sink and/or rain garden bioswale. Currently, Cannonball Park is underutilized. A rain garden bioswale could be integrated into the park as an attractive bio-retention area that would be temporarily wet during heavy rain events but remain dry and appropriately landscaped at most times.

Climate Change & the Built Environment

EXISTING CONDITIONS

While it is essential to protect Edgartown from coastal hazards and climate risk, this must be balanced with the elements which contribute to Edgartown's unique sense of place, which include ecological resources and habitats, the coastal viewshed and access to the water, and the historic built environment and cultural landscapes. Coastal risks can never be entirely removed, but they can be reduced through planning, capital investment, and changes to policies and regulations. Land use changes may be necessary to address increasing risk.

The challenges presented by sea level rise and climate change present opportunities to channel resources toward more robust, reliable, and redundant systems and infrastructure that support community safety, well-being, and vibrancy into the future.

There are many buildings and locations within downtown Edgartown that are essential to the culture and essence of the Town and the Island. Prioritization to protect these resources is necessary in climate action and preparedness planning.

For areas other than the Edgartown harbor waterfront, natural habitat protection and enhancement are a priority. Protecting and enhancing these habitats has several important benefits, including reducing flood and erosion risks and supporting bird, fish and shellfish populations. Some of the ways the marsh and eelgrass habitat could be protected and enhanced include changes to make room for natural migration of

resources, sediment enhancements to enable wetlands to keep up with sea level rise, development limits to reduce encroachment on the wetlands, and shoreline stabilization to reduce erosion impacts.

The dollar value of the risk to buildings, infrastructure, services, and natural resources under a scenario in which no actions are taken to reduce risk has not been calculated, but it is certainly very substantial. When an analysis of this kind was done for Nantucket in 2021, the cumulative cost of doing nothing from 2021 through 2070 was estimated at \$3.4 billion. The \$3.4 billion was made up of \$2.8 billion in direct physical damage to buildings, \$420 million in direct economic disruption, and \$250 million in social disruption such as relocation costs, health costs, and lost income from health issues. The magnitude of the cost of doing nothing provides a basis for consideration of the cost of intervention to prevent those losses.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

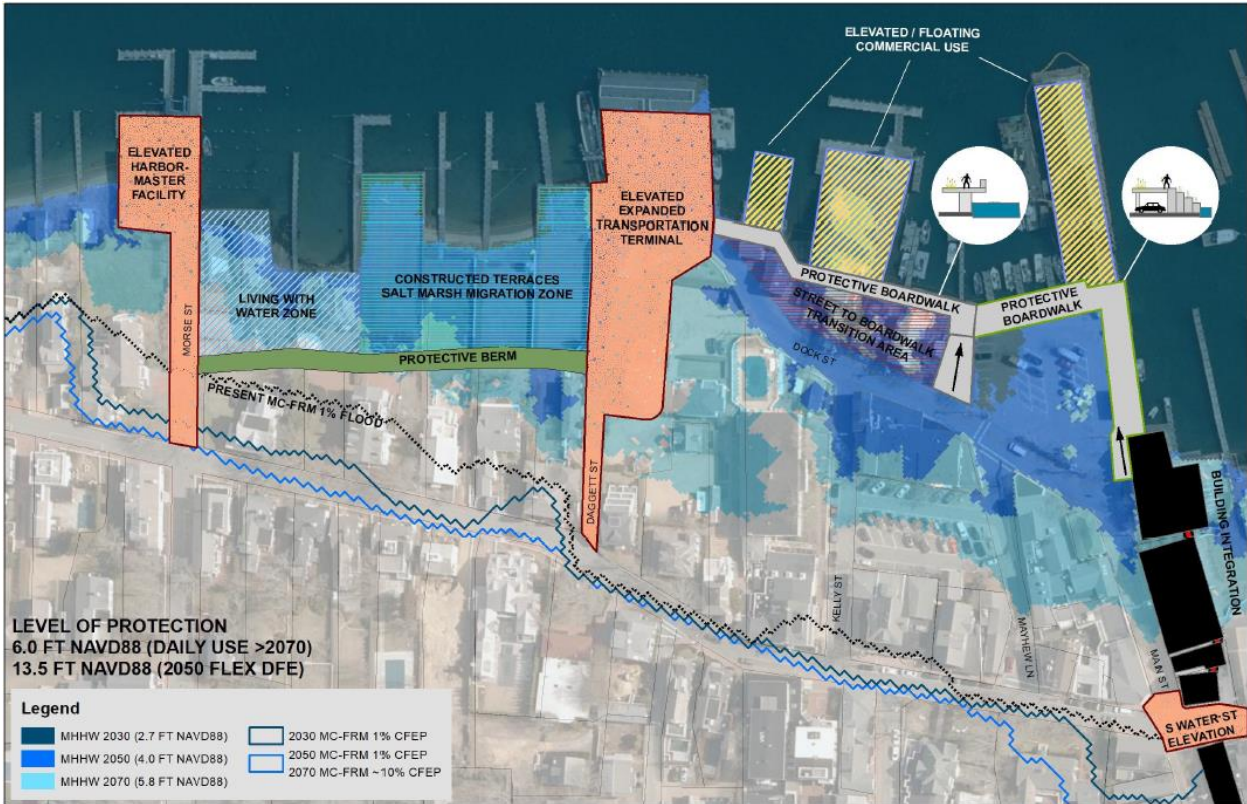
Protecting and adapting the built environment will require all residents and businesses to take action. A spirit of compromise is essential, as not every course of action will be viable, and prioritization will be necessary. For example, while nature-based strategies are broadly favored, there are likely to be spaces and places where such strategies may not be feasible.

- **Roads.** The Vulnerability Plan says the roads in Edgartown that will be most exposed to future flooding are Dock Street, the Chappaquiddick Road, and the Edgartown-Oak Bluffs Road (Bend in the Road). The Edgartown Oak Bluffs Road is controlled by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, not the Town, so it is outside the scope of this Master Plan. Where there is a road that is vulnerable to flooding and is also essential for everyday and emergency use and can't reasonably be relocated, the solution will be to elevate the road. Some sections will be elevated on a berm of stone and gravel, and some sections will be bridge structures. In some locations, existing culverts under these roads will likely be removed and replaced with bridge structures. This will allow a natural flow of water to the extent possible and has the benefit of enabling marsh migration.
- **Zoning Changes.** Updated land use and zoning regulations will play a critical role in achieving greater resiliency to climate change. For example, the Vulnerability Plan includes a review of Edgartown's bylaws and regulations relevant to climate change and resiliency. Specific recommended modifications are provided where the existing bylaws and regulations restrict property owners from undertaking climate change and resilience projects and where the existing rules are not restrictive enough to protect the public interest in the environment, public health, and safety. These changes include expanding the boundary of the Flood Plain Overlay District to include future coastal flood hazard areas, restricting high risk uses and structures including residential uses in some areas, encouraging green infrastructure, and adding requirements for storm water drainage systems, erosion control, sedimentation control, resource area mitigation, and other wetland protections.
- **Signage about sea level rise.** The Town should consider adding signage in the downtown area to identify the anticipated future sea levels for normal high tides and serious storms.
- **Downtown Flood Barrier.** The Vulnerability Plan says that most of the structures in Edgartown that will be exposed to future flooding are located along the Dock Street waterfront. An example of the flooding that occurred on Dock Street during one of the January 2024 storms:



The Vulnerability Plan also says that the Town assets most vulnerable to coastal flood inundation are the Chappy Ferry ramps, Chappy Ferry queuing areas, Piers 1-4, Dock Street, the Dock Street parking area, and the Harbormaster building, wharf, and parking area. This list, with the importance of the harbor waterfront of the Town in recreation, revenue generation, and Town functionality, leads to a conclusion that the harbor waterfront of the Town should be given a very high priority in climate change adaptation plans and investment.

An elevated harbor walk from the Atlantic Restaurant around the Dock Street parking lot and following the existing waterfront to Memorial Wharf and an elevated Daggett Street is proposed in the Vulnerability Plan and should be pursued by the Town. The elevated harbor walk could be a landscaped amenity and would function as a dike or levee. The buildings on the east side of Dock Street could be redesigned over time to accommodate access from both Dock Street and the elevated harbor walk. The elevated harbor walk could be built in two or more phases, with the first phase being a system of modular walls from the Atlantic Restaurant around the Dock Street parking lot and following the existing waterfront to Memorial Wharf and an elevated Daggett Street.



Housing

Edgartown's primary housing needs are more year-round rental housing units at attainable levels; more diverse housing options including multi-family, housing for seasonal employees, and year-round workforce housing. Additionally, between now and 2035, Edgartown's year-round population is expected to have a marked growth in the older adult population. This indicates a need for more housing options to meet the needs of older adults including alternatives that are smaller, accessible, and have minimal maintenance needs.

Edgartown has more housing units than any community on Martha's Vineyard, with an estimated total of 5,145 units. Of these units, 1,379 are occupied by year-round residents, with 76 percent owner-occupied and 24 percent renter-occupied. The vast majority of Edgartown's housing stock (69 percent) is used for seasonal or vacation purposes as opposed to 27 percent being dedicated to year-round use. Edgartown has approximately 460 households with low or moderate incomes, and 67 percent of them pay more than half of their monthly income for housing, which means they are severely cost burdened.

Seventy-six percent of Edgartown's housing is used for seasonal or vacation purposes.

In June 2023, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities reported that the Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) for Edgartown was 2.99%. This is derived from a total of 2,440 year-round units and 73 SHI units. Edgartown previously had 89 SHI units. The low SHI is a result partly of the decline in subsidized housing units and partly an increase in the pace of market rate building.

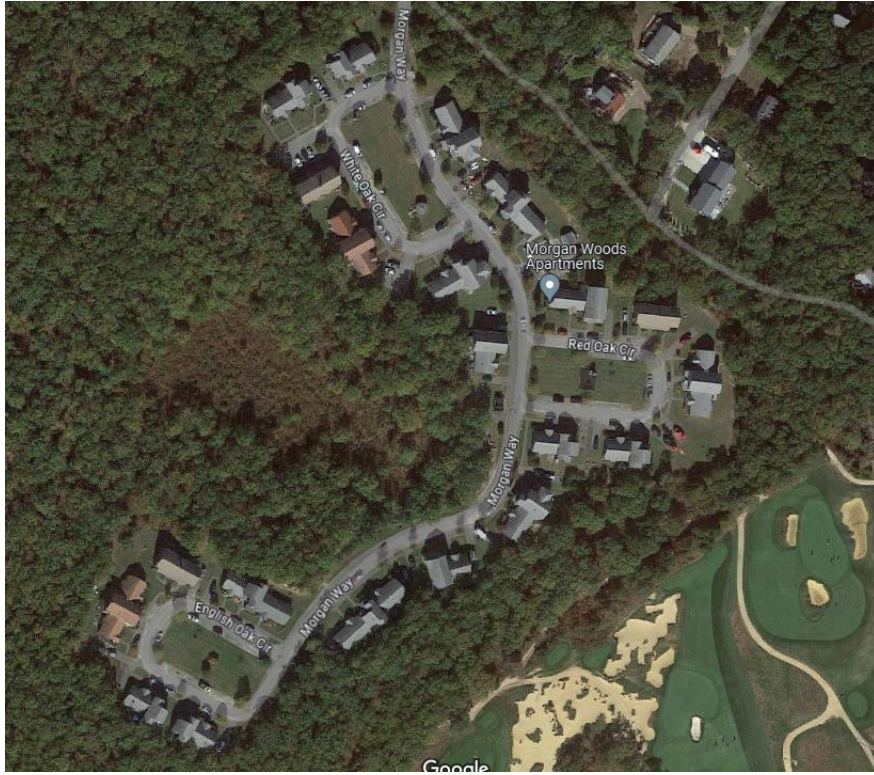
EXISTING INVENTORY:

- Pennywise Path

Completed in 2007 after more than six years of planning, permitting and securing funding, this development hosts 60 rental apartments (1, 2, & 3 bedrooms) in 21 buildings, available at varying amounts, depending on household income. The development was built and is managed by The Community Builders (TCB), a large non-profit that manages affordable housing developments in a variety of other locations. The site for this development is 12 acres and has been leased to TCB with a 99-year lease. Longtime Selectman Fred B. "Ted" Morgan Jr. was the pioneer for the creation of this development

- Morgan Woods

Morgan Woods is a 60-unit rental development that has helped ease the housing crisis on the Island and has shown that affordable housing can be successfully implemented in Edgartown. In the 2000s, Ted Morgan Jr. had the vision of creating an affordable housing neighborhood in Edgartown. That vision became this development, turning into the most affordable housing option on the Island. The project was approved in 2004, and after \$15 million was raised in funding through state and federal programs, the project was successfully completed. By its 10-year anniversary, almost 130 different tenants had lived there. On average, a tenant spends around \$1000 per month in rent on a subsidized unit or \$1670 on a market rate unit. More than affordability, the complex has also built a sense of community, which enhances the success of the development. On average, there are only around three to five units unoccupied at any time.



- Jenney Way

This 2.53-acre property with 9 affordable single family ownership homes was developed by the Island Housing Trust in 2008. It is a pocket neighborhood in downtown Edgartown, built by South Mountain Company and financed by the Martha's Vineyard Savings Bank. After its construction, income qualified households were chosen through a lottery. All of these selected families were earning between 80% and 140% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The Island Affordable Housing Fund, the Town of Edgartown Community Preservation Act (CPA), and the Cape Light Compact all provided grants for the land purchase and construction costs.



- Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity has built four single family ownership homes in Edgartown since 2001. Habitat for Humanity actively works with towns to identify properties that are available for affordable housing, which may not otherwise be developable.

DEVELOPING INVENTORY

- Meshacket Commons
Affordable, year-round rental and ownership units

Island Housing Trust, in partnership with Affirmative Investments, has been selected by the Town of Edgartown to construct 40 affordable and community housing units on property off Meshacket Road. The proposed neighborhood will consist of 36 units of affordable rental housing and 4 units of affordable, owned housing. The Meshacket neighborhood has been in the works for more than a decade and will aim to serve residents with incomes between 30% and 100% of AMI for rentals and between 90% and 120% of AMI for the homeownership townhouses. In addition to housing, the site design proposes a pedestrian and bike-friendly neighborhood with a community building that has communal indoor space and a property management office. Other amenities include outdoor play areas, passive recreational spaces, and paths that connect to the Old Meshacket Road ancient way. The site plan respects the site's natural surroundings by protecting open spaces and maintains as much of the existing vegetation as possible.

The \$20.3 million project is being funded by the Island Housing Trust, Edgartown's affordable housing trust, federal low-income housing tax credits, sale of the ownership units, and other sources. The units

will be distributed in 14 different buildings, providing several floor plan options for renters, ranging from one to two and a half story units or cottages and from one to three bedrooms. The project is scheduled to reach full occupancy by 2025. Meshacket will be counted on the SHI in 2024.



MESHACKET COMMONS - MASTER PLAN - 38 MESHACKET ROAD, EDGARTOWN MA 02539
PROPOSED MASTER PLAN

- Edgartown Gardens (Donaroma’s Property)
Chapter 40B Senior Housing

Local developers, in collaboration with a group of property owners in Edgartown, are seeking to create a new housing development on Upper Main Street. Slated for 3.1 acres behind Donaroma’s Nursery, Landscaping and Floral Design storefront at 270 Upper Main Street, the proposed project, Edgartown Gardens, will consist of up to 66 apartments; roughly 25 percent of which are expected to be affordable under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40B. Project developers say the centralized location of the proposed project is ideal, as it provides walkable access to Town services, public transit and grocery stores.

With still a long road ahead, the project is expected to receive a determination from MassHousing regarding Chapter 40B approval before the end of the year. Although the MVC Land Use Subcommittee has greenlit the conducting of a traffic study, the MVC has not yet reviewed the proposed development in its entirety.



There are other areas downtown that are underutilized, serving only as private parking lots that stand empty for most of the year. The Town should incentivize the owners of these properties, such as the gated parking lot on Winter Street, to create housing that enhances the continuity of the downtown experience, preserves essential parking, and provides attainable year-round housing. Increasing the availability of housing downtown will also increase year-round vitality and support local businesses.



- Municipal/Employee Housing.** The town is experiencing staff shortages across many departments, specifically due to a lack of available housing. The Town already owns myriad properties that could potentially be developed for municipal workforce housing that would both entice and retain needed staff. The Fire Department, which is currently a volunteer department, is in particular need of increased housing opportunities so that first responders can respond to emergency calls in a timely manner. The Town should investigate which Town owned properties could be developed. Housing that is created with Edgartown money can be restricted to only Edgartown residents or employees. The Town should also explore other properties that could be purchased and converted into municipal housing.

EDGARTOWN AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE INITIATIVES

- Housing Heroes Program.** Edgartown’s Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) embarked on its Housing Heroes campaign in November 2023. The goal of the program is to provide housing to maintain a stable workforce by utilizing vacant homes and guest houses as rental units for year-round residents. The homeowners who participate can generate the same amount of revenue with a 12 month lease that they would by renting their home as a seasonal rental, while eliminating the burden of constant turnovers. All potential tenants will be vetted by The Dukes County Regional Housing Authority (DCRHA) for income level and rental history.

- **Expanding Buy-Down Program.** The Town has an existing buy-down program that provides funding to assist with the purchase of Edgartown homes for income-qualified buyers; specifically, to bridge the gap between market-rate and what is considered “Affordable”. Once Town funds have been used, the property is then deed-restricted to year-round housing in perpetuity. This protects the inventory of existing year-round housing, and creates opportunities for families to be able to afford home ownership in Edgartown.
- **Allowing ADUs.** The Town should work to allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by right, which would incentivize the creation of more housing units on already developed property. The Town can provide subsidies for technical assistance and site-planning to home-owners who wish to take advantage of this. Units that received funding assistance would be deed-restricted to year-round housing in perpetuity.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- **Affordable Housing Trust.** Edgartown’s Affordable Housing Committee (AHC) seeks to facilitate the development of affordable homes in order to retain a stable and diversified year-round community and workforce in Edgartown. Edgartown’s Affordable Housing Trust provides a designated account for use by the AHC. The funds can be used to acquire, sell, and lease property; to manage and renovate real estate; and to hire and pay agents such as accountants, appraisers, and attorneys as deemed necessary. The fund has no dedicated annual revenue stream at this time: it may request Community Preservation funding on a project-by-project basis, receive financial mitigation from private development, or request funds via the Annual Town Meeting.
- **CPC Funds.** The Massachusetts Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a smart growth tool that helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. According to the Community Preservation Coalition CPA online database, about 17 percent of Edgartown’s total CPA revenue collected since adoption (2005) has been allocated for community housing initiatives. CPC funds are restricted by Massachusetts law to fund projects that serve residents earning no more than 100% of AMI.
- **Short Term Rental Funds (STR Funds)** The Town currently collects a 4% tax on all short term rentals, including hotels, bed & breakfasts and private properties that are offered as vacation rentals. The Town has the option to charge up to a 6% tax on these transactions and has submitted a warrant article for the 2024 Annual Town Meeting to implement the increase. The 2% increase is estimated to bring in another \$1.8 million annually. The Town has not yet allocated a specific amount of this revenue stream to Affordable Housing, but could opt to do so, which would create a regular revenue stream for the Affordable Housing Trust to administer. Another option the Town could implement to increase revenue from STR funds would be to require local registration of STRs, which would include a fee and a requirement for annual inspections by the Board of Health and Fire Department. The funds generated by the registration fee would be used to cover increased costs associated with the inspections.

- **Housing Bank Transfer Fee** Currently under review by the State Legislature is a local option for Massachusetts municipalities to implement a 2% transfer fee on most real estate transfers over \$1 million. This transaction fee would serve as the funding mechanism for a regional housing bank. As currently drafted, the housing bank proposal would create a completely new revenue stream through the transfer fee, similar to the Martha’s Vineyard Land Bank. However, unlike the Land Bank, the first \$1 million of a sale price wouldn’t be subject to the 2 percent fee. The transfer fee and housing bank legislation was passed by all six towns at their 2022 Annual Town Meetings.

Energy

As Edgartown continues to develop, its energy use must become more sustainable in order to reduce its impact on climate change. This means both reducing energy consumption and shifting from fossil fuel energy to renewable electric energy. Adding local energy generation, especially solar power, is part of the solution. The transition from fossil fuel powered vehicles to battery electric vehicles must also be supported and encouraged. These actions apply to both the broader Edgartown community and the Town’s municipal government. These actions can also improve the resilience of private and municipal properties to critical events such as severe storms and flooding.

EDGARTOWN AS A GREEN COMMUNITY

After four years of work and study by the Town’s Energy Committee, Edgartown joined the majority of Massachusetts towns and cities as a designated member of the Commonwealth’s Green Communities program in 2022. Because the Town provided a plan to reduce municipal energy consumption by 20% over five years, the Green Communities program awarded the Town a Designation Grant of \$132,000 to spend on energy conservation measures.

About \$88,000 in Designation Grant funding provided new, dimmable LED lighting for the Edgartown School’s classrooms and educational spaces. The remaining \$44,000 contributed to the purchase of six new wastewater pumps at a total cost of about \$420,000. In addition, the Cape Light Compact covered the full cost of \$151,000 for improvements to the School’s ventilation system. These Green Community and Cape Light Compact projects will provide an estimated savings to the Town of about \$100,000 per year. Total energy savings will be approximately 4,100 MMBTU per year, which is enough energy to power about 38 average Massachusetts homes per year.

MUNICIPAL SOLAR FIELDS

- **Katama Farm and Nunnepog Well Solar Fields.** The Town has two large solar fields that came into operation in 2014. These facilities generate renewable energy that is sold to the Eversource power grid. By the close of June 2023, the fields had earned more than \$1,500,000 in Town income – more than enough to cover the Town’s own electric bills since 2014. The Katama Farm solar field has a production capacity of 1.270 megawatts and has generated 12.5 gigawatt-hours of electricity through June 2023. The Nunnepog Well solar field is somewhat larger, with a production capacity of 1.440 megawatts, and it has generated 13.3 gigawatt-hours through June 2023. The total of 25.8 gigawatt-hours is enough energy to supply 806 Massachusetts homes for a single year.
- **The Meshacket Landfill Solar Project.** The Town is negotiating with a solar power developer to provide a new, large solar field atop the Town’s closed landfill that will more than double the Town’s solar output capacity. The proposed facility has a capacity of 3.744 megawatts, and will

generate about 4.7 gigawatt-hours of energy per year, which is enough energy to power about 150 Massachusetts homes per year. Production is scheduled to begin in late 2024. The new facility will also include a large storage battery system to store solar energy to augment or substitute for direct solar energy as needed. The proposed battery will be able to receive a flow of 1.376 megawatts of electric power and store 2.752 megawatt- hours of energy. By releasing this stored energy, the battery system will help meet the grid's peak power demands for summer air conditioning and winter heating. As is the case for the two earlier solar fields, the developer will sell the energy to suppliers through the Eversource grid, making more renewable energy available throughout the New England region. The developer leases the landfill surface from the Town. Lease payments are estimated to be about \$12 million over the 20-year lease period.

COMMUNITY AND MUNICIPAL ENERGY USE

According to data from the MVC, Edgartown uses about 30% of its energy consumption for heating and cooling buildings; 33% for electricity for lighting, appliances, and machinery; and 37% for transportation. Unlike other Massachusetts towns, Edgartown has no significant manufacturing and little light industry. Energy usages are almost entirely residential, commercial, and municipal.

Regarding municipal usage, the Town consumed about **18,000 MMBTU of energy in Fiscal Year 2021**, including electricity, propane, heating oil, and motor fuels. This energy is enough to support 56 average Massachusetts homes per year. The three largest municipal users were the Edgartown School, the Water Department, and the Wastewater Department. The school alone consumed about 6,100 MMBTU, which is about 33% of total municipal energy usage in FY2021. Water supply pumping and wastewater treatment processing consumed nearly 5,000 MMBTU, which is about 27% of all municipal consumption.

With the help of the Energy Committee, the Town is now actively working to prepare for the coming conversion of Town facilities to all-electric energy with solar power. The first steps are to develop plans for each facility. With good plans in hand, the Town can apply for grants to help cover costs, as well as budget Town funds as needed to proceed according to costs, savings, and needs for resilience.

THE TOWN'S ENERGY GOALS

At Edgartown's 2021 Annual Town Meeting, the Town adopted by acclamation the aspirational goals to:

- Reduce Town fossil fuel use by 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2040
- Increase the proportion of renewable electric energy consumed to 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2040.

The adoption provides a call to action by both Edgartown's citizens and its Town government, including elected officials, administrators, departments, commissions, and appointed committees, to achieve the stated goals.

- **Energy Standards for Building Construction.** The Commonwealth sets energy standards for new residential and commercial buildings as well as alterations, additions, and changes of use for existing buildings. These are included in the energy code contained within the Commonwealth's building code. The standards assure that the Town will follow an upward path in building energy efficiency and conservation. By legislative mandate, these energy standards become more stringent with time, ensuring increasing energy savings, and reducing energy costs. Edgartown has opted in to enhanced versions of the Commonwealth's energy code as they appear. The enhanced version is referred to as the Stretch

Code. The Climate Act of 2021 mandated new standards and a new version of the Stretch Code that will become effective on July 1, 2024. The new version increases energy savings by about 7%.

- **Energy Conservation for Existing Buildings.** Reducing energy consumption also requires making existing buildings more energy efficient. Investments in enhanced weatherization of homes and businesses by improving insulation and sealing of air leaks have a rapid payback through energy cost savings. Investments in more energy-efficient equipment, such as heat pumps for space heating, air conditioning, and heating domestic hot water, also pay for themselves. Fortunately for residents who would like to upgrade to efficient electric equipment, the Cape Light Compact offers incentives that can significantly cut costs of upgrades.

MUNICIPAL ENERGY SAVING ACTIONS

- **Electrification, Solar Energy, and Resilience for Town Buildings.** Many of the Town’s buildings are heated by propane and fuel oil. To meet the Town’s goals to reduce fossil fuel consumption by 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2040, these heating systems will need to be replaced by more efficient electric heat pumps. While fossil-fuel powered boilers and furnaces can only convey the heat they generate by combustion, electric heat pumps simply move heat into and out of the building. As a result, they can be three to four times more efficient, saving significant energy and cost. Many Town facilities have rooftop and ground areas that are suitable for solar power development. Storage batteries are required components of such developments, allowing greater flexibility in providing constant solar power. The renewable power can also be sold to the grid, helping to pay for the cost of development.
- **“Microgrids” For Resilience.** Where solar power and batteries can be deployed, they can be part of a “microgrid” system. Using special purpose electrical equipment, the system can draw from on-site solar power, battery power, grid power, and a back-up generator at will. This allows the system to choose the lowest cost for the energy needed at any time of day or night. The system is referred to as a microgrid by analogy with a main power grid that draws on many sources of energy – such as solar fields, hydropower, wind power, and fuel burning power plants. In a similar fashion, the microgrid chooses among local energy sources depending on their cost and availability. The microgrid is designed for resilience. If grid power fails, the system switches to battery power automatically. If daylight is available, batteries are simultaneously recharged. If batteries become exhausted, the generator takes over. Most outages are handled without burning fossil fuel. For extended outages, less generator power and fuel are needed to ride out the emergency.

Presently, studies of full electrification and solarization with batteries leading to microgrids are in progress for the following buildings: New Firehouse and Police Headquarters, Administration Building at the Wastewater Department, Water Department Building and the Chappaquiddick Fire Station.

At the Edgartown school, a detailed plan for replacement of oil-fired boilers with heat pumps and associated air conditioning has been developed, and a separate ongoing effort is planning rooftop solar with batteries for the school and public library along with a microgrid for resilience.

Electrification and solarization plans remain to be developed for the Highway Department and associated buildings on the Highway Department’s campus, Town Hall, and the Harbormaster’s North Wharf building.

MAINTAINING TOWN CHARACTER WHILE BUILDING RESILIENCE

There is a critical need to maintain the Town's historic and aesthetic character, and there is a tension between this and the need to build energy resilience. The primary concern is solar development, especially where rooftop panels may be visible from the street. The Historic District Commission presently rules on permits for solar panels within the Historic District. Massachusetts law currently provides by statute that local zoning ordinances and bylaws cannot prohibit or unreasonably regulate the installation of solar energy systems in the absence of considerations of public health, safety or welfare. This statute affirms the Commonwealth's interest in replacing fossil fuel power with renewable electric power. Also, the Massachusetts Historic Districts Act states, "When ruling on applications for certificates of appropriateness for solar energy systems, ... the commission shall also consider the policy of the Commonwealth to encourage the use of solar energy systems and to protect solar access". This Master Plan recommends that the Edgartown Historic District Commission should develop policies that maintain the Town's character while respecting the Commonwealth's and Edgartown voters' desire for renewable power to replace fossil fuel power.

CHAPTER 6: TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is an ongoing challenge on Martha's Vineyard, a challenge shared by Edgartown. Accessible only by air or boat, and a popular resort that faces a four-fold seasonal fluctuation in population as well as a steadily growing year-round population, the Island and the Town increasingly face congestion and safety problems that strain our infrastructure capabilities. Additionally, as recent storms have shown, several of our key roadways are vulnerable to storm surges and flooding. Such flooding events are likely to increase in the near future.

The Martha's Vineyard Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) released by the MVC, and updated for 2024-2044, seeks to identify and address many of these issues, including traffic, seasonal congestion, parking, alternative means of transportation, and roadway, air and water transportation. The RTP provides an essential framework and current data that should be accessed by Town departments. The Martha's Vineyard Climate Action Plan (CAP), released in 2022, also identifies and addresses transportation issues as they are impacted by climate change. Based on the CAP, Edgartown would benefit from assessing its transportation infrastructure assets and vulnerabilities to form the basis of future planning, explore the use of nature-based strategies to protect at-risk infrastructure and/or identify alternative locations, develop a Town policy to ensure that climate change projections and protocols are used to assess road infrastructure repairs and upgrades, and design a complete streets program with emphasis on walking, biking, ride shares and public transit.

The infrastructure updates that will be required will come with a hefty price tag. The Town will need to explore alternative funding opportunities in conjunction with the Highway Superintendent and other Town officials.

This chapter describes Edgartown's current transportation assets and vulnerabilities, and looks at ways to establish and maintain a transportation system that is safe, reliable, convenient, economical, and at the same time is consistent with Edgartown's scenic, historic, and natural resources.

High Congestion Areas

THE TRIANGLE & UPPER MAIN STREET

The most heavily talked about congestion area for Edgartown traffic is the back-up at the Welcome to Edgartown Triangle. During peak months, and peak traffic times, the traffic at this intersection can back up almost a mile along the Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Rd, and similarly along Beach Road. A number of solutions to the issue have been discussed, including changing the merging lanes into a roundabout, as shown below:

Edgartown Triangle Concept – Roundabout A

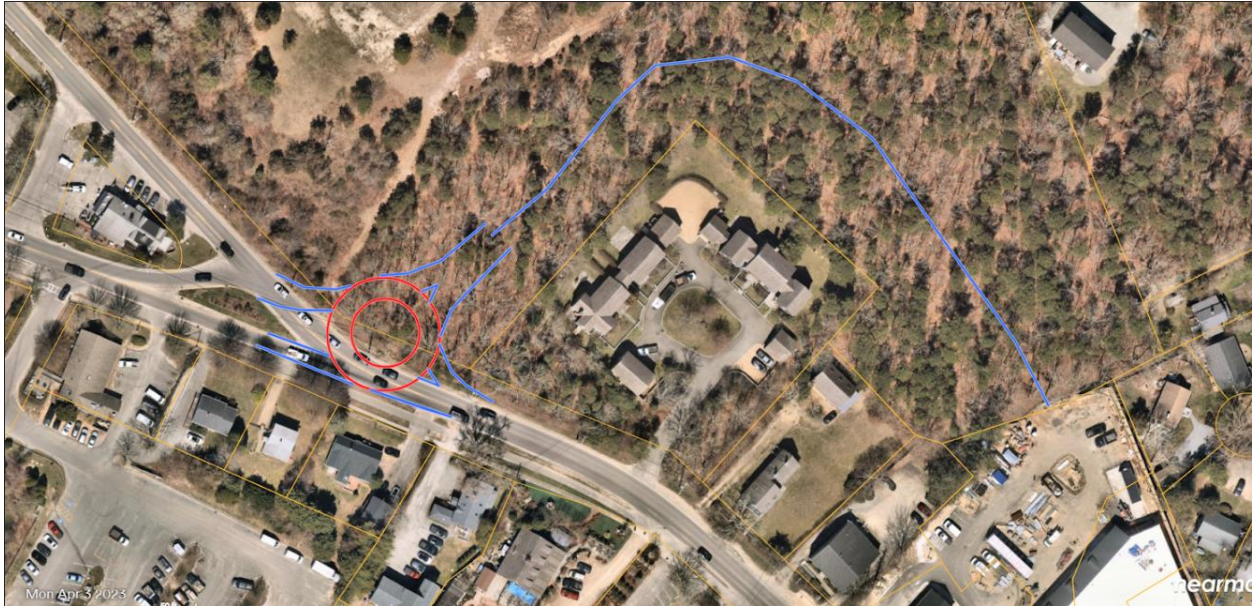


Other ideas that have been explored include changing the two roads from merging and instead, having Beach Road terminate into the Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road at a right angle, as shown below:

Edgartown Triangle Concept – Intersection B



Another idea that would require further investigation, as well as coordination with the Edgartown Golf Club and the Stop & Shop is to connect Beach Road to the back side of the Stop & Shop parking lot through the purchase of a portion of Edgartown Golf Club land. This would provide an alternate entrance and exit route into the Stop & Shop parking lot, alleviating the pressure of having to enter and exit via Upper Main Street. It is without question that having the only access into and out of Stop & Shop from Upper Main Street contributes heavily to the back-up that occurs at the Triangle during the summer months. The concept for a back entrance to Stop & Shop is roughly drawn here:



A final idea to help alleviate Triangle traffic, which could be used in conjunction with other efforts, or could be effective in and of itself, is the creation of a left turn lane into the Western access point to the existing Stop & Shop parking lot, as shown below. Another change that could be made to the area to reduce pressure would be turning Pinehurst Road into a one-way road that would provide access from Upper Main Street to the Edgartown – West Tisbury Road via Chase Road, but not coming toward Upper Main Street.

Proposed Upper Main Street Traffic Concept



COOKE STREET & UPPER MAIN STREET AT CANNONBALL PARK

The intersections of Cooke Street, Upper Main Street, and Edgartown-West Tisbury Road create a triangular area with Cannonball Park at the center. Each street consists of two lanes, with two-way traffic, creating points of conflict for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. This is a particularly confusing area for bicyclists, who must deal with an awkward jog at the top of Cannonball Park, where Cooke Street begins, and the bike path crosses across Cooke Street to Upper Main Street. This intersection is also a high vehicle congestion area during the summer months as cars utilize Cooke Street to turn left onto Upper Main Street. The intersection being discussed currently looks like this:



As noted, the intersections surrounding the triangular park are not ideal, and make walking dangerous. Redesigning some of these intersections would also make bicycle travel significantly easier and safer. Making Cooke Street a one-way street heading into downtown as far as Pease's Point Way, and making Main Street one-way heading out of Town from Pease's Point Way to Cooke Street, will reduce points of conflict, and enable the sidewalks at the park edge to be widened and parking to be added. In general, the combination of one-way streets and parallel parking creates multiple benefits. They both positively change the character of an area, which helps emphasize pedestrian activity and slow down traffic. Adding on-street parking along Upper Main Street and Cooke Street would also increase the number of parking spaces available for the park, allowing people to more easily access the public space. Clear pedestrian crossings at all intersections, along with the simplified traffic movements would make getting to the park and traveling past the park safer on foot and by bike. Cannonball Park can become an attractive extension of downtown Edgartown.

The proposed concept narrows each street segment around Cannonball Park creating one-way roads to reduce conflict points at the intersections. Vehicles traveling east on Upper Main Street will fork right onto Cooke Street. If they wish to reverse direction, they can turn left onto Edgartown-West Tisbury Road and make another left turn onto Upper Main Street. In this concept, park space would be expanded. Sidewalks and shared-use paths would be reconstructed to be wider around the park with landscape buffers between the paths and the street. Bikes coming in along Upper Main Street would continue along the Cooke Street side of Cannonball Park, not the Main Street side, ensuring the safety of cyclists by avoiding two dangerous intersections.

Cannonball Park - Proposed Concept



The existing triangular buffer at the top of Cannonball Park could be repurposed as a plaza extension for the park, while also serving as an entry point to downtown Edgartown. Moving the pedestrian crossings farther away from the intersection would also ensure the safety of pedestrians. This way, activity between cars, cyclists, and pedestrians would be properly distributed and separated from one another, creating cohesive intersections for both entering the park and continuing to Town in all mobility aspects. The new strategy with on- street parking would add more than thirty (30) parking spaces as well as new sidewalks where there are currently none and wider sidewalks where they do exist.



It should be noted that this proposal could be implemented in stages possibly moving the bike path from the Main Street side of Cannonball Park to the Cooke Street side as the first step. The bike path could then continue down Cooke Street to new bike racks along Pease’s Point Way South, adjacent to the Old Westside Cemetery. This would keep many bicyclists away from the narrow section of Main Street east of the Edgartown – West Tisbury Road. The bike path could possibly continue down Cooke Street all the way to South Water Street, where bicyclists could turn right and safely connect to the Katama Road bike path.

CONNECTION BETWEEN BEACH RD. & EDGARTOWN-VH ROAD BEFORE THE TRIANGLE

Another way to relieve the traffic back-up at the Triangle could be to create access between Beach Road and Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road before the access provided at the Square Rigger Restaurant. This would not only create an avenue for cars wishing to access State Beach from Edgartown – Vineyard Haven Rd, it would also minimize the number of cars that use the existing parking lot as a way to cut through before reaching the triangle. The access would be created as shown below. The property where the access would be created is owned by Sheriff’s Meadow Foundation (SMF), but an easement is in place for the Town to use this land for this purpose. SMF has approved the use of this location as an additional access, however, further collaboration would certainly be needed.



INTERSECTION OF EDGARTOWN-WT RD & BARNES RD

The intersection of Edgartown-West Tisbury Road and Barnes Road sees a large volume of traffic during peak seasons on the island. Currently, Barnes Road has a stop sign at this intersection and drivers have the right of way to travel non-stop on Edgartown- West Tisbury Road. The ongoing traffic on Edgartown-West Tisbury Road makes it challenging to turn onto or off of Barnes Road and as result, there is often backed up traffic on Edgartown - West Tisbury Road as drivers wait to take a left onto Barnes Road. The Town should investigate ways to improve the traffic flow at this intersection including the possibility of a roundabout or left turn lane on Edgartown West – Tisbury Road.

When considering what to do with this location, the Town should also encourage the County, Airport Commission and the FAA to address the traffic back-ups on Airport Road, for vehicles leaving the

Airport via Airport Road. As air travel to and from the Island continues to increase, this will become more of a problem area.

CHAPPY FERRY LINE

The queue of vehicles attempting to utilize the Chappaquiddick ferry can cause significant congestion and disruption to traffic flow in downtown, and community members have reported waiting hours and or being denied access to the queue by police monitoring traffic because the queue has become too long. Suggestions for reducing this point of conflict and congestion were made by community members and included creating a reservation system, running an additional ferry, and exploring ways to encourage more pedestrian ferry riders instead of those with vehicles.

While the current restricted capacity of the ferries effectively controls the pace at which vehicles are released onto Chappaquiddick, and conversely back to Edgartown, the summer demand still often creates vehicle queuing for users on both sides of the harbor. Waits of more than an hour increasingly occur. Queuing on the narrow Edgartown streets can extend several blocks at peak times and coordination requires at least two traffic control officers, including in the shoulder seasons. The waiting cars often block residential driveways and cause other traffic issues downtown.

Getting to Edgartown

VEHICLE PARKING

As noted in Chapter 4, downtown Edgartown is highly walkable and easy to navigate on foot. Parking in downtown Edgartown is limited and data shows that a substantial number of vehicles traveling down Main Street, Dock Street, and Winter Street are people circling downtown looking for a parking space. During the crowded summer season, parking for the downtown can be located outside of the downtown core. The remote parking areas should be clearly marked from roadways entering Town and easy to find from the main road. The Town should also work to increase public transportation services through downtown, possibly with small electric buses, or a trolley.

- **Enhance Existing Remote Parking Options.** Currently, in Edgartown, only one Park and Ride facility exists. It is located off Dark Woods Road near the Triangle, behind Edgartown Pizza, as shown in the map below. This Park and Ride lot allows users to leave their vehicles outside of the busy downtown area and ride the Martha's Vineyard Transit Authority (VTA) electric shuttle buses to access downtown. The Dark Woods Park & Ride lot needs better signage. Drivers coming into Edgartown need to see clear directions to the lot and need to be alerted that there is limited parking downtown *before* they pass beyond Dark Woods Road. Also, the Town should work to make the Dark Woods lot a more inviting place to park, by adding shade trees, benches and even possibly a public restroom facility. In addition, the commercial vehicles that currently monopolize many of the parking spaces in the Dark Woods lot should be relocated somewhere more suitable for their storage, or should be required to purchase a permit to continue parking there.

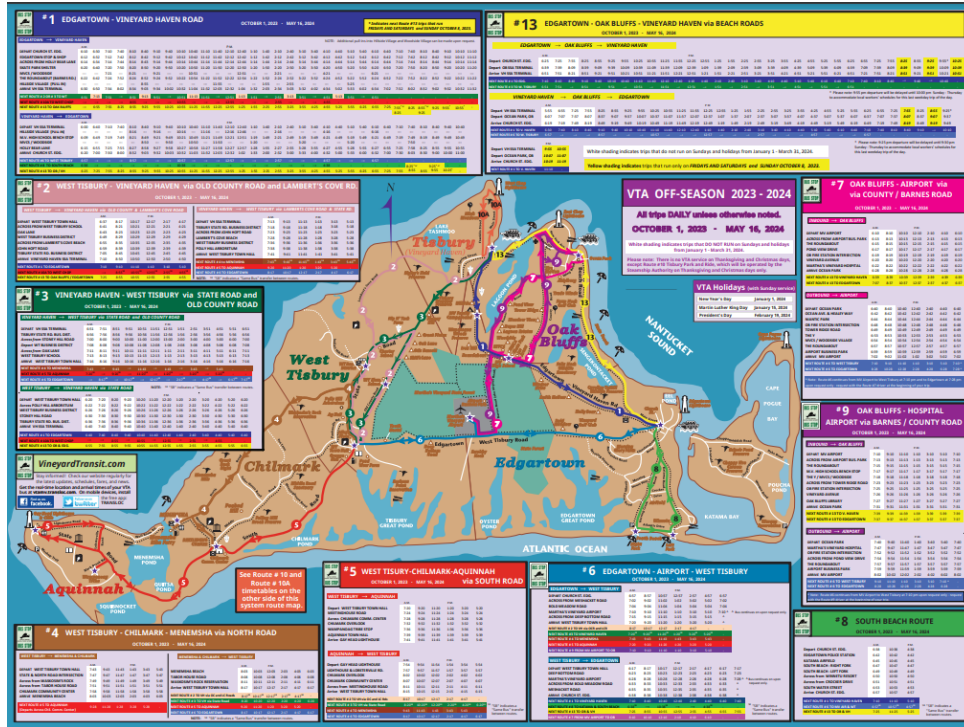
EDGARTOWN PARK & RIDE



- **Expand Park & Ride Locations (During Summer Months).** During the development of this Master Plan, it was repeatedly suggested that, during the months of July and August, the Edgartown School parking lot could be utilized as a second Park & Ride option. The location at the School would make it especially convenient for visitors coming from Katama, or coming into Town on Edgartown – West Tisbury Road. The Town should work with the VTA to see if it's feasible to add the School parking lot to the Park & Ride shuttle service from the Dark Woods lot.
- **Expand Access to EV Chargers.** There are currently EV chargers at the Dark Woods Park & Ride. The Town should consider adding EV charges to other locations easily accessible from downtown, such as the Edgartown School parking lot, the parking lot on Robinson Road between the School and the Old Westside Cemetery, the Town's Public Safety Campus and/or at the Chappaquiddick Community Center.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

The Vineyard Transit Authority (VTA) provides year-round public transit bus and paratransit services across Martha's Vineyard. In Edgartown, six routes operate: Routes 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 13. The VTA also provides a free shuttle service from the Dark Woods Park & Ride to the downtown area.



The Church Street Visitor Center improvement project broke ground in January 2022 and finished in the middle of June 2022. The project scope included hardscape improvements and the installation of three inductive bus chargers under Church Street in Edgartown. Electric buses currently do not have enough battery power for a full day without charging. The inductive bus chargers installed under the street can charge a bus wirelessly when the vehicle is parked over the charger. The project also included renovation of the waiting area in front of the Visitor Center. A covered shelter, new seating, and new signage were added to help visitors navigate downtown.



- **Make the VTA Free.** As a means of reducing traffic and increasing the utilization of alternative transit options, the Town should explore making all VTA transit routes free through Edgartown. This is an effort that would require partnership and coordination with the VTA and the Martha’s Vineyard Commission (MVC). Making the transit routes free would incentivize ridership while traveling through Edgartown.
- **Downsize and Localize.** Through conversations during public input sessions, it was suggested that the idea of a more localized transit service should be explored to move people from areas like the Park and Ride, to popular areas like downtown or the beach, and around Chappaquiddick Island. The service could be run with a fleet of pedi-cabs or jitneys.

FERRIES

There are two public ferries that operate in Edgartown Harbor: the Chappaquiddick Ferry (“Chappy Ferry”) and the Pied Piper Ferry. Both ferries base their operations from the Memorial Wharf. The Chappaquiddick Ferry operates year-round; the Pied Piper Ferry operates seasonally.

The Chappy Ferry transports cars, bikes and people to and from Chappaquiddick. The ferry service is licensed by the Edgartown Selectboard, who also approves the fares. The ferry crossing is located downtown, at the narrowest part of the Harbor for the shortest crossing possible. There are three ferries in operation, each carry either two or three vehicles, depending on the size of the vehicles. The ferry operates year-round from 6:45am until 8pm, with extended hours during the summer months. With two vessels running simultaneously, the ferries can transport approximately 30 vehicles per hour in both directions.



When the south-facing barrier beach that connects Chappaquiddick to the rest of the island breaches, the Chappy Ferry is the only way for residents of Chappaquiddick to access their properties. When the beach breaches, it can close back up in a matter of days, or can remain open for years, as it did from 2007 to 2015.

In 2022, Edgartown voters approved funding to conduct a feasibility study to look at the Chappy Ferry operations, including ownership, operation and infrastructure. Rising sea levels put the existing infrastructure at risk and at times, inaccessible during storm surges and moon tides. The study will make

recommendations on how to address SLR on both sides of the harbor. On the Chappy side, this will likely involve raising the entire road.

The Falmouth - Edgartown Ferry, also known as the Pied Piper Ferry, is the only ferry that sails from Falmouth Harbor into Edgartown Harbor. The Pied Piper Ferry is a seasonal, passenger-only ferry that runs daily from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend and offers various services on board. The total time for a one-way trip is only about an hour.



- **Increase options for water-based transportation services.** During the development of this Master Plan, it was suggested that new ferries might be added. Possibly, a fast ferry that would serve as a year-round commuter ferry, bringing riders over from the mainland in the morning, and returning them late afternoon. Another option that was discussed was a water taxi service that transported passengers to Vineyard Haven or Oak Bluffs. This would be an attractive alternate to buses or taxis during the summer months and shoulder seasons.

AIR TRAVEL

- **Katama Airfield.** Established in 1924, few similar landing facilities have retained their original look and utility as Katama Airfield. Located in the Katama section of Edgartown, Katama Airpark has three grass runways, and averages 22 takeoffs each day. It also has biplane rides available during the summer season. The Airfield also provides flying lessons for those seeking a pilot's license. The property hosts 2 hangars and a seasonally operated restaurant. The Katama Kitchen offers traditional diner fare with a fresh and local twist. Breakfast and lunch are served from May through October, with dinners added in July and August. The Airfield operates from May – October, dawn to dusk, with a full-time airport manager, part time assistant, and is overseen by a five-member Airfield Commission who collaborates with the Katama Airfield Trust, a separate entity from the Town of Edgartown. The historical preservation and special care of The Katama Airfield is handled by the Town of Edgartown, The Nature Conservancy and the Katama Airfield Commissioners. The Katama

Airfield Commissioners and the manager of Katama Airfield are responsible for the overall maintenance of the property, and communicate the financial needs to the Town of Edgartown.



- **Martha’s Vineyard Airport.** The other island Airport, MVY, is the only airport that supports the island’s commercial air travel needs. MVY is located on the border of West Tisbury and Edgartown, three miles south of Vineyard Haven’s Central Business District. Presently owned by the County of Dukes County, it was initially built in 1942 to support the training of naval aviators. Now it handles the general aviation traffic on Martha’s Vineyard. The MVY airport business park has over 100 lease-holding businesses. It is overseen by a seven-member Commission and is under the jurisdiction of the FAA.

BICYCLES & THE BIKE PATH NETWORK

In Edgartown, although extensive bike paths exist, they are fragmented and disconnected. The bike paths should be extended to create an interconnected network that makes biking and walking a clear and desirable option. The Town should support a study by qualified consultants to identify areas with pedestrian and bicycle network gaps. The study should identify areas to create connections to fill in pedestrian and bicycle network gaps. Bicycle network connections that would increase alternative transportation options include connecting the bike path in the Upper Main Street area to a bicycle parking area downtown, safely connecting the Katama bike path to the downtown area, and creating a bike path on Chappaquiddick Island.

Another recurring concern that was discussed during the development of this plan was that the bike paths need better maintenance. The Town should take steps to clarify the responsibility for maintenance and to be sure funds are provided regularly to keep the bike paths safe for all users.



- **Improve Bicycle Path Network Connectivity.** The map below shows bike path extensions proposed by residents and transportation planners.

Proposed Pedestrian and Bicycle Networks in Edgartown

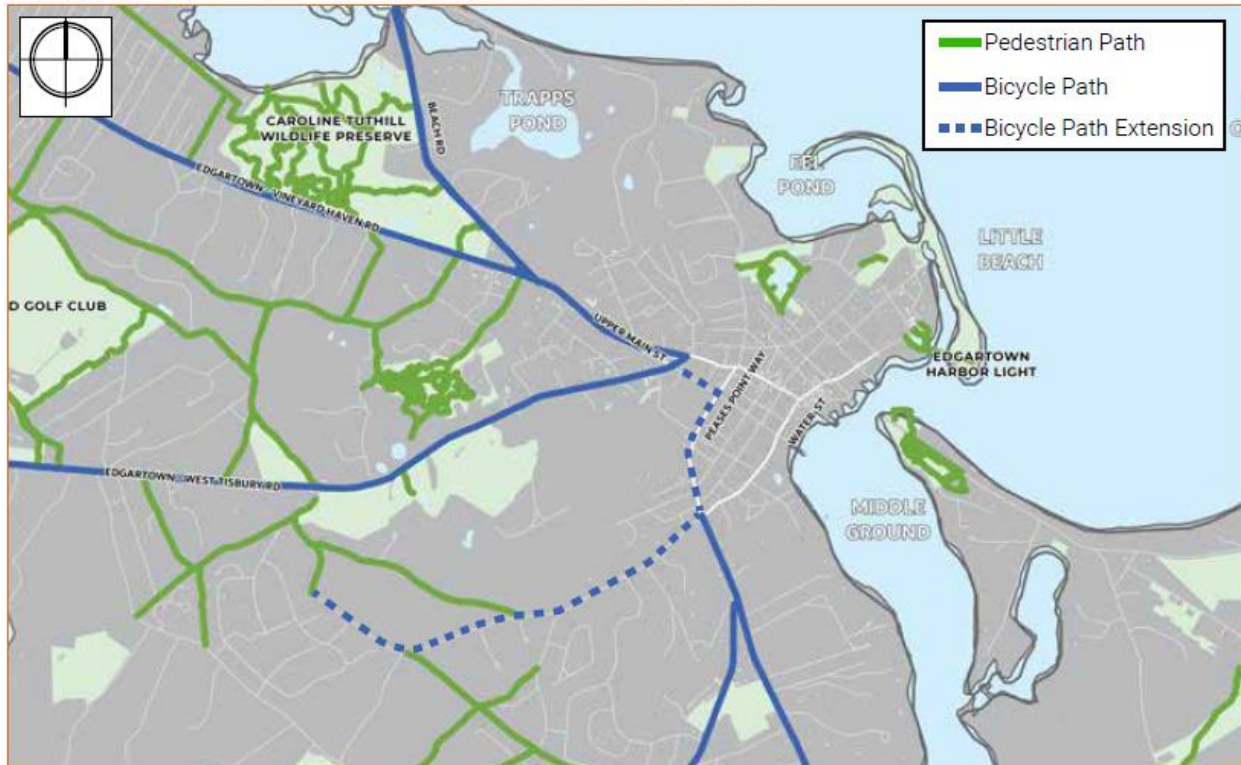


Image Source: MassGIS, Martha's Vineyard Commission GIS

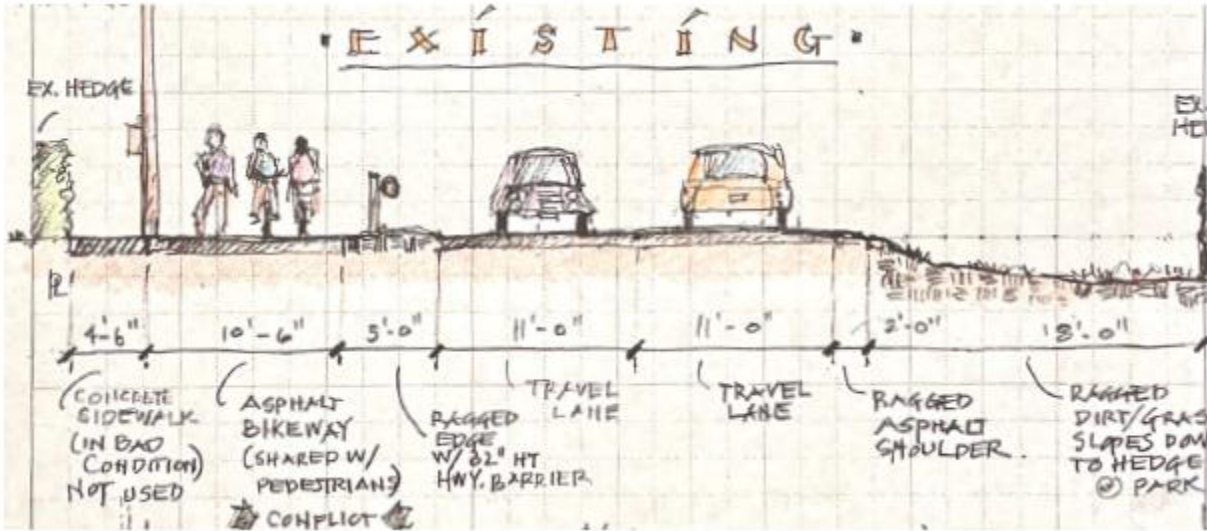
Meshacket Road is a popular bypass route for cyclists that begins near Morning Glory Farm and leads to downtown Edgartown and Katama. The road connects existing bike paths on Edgartown-West Tisbury Road and Katama Road. The addition of a bike path will provide increased access and safety for nearby residents. The Town should investigate the ideas to add a shared-use path or dedicated bike lane on Meshacket Road

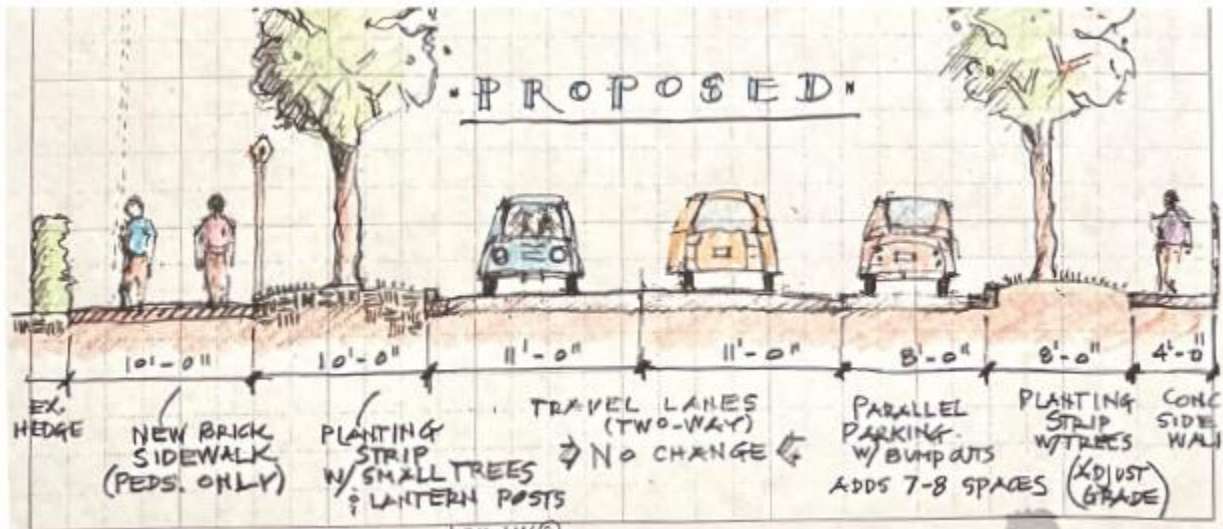
The bike paths on Upper Main Street and Edgartown-West Tisbury Road end at the intersection of the two streets near Cannonball Park. At this intersection, Upper Main Street becomes significantly narrower and there is inadequate space for bicycles. As a result, bicyclists ride on the sidewalks, which are also narrow. As described above in this chapter, Cooke Street could potentially serve as the main access to downtown for cyclists, eliminating the need to cross in front of oncoming traffic. The speed limit for this portion of Cooke Street could be lowered allowing cars and bikes to mingle comfortably, or Cooke Street could be made one-way for cars heading into Town, which would make room for bikes, trees and possibly parallel parking for cars.

Pease's Point Way North, between Planting Field Way and Winter Street, is very difficult for pedestrians. There are no sidewalks, and the existing crosswalks do not lead pedestrians to safe areas to walk along the road. The placement of crosswalks at the intersection of Pease's Point Way North with Church Street and Winter Street, and the crosswalks nearer to Edgartown Commons, should be reconsidered. The bike racks along Pease's Point Way North are heavily used, but difficult for bicyclists to get to and are not well marked. Bike racks located on Pease's

Point Way South, adjacent to the Old Westside Cemetery, would be much easier for bicyclists to access.

The layout of the intersection of Edgartown-West Tisbury Road and Main Street should also be an area of consideration for improvement. As shown below, there is ample room for improvements to the shared use path between Main Street and the Edgartown Library; this is another location where street trees could be added, as proposed in the diagram below.





- **Bike Share Program.** Other options the Town could explore include implementing a bike share program, perhaps in partnership with the other Island Towns, to provide bicycling opportunities for those who may not have access to a bicycle but have the desire to ride one.
- **Regulations for Electric Bicycles and Scooters.** The State has no formal regulations on whether e-bikes should be ridden on paths, trails, or sidewalks. As e-bikes increase in popularity, it is expected that rules and regulations will also change with them. Research into states and municipalities with e-bike guidance is recommended when planning rules and regulations for the Town.

CHAPTER 7: Chappaquiddick

Chappaquiddick's Unique Character

Located just over 500 feet across the harbor from downtown Edgartown, Chappaquiddick, or “Chappy” as it is known locally, is a world apart. For the most part, Chappy is its own island, although usually connected to the Vineyard by a narrow stretch of sand at its southern end. The island never developed to the extent that the rest of the Town did and its thirty-eight hundred acres remain wild, rugged, and remote to this day.

Much of Chappaquiddick's uniqueness comes from its wild landscapes and rural development pattern. Over the centuries, those living on Chappy have taken pride in the self-reliant and independent nature of life on the island. Even now, there is only one retail establishment on Chappy, a small convenience store.

Like the rest of Edgartown, Chappy is faced with increasing residential and tourism pressures. Preserving Chappaquiddick's uniqueness while adapting to present needs requires balancing modern conveniences and increased access with protecting the natural environment and maintaining the rural character

The entirety of Chappaquiddick is currently zoned as a special residential district. This district has a minimum three-acre lot size, 50-foot front setback, and 25-foot side and rear setbacks. There are also several Overlay Districts in Chappaquiddick, including the Cape Pogue District, Coastal District, Flood Plain District, Island Roads District - Major Roads Zone, and Special Places District.

Industrial and commercial uses should remain limited on Chappaquiddick. Where necessary, the size of such uses should be restricted by water and wastewater constraints, as well as the ability to be serviced via the Chappy ferry.

Unique natural areas across Chappaquiddick, especially those along the waterfront or within the flood plain, should continue to be conserved to provide access to the water and limit property damage from flooding. The Open Space Committee (OSC) of the Chappaquiddick Island Association, in partnership with the MV Land Bank Commission and the Sheriffs Meadow Foundation, work to conserve land on Chappy.

Public Safety

Public safety on Chappy is monitored by the Edgartown Police and Fire Departments which are staffed by a small number of officers. 911 is the only number to reach a local dispatcher in case of fire or crime. About 3% of the 911 calls in Dukes Country are from Chappy and 6% of the calls received by Edgartown Fire Department are from Chappy. Fire Alarm calls will automatically dispatch ambulance, police, and the Chappy tanker. Four-wheel drive emergency vehicles may come from other towns for remote locations access.

As Chappaquiddick Island is separated from the main Martha's Vineyard Island, emergency preparedness is an important aspect of public safety on Chappy.

Chappy can be subject to natural disasters such as hurricanes, coastal floods, and winter storms. As an emergency shelter, the Chappy fire house can accommodate 25 people with limited food for three days. Residents of Chappaquiddick are in the process of establishing a Community Emergency Response Team

(CERT) with trained volunteers and established communication teams. They are also working to create a solar-powered micro grid at the Chappaquiddick Community Center so that it can be used to shelter and assist residents in the event of an emergency.

Vehicle and Bicycle Access

Access to Chappaquiddick is provided by the Chappy Ferry, carrying people and vehicles year-round between the two islands. The ferry runs between Memorial Wharf in Edgartown and Chappaquiddick Point. The relative difficulty to travel to the island and lack of a road connection add to its remote and rugged character.

The Martha's Vineyard Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) 2020-2040 provides an overview of the ferry service and the challenges it faces, including queueing through the downtown. The RTP recommends further studies to improve the ferry, which may include a reservation system, remote staging, separate ferrying of cyclists and pedestrians, and new ferry service farther from the downtown area.

Explore options to reduce queue lengths for the ferry and increase the reliability of travel times between downtown and Chappy. This could include a reservation system that would provide certainty for ferry service and also decrease queueing. Other options could include an off-site queueing area outside of downtown where vehicles could wait for their turn for the ferry.

Explore the possibility for a second ferry location outside of downtown for vehicular traffic to reduce traffic and queueing in downtown Edgartown. When studying locations, the impact of sea level rise and coastal flooding should also be considered.

The Chappy Ferry facilities, including the ramps and approach roads, will need to be elevated to allow for continued operation with higher sea levels. The Vulnerability Plan provides recommendations to increase the elevation of these facilities in two phases, ultimately reaching 5.8 ft. NAVD88, compared to the current 2.1 feet on the Edgartown side and 2.4 feet on the Chappy side.

There are currently no public docks or launching facilities on Chappaquiddick. This is discussed in Chapter 3 of this Master Plan.

An electric shuttle bus from the Chappy ferry to the beach and other areas of interest on Chappaquiddick during the summer months can encourage more walk-on passengers and bicyclists as well as off-load the volume of cars on the ferry.

Chappaquiddick does not have any designated bicycle facilities or shared-use paths, although the quiet and rural roads are generally easy to navigate. Improving bicycle facilities on Chappy could be beneficial for both residents and visitors. Increasing the use of bicycles on Chappaquiddick during the busy summer months could reduce the number of cars on the island and the number of vehicles needing to take the ferry.

A shared-use path along Chappaquiddick Road has been discussed in the past and was not pursued at the time. As visitors to Chappy increase, along with their cars, the need for a shared-use path should be revisited. Additionally, Dike Road, connecting Chappaquiddick Road to East Beach should be upgraded to better allow bicyclists to share the facility. Pervious surface materials are recommended which could include natural earth or crushed stone. Such upgrades can involve fixing drainage problems, repairing eroded areas, and removing vegetation.

Communication and Energy

For many years, cell phone service on Chappy was unreliable with limited coverage, which posed an inconvenience as well as challenge for emergency situations. Similarly, high-speed internet was also limited. One of the challenges to providing improved cell phone service on the island is balancing the desire of many to maintain the island's rural character and aesthetics.

Eventually, a 115-foot cell tower was constructed in 2019 after approval by the Martha's Vineyard Commission in 2017 and a special permit issued by the Edgartown planning board in 2018. While the tower has improved cell phone service on Chappy, there are still some concerns over its impact to neighbors and on the island's aesthetics.

The Town should continue to work with communication companies to strengthen communication infrastructure on Chappaquiddick while addressing neighbor concerns. The Town should also work to phase-out the current cell tower in favor of other alternatives.

- **Establish Reliable High-Speed Internet Connection.** Access to the internet is a necessity for work, healthcare, education, and communication. Edgartown should continue to coordinate with internet service providers to utilize the latest technology to provide reliable, high-speed internet service on Chappy.
- **Build Energy Resilient Infrastructure.** The energy supply on Chappy is dependent on the mainland energy grid which is connected to the island via submarine cables. Resilient infrastructure ensures a reliable and stable supply of energy even in times of extreme weather events. Alternative energy sources such as solar panels should be encouraged. Diversifying energy sources can reduce Chappy's dependence on a single energy source. Adding battery back up to a solar panel system can store excess energy and allowing it to be used during periods of low energy production.
- **Draft a Wireless Communications Overlay District.** The Town should consider creating a Wireless Communications Overlay District, or other zoning bylaws, to ensure that infrastructure locations reflect current technologies, approaches, and locational criteria and that telecommunication towers have the least impact on residents. Such rules can:
 - Establish appropriate locations for wireless communications infrastructure;
 - Minimize the adverse impacts of wireless communication facilities on adjacent properties and residential neighborhoods;
 - Minimize the overall number and height of such facilities to only what is essential; and,
 - Promote shared use of existing facilities to reduce the need for new ones.

Climate Change

Chappaquiddick is particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels, higher tides, and stronger storms, all of which may result in more ferry shutdowns, saltwater intrusion into wells, electrical disruptions and migration of marshes.

Chappy's shoreline is in a nearly constant state of change. Over the centuries, it has moved and responded to storms and changing sea levels. With climate change, these changes are expected to accelerate.

Projects to protect Chappy's coastline should be studied and implemented as needed. Adaptation projects that use hard infrastructure to mitigate flooding or erosion typically have effects on other areas, many times negative. Resiliency projects in Chappy must carefully consider the benefits they provide with any possible negative effects.

Chappy is home to some of the cleanest waters and most productive natural scallop fisheries in New England, which are found in Cape Pogue Pond. On the other side of Chappy, Katama Bay's clean, brackish waters are the location of a dozen oyster farms. New development and increased tourism are placing additional stress on the natural environment and should be managed to protect resources while also allowing for their enjoyment.

The increase in recreational use of Cape Pogue by boaters has resulted in degradation to the natural environment, including damage to scallop beds and eel grass. Management plans to address these issues are being considered and implemented, and this effort should continue. This includes establishing designated anchoring area.

The Town should consider limiting the clearing of trees to maintain the forested character and tree canopy on the island. Maintaining forested areas can reduce storm water runoff and erosion, helping to maintain cleaner water.

In 2021, the key findings of a 2020 climate change speaker series sponsored by the Chappaquiddick Island Association and the Chappaquiddick Community Center were as follows:

- We must reduce our nitrogen output into coastal bays and ocean by upgrading our septic fields to save our marshlands and aquifer.
- We must prepare for future marsh migration inland by preserving our low-lying areas from development.
- We must support local organic farming, utilize GSA, and grow more of our own vegetables using reduced tillage techniques and cover crops.
- We must preserve our aquifer by reducing our freshwater usage, upgrading our septic systems, and limiting fertilizers and other chemicals that quickly percolate through the sandy soil.

In the face of climate change, Chappy is particularly vulnerable. Taking steps, such as providing safe and comfortable routes for biking, is a critical step toward reducing the carbon footprint of those living on and visiting Chappy.

CHAPTER 8: Implementation – GOALS & ACTIONS

CHAPTER 3: Edgartown's Natural Resources

OPEN PUBLIC SPACE

GOAL: Maintain and improve open space areas both for the environmental services they provide and their recreational opportunities.

ACTIONS:

- Increase public awareness of town-owned and other publicly accessible land, including traditional and historic walkways and beach access points.
- Improve the visitors' experience of Lighthouse Beach and Harborview Park with a plan for improved trails, interpretive signage, and wayfinding which nevertheless maintains the picturesque, wild character of the beach and park.
- Inventory, document and map all public access points to the shoreline and freshwater bodies; publish and distribute a public waterfront access guide.
- Work with private beach owners to connect public access areas.
- Improve communication with the community and visitors by using social media and websites for updates on recreation programs, activities, and opportunities.
- Encourage people to designate land as protected open space through conservation restrictions, or otherwise.
- Develop informational guides for property owners on how to manage open fields for wildlife and the best cutting and planting practices to achieve various desired results.
- Encourage and require, where possible, the use of native plant species in Edgartown and discourage and prohibit, where possible, the use of invasive plant species in Edgartown.
- Encourage replacement of removed trees whenever possible.
- Disincentivize expansive lawns.
- Plan and construct public toilet facilities at the Robinson Road Recreation area as part of a general improvement of the area.
- Add a public boat launch on Chappaquiddick.

GOAL: Increase the inventory of conserved lands in order to protect natural resources and preserve the Town's scenic landscapes.

ACTIONS:

- Prioritize the conservation of lands abutting already conserved lands to create larger protected greenways, habitat areas, and opportunities for trail extensions.
- Require substantial undisturbed open space set asides in any new subdivisions.

BEACHES

GOAL: Maintain public beaches and manage erosion to the extent possible

ACTIONS:

- Continue to nourish key public beaches, especially those that protect Beach Road, the harbor, and access to Chappaquiddick
- Consider amending zoning bylaws to restrict construction that is likely to result in increased erosion near beaches
- Inform property owners of the benefits of stabilizing vegetation (e.g. beach grass) versus species with shallow root systems (e.g. lawns)

PONDS

GOAL: Improve water quality

ACTIONS:

- Support aquaculture programs
- Work with other agencies in a joint effort to protect the ponds (ie Great Pond Foundation)
- Support expansion of sewer lines and use of advanced nitrogen removal systems
- Dredge when appropriate to increase water flow.
- Create/maintain/update management plans for heavily used recreational areas
- Provide the relevant Town departments with the equipment, personnel, and budgets needed to enforce regulations.
- Encourage regular testing to measure water quality.

SALT MARSHES

GOAL: Support salt marsh migration where possible by removing barriers and limiting development in potential future salt marsh areas

ACTIONS:

- Ensure that publicly and privately owned property having the potential to support future salt marsh migration remains undeveloped.

- As sea level rises in response to climate change, salt marshes can be expected to migrate to higher ground further inland. Adjust mapping, setbacks, and buffers to protect these shifting ecosystems.
- Review bylaws and regulations to determine whether required setbacks should be increased, or other changes should be made.
- Plant salt marsh for restoration and to reverse effects of degradation.

DUNES & BLUFFS

GOAL: Preserve Edgartown’s beaches and coastline into the future for as long as possible

ACTIONS:

- Continue to nourish and rebuild dunes.
- Combat bluff erosion by stabilizing dunes with native vegetation.
- Explore use of breakwaters to reduce wave exposure and protect existing beaches
- Map bluffs that would benefit from “toe protection” and identify and implement the selected types of such protection.

STATE FOREST

GOAL: Align forestry practices with habitat restoration and wildfire risk reduction.

ACTIONS:

- Support DCR with habitat restoration efforts and efforts to propagate native species.
- Encourage the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to increase their clearing of flammable materials from the State Forest
- Encourage cooperation between the Edgartown Fire Department, the other Martha’s Vineyard Fire Departments, and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to consider and implement controlled burns in the State Forest
- Encourage cooperation between the Edgartown Fire Department and the other Martha’s Vineyard Fire Departments to develop and implement a public awareness campaign [What did the MVC recommend in its “comprehensive matrix”?]

AGRICULTURE

GOAL: Preserve the island’s rich agricultural heritage

ACTIONS:

- Support efforts to revitalize depleted soils.

- Support farming operations
- Consider participating in the creation of an overarching Vineyard Agricultural Commission to help coordinate on-going efforts and take on new responsibilities.
- Work with other towns to promote agricultural activities.

GOAL: Encourage on-island food production.

ACTIONS:

- Increase public awareness and utilization of existing community garden plots.
- Support further creation of farm fields growing food, community garden plots, local grocers and farmer's markets.
- Enhance infrastructure for the marketing and distribution of locally grown produce (ie Artisan's markets, local food events, utilization of areas such as the Village Green to support and promote local farmers)
- Amend zoning to encourage agritourism activities and the production of value-added agricultural products.
- Highlight and support the Edgartown School's gardening program

GOAL: Reduce Waste, Increase Re-Use & Repurposing of Materials

ACTIONS:

- Support the efforts of the Refuse District to offer various recycling options, including food-waste.
- Help to identify properties that could support a composting operation (see IGI pilot composting project)
- Seek to reduce construction waste by offering opportunities for people to reuse materials before demolition.
- Increase awareness on how much waste gets shipped off the island, and how many organic materials are shipped on island, and work to decrease this gap.

CHAPTER 4: Economic Development in the Historic District & Beyond

THE HARBOR & WORKING WATERFRONT

GOAL: Strengthen Working Waterfront Functions

ACTIONS:

- Support the recommendations in the 2024 update of the Harbor Plan
- Tourist based businesses along the waterfront should be secondary to harbor-dependent uses, including new small scale processing structures and facilities that provide necessary infrastructure for commercial fishing and seafood farming.
- Provide more access for commercial fishermen: ie Reserve more of the parking at the Dock Street and Memorial Wharf parking lots for fishers and quick drop offs
- Enhance visitor experience, expand facilities: Plan and construct public toilet facilities at the Chappy Ferry house, at Memorial Wharf or another suitable location
- The Town should plan and implement a longer and continuous boardwalk along the edge of the harbor waterfront. The proposed boardwalk along the edge should be developed as an elevated integrated barrier to protect the downtown area from tidal inundation over time.
- Leverage the fishing derby through competitions with other fishing derbies across the U.S.

THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

GOAL: Preserve the character of the Village

ACTIONS:

- Share Edgartown's history through tours, both interactive and virtual and better signage that tells Edgartown's history through a variety of lenses.
- Expand the design guidelines for renovation and development in the Historic District to include more about commercial buildings and to regulate more than just what can be seen from the public way. Consider whether the Historic District Commission, or perhaps some new committee, should develop standards for more than just the aspects of buildings that can be seen from public ways, everything from signage to lighting, sidewalks, landscaping and fencing.
- Develop signage that is consistent throughout town and appropriate for a historic village. This includes street signage and wayfinding signage.
- Develop a lot density formula that will restrict building out lots and thus, compromising existing and historic views of the harbor and downtown.

- Enhance visual continuity downtown to preserve downtown’s charm. Encourage the filling in of street frontages that are interrupted by parking lots or vacancies.

GOAL: Improve the Downtown experience

ACTIONS:

- Create and adopt a “Streetscapes Plan.”
- Explore burying power lines. To be done in conjunction with other infrastructure improvement projects as they arise. This would greatly improve ADA compliance and access.
- Add more street trees for shade, aesthetic and ecological benefits.
- Encourage parking outside of the downtown area, possibly at the Edgartown School in the Summer months.
- Increase public awareness of and access to the boardwalk and harbor by turning part of the Dock Street parking lot into a park, possibly a location for artisans’ fairs and/or events related to aquaculture, fishing, or other marine activities.
- Make better use of the downtown Village Green by using it as a venue for more activities, improving signage and connectivity to Winter Street and Nevin Square, and encouraging surrounding businesses to present a “face” to the Green.
- Consider creating Pedestrian Only areas downtown for certain times of day.
- Plan and implement new wayfinding, signage, and branding for the entire downtown area.
- Increase the offering of shoulder-season and winter events to encourage businesses to stay open.
- Create a Visitor Center kiosk or virtual visitor center with maps and tours.
- Provide more areas for families to enjoy.
- Offer free Wifi.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: Increase opportunities for business development and diversification

ACTIONS:

- Conduct a strategic plan for Edgartown’s tourism industry. Work to promote the Board of Trade’s brand, *Visited Edgartown*.
- Create a true visitor center.
- Prioritize accessibility and sidewalk improvement projects.
- Consider a year-round fast ferry to bring workers and visitors to Edgartown directly.

- Encourage and assist the Board of Trade to conduct a business gap analysis and create a merchandising mix plan.
- Provide more family-friendly areas and activities.
- The Town should consider creating an economic development position, possibly within the Board of Trade or the Planning Board to initiate and coordinate strategic plans and possibly economic incentives and/or a legacy business fund.
- Encourage businesses to create economic development zones such as Business Improvement districts, or for the town to create Parking Benefit districts implement paid parking to generate funds for improvements to various areas.
- Create a Legacy Business fund to protect and promote long-time local businesses.
- Discourage vacant businesses and storefronts in disrepair through ordinances for vacant commercial building and commercial property maintenance.
- Make Outdoor dining easier.
- Provide financial or other support to the Board of Trade in order to expand event programming year-round, but especially in the shoulder and winter seasons. Encourage year-round use of the Town Center; promote and incentivize year-round or extended season businesses.
- Create incentives for Owner-operated businesses.
- Plan and implement more efficient use of downtown drop-off and delivery spaces.

GOAL: Develop and enhance business locations outside of downtown.

- Create an identity for Upper Main Street Business District: Develop standards and/or guidelines for businesses operating in the BII districts of Upper Main St.
- Encourage redevelopment at the Triangle, possibly with retail and other commercial space on the ground floor and year-round rental dwelling units above.
- Establish a Business District Commission within the Planning Board.
- Engage with the MV Airport Commission to optimize future possible uses of the Airport Business Park; Consider further development at the Airport Business Park, especially for noisier businesses.
- Designate areas for commercial vehicle storage
- Continue and expand the shellfish propagation and aquaculture programs.
- Consider new ways to support the arts such as pop-ups, artisan fairs or featuring artwork in public buildings.
- Encourage galleries to promote the work of local artists.
- Review the zoning bylaw concerning home based businesses to see whether it needs updating to encourage and support such businesses.

CHAPTER 5: Sustainable Growth & Change

GOAL: Unify the Town’s approach to management of public facilities and infrastructure

ACTIONS:

- Create a Town Public Works Department to close the gap between town departments that manage public resources.

WATER MANAGEMENT

GOAL: Strengthen the protection of the existing Town wells

ACTIONS:

- Establish a municipal “Wellhead Protection Committee” (recommended by DEP) comprised of the Water Department Superintendent, Town Health Agent, Conservation Agent, and Planning Board Administrator to hold quarterly meetings to discuss issues of common interest.
- Establish protocols based on studies for design, approval, and installation of storm water management facilities to assure that impairment of water quality does not inadvertently occur from storm water discharges.

GOAL: Plan for the Future and Create Redundancy

ACTIONS:

- Continue planning to upgrade the existing water withdrawal, storage, and distribution infrastructure (Town wells operate at close to max capacity during peak season)
- Protect and/or acquire additional land for protection of existing and/or future Town wells.
- Extend distribution lines to areas of Town currently served by on-site wells, where density and on-site wastewater disposal may warrant provision of Town water service.
- Supplement existing zoning, conservation, and health regulations to preserve and protect the aquifer, and to optimize the allocation of municipal water.
- Lessen impact of irrigation by encouraging alternatives and educating the public

WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

GOAL: Expand and Improve Wastewater Collection and Treatment

ACTIONS:

- Complete and implement the current Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP)
- Explore the possibility of expanded use of the Airport Business Park wastewater treatment facility for nearby properties.
- Explore the feasibility of neighborhood or community septic systems that pump to a shared leaching field.

STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

GOAL: Improve Existing Storm Water Management Systems

ACTIONS:

- Continue the aggressive street sweeping program along with maintenance of existing storm water drains
- Continue adding seepage pits to existing drains where feasible
- Incorporate Best Management Practices into site development approvals for new construction, renovations, and improvements

GOAL: Plan for the Future

ACTIONS:

- Proceed with the Highway Department plan to commission a comprehensive study to assess the current system of storm water management and develop recommendations for current and future needs, including those resulting from predicted increases in storms

CLIMATE CHANGE & THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

GOAL: Protect existing infrastructure and elevate roads that are vulnerable to flooding and cannot be relocated

ACTIONS:

- Implement plans to address existing and future flooding at Dock Street, Chappaquiddick Road, Atlantic Drive, and Beach Road at Bend in the Road.
- Use the Edgartown Zoning Bylaw to Achieve Greater Resiliency to Climate Change. Continue the current process of developing and adopting zoning bylaw changes restricting high risk structures, controlling erosion, and encouraging green infrastructure.
- Plan and implement the recommendation of the 2021 Vulnerability Study to construct an elevated and landscaped harbor walk from the Atlantic Restaurant around the Dock Street parking lot and along the existing waterfront to an elevated Daggett Street
- Provide personnel and budget for enforcement of zoning bylaws and Health Department and Conservation Commission regulations.
- Increase public awareness of the potential damage SLR can cause by installing signage that demonstrates potential flooding in key areas.

HOUSING

GOAL: Establish a clear inventory

ACTIONS:

- Create public facing online affordable housing inventory document, including all deed restricted inventory at all AMI levels that can be updated regularly and communicated to the Commonwealth.
- Conduct an assessment of all existing Short Term Rental properties to be used to advise on future property ownership and zoning considerations.
- Adopt a Housing Production Plan. The most recent Housing Production Plan was drafted in 2017 but was never adopted by the Town. HPPs qualify the Town for Safe Harbor status with the State, under Chapter 40B; without an HPP, the town has no influence on proposed 40B projects.

GOAL: Increase housing options in sensible (Smart Growth) locations, close to stores and transit hubs, and along existing water and sewer lines.

ACTIONS:

- Downtown Infill opportunities (DK&P Example on Winter St)
- Incentivize businesses to create work-force housing (MVSB 7 School Street)
- Establish basic guidelines for upper-story housing, including a year-round residency requirement;

GOAL: Make building housing in developed areas easier.

ACTIONS:

- Allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by right if they meet basic performance standards in the Zoning Bylaw, such as being restricted to year-round occupancy.
- Consider allowing both an accessory apartment and a guest house on lots that meet the minimum lot area requirement for the district in which they are located (or at least 20,000 sq. ft. in the R-5 district), if one or both of the ADUs is restricted to year-round lease/ year round occupancy.
- Allow multifamily dwellings by right, subject to site plan review and design review in the R20 and R5 districts, and by special permit in the R-60 and B-II Upper Main Street districts.
- Provide public information and educational materials to Edgartown residents about the opportunity to create an accessory apartment and a simple procedures checklist for interested applicants.
- Create a technical assistance program to provide feasibility and planning support to community members interested in creating ADUs.
- Consider providing a financial incentive or subsidy for homeowners willing to deed restrict their accessory apartment to a year-round rental or seasonal workforce rental (90-day minimum rental period)
- Consider eliminating parking requirements for downtown affordable units.

GOAL: Consider constructing work-force housing on town-owned land and/or investing in land for that purpose.

ACTIONS:

- The Edgartown Wastewater Treatment Facility has 6 potential building lots along the Edgartown-West Tisbury Road. The Town should consider building multi-unit housing on these lots and renting it to households where there is at least one full time Town employee. This would aid in recruiting and retention of employees.
- Identify existing properties, such as the Land Bank building, that could be purchased and converted into work-force housing
- Pursue permission from the Commonwealth to use public funds for municipal employee workforce housing, both rental and ownership
- Explore providing housing stipends for town employees
- Pursue permission from the Commonwealth to reserve a preference on a certain number of units in town-funded housing developments for municipal employees on projects funded with State or Federal funds
- Compel the Affordable Housing Committee to conduct title searches, and searches for tax lots/undersize lots that could be used for Affordable Housing by partnering with non-profits such as Habitat for Humanity.
- Investigate allocating municipal funds to build housing specifically for town employees

GOAL: Expand local and regional funding sources to help support creation of affordable housing.

ACTIONS:

- Increase local option Rooms Tax from 4% to 6%, which will bring in approximately \$1.8 million annually in additional revenue without impacting property taxes. Consider dedicating a percentage of this additional Rooms Tax to Affordable Housing Trust annually to provide a reliable flexible revenue stream that can be used for the creation of programs, and to leverage state contributions. Unlike CPC, Rooms Tax funds are not restricted to any AMI, and thus could be used to address a wide range of housing programs and efforts, including workforce.
- Increase allocations of local Community Preservation Act funds to create affordable housing
- Incentivize property owners to rent year-round with property tax incentives.
- Implement a residential tax exemption.
- Explore bonding potential (Affordable Housing Trust and CPC) to increase funding capacity for housing.
- CPC partner with Edgartown Affordable Housing Trust to provide early funding commitment to town projects in development in order to leverage maximum State commitment for funding contributions.

- Solicit private funding and land donations for development of affordable and/or mixed-income housing
- Encourage private developers to build more reasonable accommodations for workforce and elderly housing.
- Advocate for the adoption of a Housing Bank through special legislation to implement a real estate transaction fee to generate revenue for affordable housing.
- Increase funding for Dukes County Rental Assistance Program
- Scale up Edgartown’s successful Buy-Down program, which has converted a number of market rate homes into perpetually affordable ownership units for year-round households.
- CPC to prepare Community Preservation Plan (CP Plan) to study the needs, possibilities, and resources for community preservation and to strategically plan for use of CPA funds over five years (FY2018-2022). CPA can utilize administrative funds (up to 5 percent of total annual CPA revenue) to support this planning effort, if needed. Planning effort should consider impacts of increasing allocations of CPA funds for housing.

GOAL: Protect and preserve year-round inventory and residential neighborhoods

ACTIONS:

- Adopt a timeshare & fractional ownership by-law that prohibits use of homes in residential neighborhoods as timeshares or commercial fractional ownership properties.
- Adopt a Short-Term Rental bylaw to manage impact on neighborhoods and character of community.
- Explore IRS “Bargain Sale” option that incentivizes property owners to sell their home at a price that is lower than the home’s market-value in order to earn a tax credit that exceeds the difference between the sale price and market value.
- Explore Placemate’s Lease to Locals program, a public-private partnership that incentivizes the conversion of short term and vacation rentals to year-round rentals for workforce members making above the allowable income range served by DCRHA’s Rental Assistance Program (Lease to Locals is currently being piloted on Nantucket)

ENERGY

GOAL: Continue to work toward reduction in fossil fuel use by 50% by 2030 and 100% by 2040

ACTIONS:

- Continue to switch from fossil fuels to electricity as electricity is increasingly generated from renewable resources.

- Continue to opt in to enhanced versions of the Massachusetts building code as they become available.
- Implement a ban on fossil fuel use in building construction, addition, and renovation if and when permitted to do so by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- Continue to develop plans and resources for each Town owned building to replace the fossil fuel heating systems with efficient electric heat pumps and deploy solar power and battery systems and connect them in “microgrids” where feasible.
- Encourage the Edgartown Historic District Commission to develop policies that maintain the Town’s character while respecting the Commonwealth’s and Edgartown voters’ desire for renewable power to replace fossil fuel power.

COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION NETWORKS

GOAL: Continue to Improve Communication and Information Networks

ACTIONS:

- Develop and implement a transparent decision-making process for placement of new cell towers.
- Consider a distributed antenna system along roads.
- Offer free Wifi downtown.

WASTE

GOAL: Work with other Island communities to evaluate ways to reduce the waste stream and increase on-Island recycling.

ACTIONS:

- Manage unnecessary disposal of construction materials.
- Provide land for commercial composting operation.

CHAPTER 6: Transportation

GOAL #1: Use the MVC's Regional Transportation Plan, Climate Action Plan and the Massachusetts 2021 Climate Law and Climate Plan for 2050 as a guide to informing transportation and infrastructure improvements in a climate friendly way.

ACTIONS:

- Encourage town departments and boards to use the information and explore the recommendations included in these Plans as part of town transportation and infrastructure planning.
- Request that the Edgartown Energy Committee make semi-annual reports on town progress toward implementing the adaptation and mitigation strategies outlined in the Plans.

GOAL #2: Access available funding to support transportation initiatives.

ACTIONS:

- Work with the MVC to explore grant programs (such as the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Complete Streets Program and Safe Routes to School Program) and assist the Highway Department in obtaining funding through those programs.

GOAL #3: Alleviate high congestion areas.

ACTIONS:

- Address Upper Main Street congestion: Conduct a traffic study to investigate the feasibility of a round-about at the triangle that provides a back entrance to Stop & Shop. Look at other alternatives, including a reorganization of the existing entrances/exits to S&S.
- Plan and execute a shift of the bicycle path along the Main Street side of Cannonball Park to the Cooke Street side to keep bicycles away from the downtown Main Street
- Consider making Cooke Street one way heading East and Main Street one way heading West between Pease's Point Way and the West end of Cannonball Park. This would allow for increased parking areas around the park and close to downtown.
- Consider creating a connector in between Beach Road and the Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road using town property behind the Trader Fred and Your Market businesses.
- Conduct a study in cooperation with the MVC to analyze the possibility of a roundabout at the intersection of Barnes Road and the Edgartown West Tisbury Road.
- Implement an online reservation system for the Chappaquiddick Ferry to improve the congestion caused by the ferry waiting line.
- Explore an alternate or additional ferry crossing point within the harbor.

GOAL #4: Expand and enhance alternate means of transportation.

ACTIONS:

- Assess existing bike paths and identify areas that are not connected (e.g. Meshacket Road from the West Tisbury Road to the old town landfill) and implement methods of filling these gaps.
- Address drainage problems and repave areas on bike path network
- Plan and create signage to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety and efficiency.
- Implement bike parking at the end of Cooke Street (on Pease's Point Way South)
- Identify concrete means for the town to stay abreast of evolving regulations and policies regarding the increasing popularity and the inherent safety issues of electric bikes, scooters, and other new means of personal transportation.
- Work with the VTA to explore the potential for added shuttle service from the Dark Woods and Edgartown School lots to the downtown area, South Beach, and Bend in the Road Beach
- Implement jitneys or other low-impact modes of transportation for people visiting downtown.
- Study the feasibility of a "Bike Share" program, ideally in conjunction with other island towns.
- Offer a high-speed ferry from the mainland direct to Edgartown to support the workforce.
- Investigate inter-town ferries and/or water taxis.

GOAL #5: Support climate resilience initiatives.

ACTIONS:

- Reduce the volume of vehicles circling the downtown area in search of parking by allowing parking in the Summer at the Edgartown School with signage to direct visitors to park there or at the Dark Woods lot
- Optimize the potential of the Dark Woods lot.
- Encourage compliance with the Massachusetts no idling rules.
- Add signage to publicize the EV chargers at the Dark Woods lot.
- Consider installing EV chargers at the Edgartown School lot or in the parking area behind the library.
- Plan for the full electrification of the Chappy Ferry no later than 2040

CHAPTER 7: Chappaquiddick

CHAPPY'S UNIQUE CHARACTER

GOAL: Protect Chappy's Natural Environment and High-Quality Waters

ACTIONS:

- Implement the Management Plan for Cape Poge
- Limit Clearings in Building Setbacks

VEHICLE & BIKE ACCESS

GOAL: Enhance the Chappy Ferry: Prioritize the Resilience of the Chappy Ferry and Access to it Along Chappaquiddick Road

ACTIONS:

- Explore a Reservation System or Other Means of Reducing Wait Times
- Create a Second Ferry Route Outside of Downtown
- Consider Adding Additional Parking Areas

GOAL: Increase Access to the Waterfront

ACTIONS:

- Establish a Public Dock and Landing on Chappy

GOAL: Provide for Additional Mobility Options on Chappy and Reduce the Number of Motor Vehicles Crossing the Harbor

ACTIONS:

- Evaluate the Potential of an Electric Shuttle Bus
- Improve Bicycle Facilities, Including Extending a Bikeable Facility along Dike Road to East Beach

COMMUNICATION & ENERGY

GOAL: Improve cell coverage on Chappy

ACTIONS:

- Work to phase-out the current cell tower in favor of a location with a lower density of homes
- Alternative energy sources such as solar panels should be encouraged. Diversifying energy sources can reduce Chappy's dependence on a single energy source. Adding battery back up

to a solar panel system can store excess energy and allowing it to be used during periods of low energy production

- A Wireless Communications Overlay District should be created to ensure that infrastructure locations reflect current technologies, approaches, and locational criteria and that telecommunication towers have the least impact on residents.