The Town of Tisbury Vision Plan

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Tisbury Vision Plan

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Tisbury Vision Plan

Introduction

The Tisbury vision planning initiative, sponsored by the town planning board, facilitated community participation in a town visioning process during the fall of 2014 and winter of 2015.

Through a series of surveys and workshops, town residents (and a few people from other Island towns) identified core community values, voiced concerns, described the future that they would like to realize, articulated goals essential to the attainment of the vision, identified actions that can be taken to accomplish the goals, and considered opportunities to strengthen the town.

The following vision plan presents the culmination of this community endeavor. It sets forth a framework to guide town decisions and creates a working agenda for elected officials, town committees, and community groups.

Tisbury Vision Plan

The Vision of Tisbury

The village of Vineyard Haven is the heart of Tisbury and, as Martha's Vineyard's year-round port, will continue to serve as a welcoming "gateway" to the Island.

The residents of Tisbury, a strong year-round community, will work together to get things done through good planning and organizational collaboration. Private and public partnerships will establish a network of open spaces connecting recreation areas and residential neighborhoods with a vibrant town center, a diversified waterfront, and a working harbor.

Through public investment and private development, the town will achieve a strong year-round economy that provides employment opportunities and services for residents and visitors. The Vineyard Haven Harbor Cultural District will celebrate Tisbury's unique history and support Island artists and artisans while contributing to the town's economic base.

With the guidance of thoughtful leaders, working with an active citizenry that is diverse in its interests and aims, Tisbury will work to protect its environmental resources, build a sustainable future, and remain "Tisbury."

Taking Action

The actions identified under each of the listed goals provide a framework to guide the implementation of the town vision. Some are short-term actions that utilize existing local skills and resources while others are longer-term actions that might require fund-raising and outside expertise.

Some actions fall under the purview of elected officials but many can be undertaken by community businesses, organizations, and residents. Achievement of the vision will depend on the participation and support of the entire community.

The planning board proposes creating a Community Vision Council, which will facilitate and coordinate implementation of individual projects.

This council will provide planning, design, and organizational support for various groups that would like to initiate a project. This will be accomplished by matching the expertise of community volunteers, consultants, and professionals to the needs of specific projects. The council will also be a means through which educational sessions (on planning topics related to the vision plan) can be convened, and through which workshops can be conducted to gather community input on specific projects and issues.

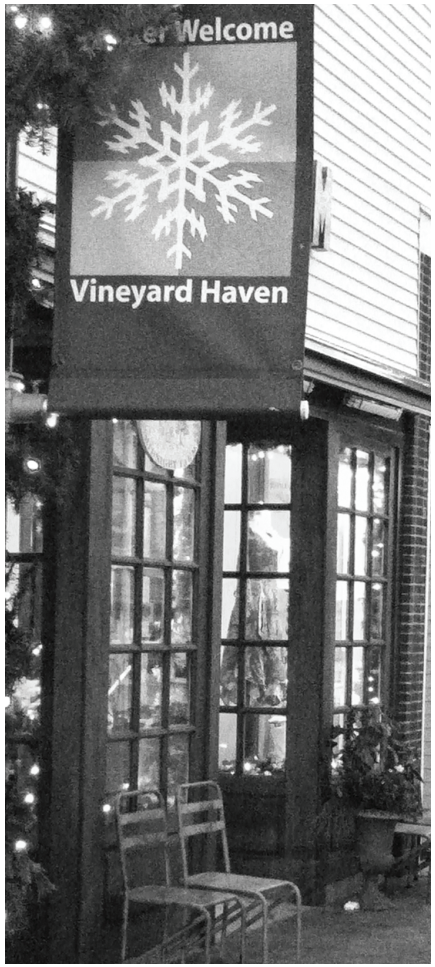
Finally, the council will produce recommendations on a project-by-project basis as well as a newsletter to update the community on accomplishments and ongoing projects.

Tisbury Vision Plan

Goal

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

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



PURPOSE

Organize the structure of town government to provide effective and responsive governance.

ACTIONS

- Reestablish Department of Public Works oversight by the Board of Selectmen
- Improve town government's technology functions (i.e. website, communication, etc.)
- Initiate a process to guide effective planning for capital expenditures
- Develop strategies to better integrate and coordinate town boards and committees
- Encourage greater participation in town government through education and recruitment

PURPOSE

Maintain a forward-looking planning process to manage change, address affordability, and guide appropriate development.

ACTIONS

- Create a town master plan to encompass comprehensive planning
- Strengthen town collaborations with regional housing organizations to increase affordable housing
- Begin community-based planning forums and support the formation and initiatives of neighborhood planning groups

PURPOSE

Encourage broad participation in the implementation of the vision plan.

ACTIONS

- Encourage and support collaboration among businesses
- Organize neighborhood groups to work with the town to identify and initiate neighborhood improvements
- Develop educational opportunities, formal and informal, for people of all ages

Tisbury Vision Plan

Goal

Act as responsible stewards for our natural environment.

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

PURPOSE

Support the ongoing preservation of open space and views.

ACTIONS

- Meet with the Martha's Vineyard Land Bank and other conservation groups to identify potential preservation approaches
- Work with neighborhoods to identify potential land preservation opportunities

PURPOSE

Monitor and mitigate the impact of land use activity on the health of our environment and the water quality of town estuaries.

ACTIONS

- Develop nitrogen reduction strategies
- Develop clear protocols regarding any harmful chemical use in town
- Participate in educational sessions regarding fertilizer usage as well as chemical and pharmaceutical disposal

PURPOSE

Understand potential impacts of environmental change on town resources and land uses.

ACTIONS

- Study long-term sea level rise and develop plans to address predicted changes
- Study potential changes from temperature and seasonal shifts

PURPOSE

Support local activities that contribute to long-term sustainability.

ACTIONS

- Increase energy efficiency in town facilities
- Support local, sustainable food and craft production that makes use of local resources
- Support local school lunch programs
- Create a market venue for small-scale distribution of locally produced products (i.e. farmers' markets, and craft booths)

Tisbury Vision Plan

Goal

Sustain a beautiful and lasting built environment.

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

PURPOSE

Restore the condition of dilapidated buildings and poorly maintained sites.

ACTIONS

- Develop approaches to rehabilitate dilapidated buildings and poorly maintained properties
- Review and address shortcomings in current bylaws

PURPOSE

Take steps to better maintain town facilities.

ACTIONS

- Develop strategies for better long-term municipal facility planning
- Improve municipal building maintenance
- Develop strategies for a new Town Hall which better integrates the town departments
- Initiate conversations regarding long-term facility planning for the Tisbury School

PURPOSE

Identify and address long-term build-out issues and infrastructure needs.

ACTIONS

- Review subdivision control laws to find ways to better manage future development in a manner that supports the town vision
- Review zoning laws to support density needs and avoid developmental sprawl
- Develop a process by which municipal buildings can be better designed and constructed

Tisbury Vision Plan

Goal

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

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

PURPOSE

Develop and enhance public pedestrian spaces which promote walking.

ACTIONS

- Improve maintenance and cleanliness of public areas
- Develop seating and pocket parks throughout the downtown
- Partner with private land owners to make better use of the space around businesses
- Utilize the public space by supporting small scale entrepreneurial vendor opportunities
- Develop better paths between the SSA terminal and Main Street and other parts of town
- Further develop pedestrian paths connecting neighbor-hoods to Main Street

PURPOSE

Promote opportunities associated with the Vineyard Haven Harbor Cultural District and the Martha's Vineyard Museum.

ACTIONS

- Develop streetscape installations, tours, and public events that highlight the cultural district
- Develop expanded visitor services to promote the cultural district and in-town activities

PURPOSE

Protect the scale and character of the village of Vineyard Haven.

ACTIONS

- Review B1 zoning and add oversight for review of projects that will affect the district

PURPOSE

Create a comprehensive traffic and parking strategy to reduce congestion.

ACTIONS

- Study alternative parking approaches
- Review bylaws in the B1 district regarding parking requirements in congested downtown areas
- Work with the Steamship Authority to improve circulation during ferry arrivals and departures
- Study shuttle services in and out of town
- Work with Mass DOT to develop a plan for the State Road and Beach Road corridor

Tisbury Vision Plan

Goal

Create an even more accessible waterfront.

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

PURPOSE

Expand public access and recreational use on the harbor waterfront.

ACTIONS

- Look for potential properties that could become public parks
- Develop bylaws that both support appropriate development and allow for public access
- Partner with landowners to create opportunities for more public access to fully realize the harbor walk, and develop solutions agreeable to private landowners
- Support Sail MV events
- Celebrate the harbor's maritime history through events with the Martha's Vineyard Museum

PURPOSE

Explore ways to expand fishing and shellfishing as part of the working waterfront.

ACTIONS

- Create a permanent commercial fishing pier
- Create a wholesale shellfish and fish market
- Support shellfish farming businesses
- Provide a place for charter fishing businesses to operate

PURPOSE

Improve and maintain town property that currently provides public waterfront access.

ACTIONS

- Improve access and maintenance on town-owned waterfront property
- Develop sites to enhance and expand public use

Tisbury Vision Plan

Goal

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

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

PURPOSE

Raise awareness of parks, beaches, and open space.

ACTIONS

- Develop maps to promote awareness of parks and activities around town
- Improve signage at town parks and publicly held open spaces

PURPOSE

Better maintain, improve, and expand existing town parks.

ACTIONS

- Add facilities that will expand, diversify, and improve the use of existing parks
- Create a process by which neighborhood groups work with the town to improve and care for community parks and open spaces
- Look to create additional parks, recreation areas, and open space

PURPOSE

Conduct a comprehensive review of sidewalks and develop an improvement plan.

ACTIONS

- Conduct an inventory of current sidewalk conditions
- Develop design guidelines for future sidewalk extensions and repair

PURPOSE

Develop and promote a safe network of bike paths.

ACTIONS

- Complete planned bike access from Beach Road to Lagoon Pond Road
- Create safe bike routes that connect the SSA to the Islandwide bike path network
- Work to connect bike and walking paths, and to provide bike racks where they meet
- Create maps and signage to inform users

Tisbury Vision Plan

Getting Involved

As the town moves from planning to implementation, we look to build on the contributions of community volunteers and to continue the constructive dialogue that grew through the workshops.

Groups and individuals interested in initiating a project or participating on a project within the vision framework, and individuals wishing to contribute special skills, are encouraged to contact the planning board.

You can reach the planning board at 508-696-4270 ext.1122
or by email at visionplan@tisburyma.gov.