



# Tisbury Master Plan

## Executive Summary



2024

Tisbury Planning Board  
Master Plan Steering Committee

# Tisbury Master Plan

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Master Plan Steering Committee  
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*For more details:  
Volume 1. Vision, Goals, Policies, and Community Participation  
Volume 2. Inventory and Assessment  
Volume 3. Key Issues and Implementation Program*



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(Note: Goals are not listed in order of importance.)

# Guiding Tisbury's Future: Master Plan Vision

*Sustain a strong, resilient, healthy, forward-looking, year-round community.*

*The village of Vineyard Haven is the heart of Tisbury, and as Martha's Vineyard's year-round port, it is committed to maintaining its role as the welcoming gateway to the Island.*

*The residents (both year-round and seasonal) of Tisbury, a resilient year-round community, are committed to working cooperatively with each other and Town staff to accomplish tasks through effective leadership, planning, and organization. It is envisioned that private and public partnerships will help establish a network of open spaces connecting recreation areas and residential neighborhoods with its business districts, including State Road, a vibrant town center, a diversified waterfront, and a working harbor.*

*Through public investment and private development, the Town intends to actively support a prosperous year-round economy that provides residents with housing, education, jobs, and services. The Vineyard Haven Harbor Cultural District is envisioned as a platform to celebrate Tisbury's unique history and support Island artists and artisans.*

*Under the stewardship of thoughtful leaders, in collaboration with an active and diverse citizenry with a range of interests and aims, Tisbury strives to protect its natural resources, foster a sustainable future, welcome its seasonal and daily visitors, and preserve and celebrate its distinctive small-town character and rich history.*



# Goals, Policies, and Action Plan

# Goal 1. Provide Town government with the human and financial resources and facilities to implement the Master Plan.

## How? What is our strategy?

**1.1:** Modernize the organization of town government to provide effective leadership, equip Town staff with the authority and resources to do their jobs, and provide support for local government volunteers.

**1.3:** Provide residents and visitors access to Town government through online communication channels and well-maintained, accessible facilities.

**1.5:** Improve and update annually the Capital Improvement Plan process to account for all costs and benefits associated with municipal projects, including sustainability, construction, planned preventive maintenance, project timelines, and funding. Institute a prioritization process that includes participation by Town departments and the Town's major policy boards.

**1.2:** Provide accountability and transparency, and encourage broad participation of year-round and seasonal residents in the implementation of this Master Plan.

**1.4:** Engage and collaborate with other island municipalities on priorities where coordinated planning and/or shared services may prove both more effective and efficient.

**1.6:** Provide and maintain public facilities, including parks, to serve the residents, visitors, and town staff of Tisbury.

## Why is this goal so important?

- *Tisbury is trying to function as a year-round town that has big challenges with the human, financial, and organizational capacity of a small hamlet. It has dedicated staff and volunteers, but the staff have very limited authority, and this weakens their effectiveness.*
- *At times, residents and officials say town government should be able to do more, but Tisbury's general bylaws provide no clarity about the roles and responsibilities of the Town Administrator or other Town departments, or for many of the boards and commissions that rely on volunteers.*
- *Tisbury relies on the Commonwealth's antiquated statutes for municipal organization – statutes that long pre-date the movement toward professional town government that for small communities like Tisbury only began in earnest in the 1980s.*
- *What is remarkable about Tisbury is not what the Town has trouble accomplishing, but rather what it manages to accomplish despite its decentralized government and unclear lines of departmental authority.*
- *The Town needs to provide professional staff support for planning and zoning.*
- *The Town must take a hard look at whether the system of government it has today is up for the job of leading, managing, and making the tough decisions that have to be made – and made soon. The choices Tisbury makes about how it governs will have an indelible impact on how well the Town can address issues that cut across every element of the Master Plan.*

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## Choosing to Succeed

### The steps we plan to take right away (1-3 years)

- Develop a Special Act of the Legislature to adopt a Town Meeting-Select Board-Town Manager form of government along with any necessary accompanying structural changes.
- Hire a qualified, experienced organization to assist the Town with the Town Manager hiring process and the transition to the Town Manager form of government.
- Hire a qualified Town Manager through a professionally conducted search process.
- Engage schools and other youth organizations (such as Scouts) to create a curriculum to study local government and get involved.
- Consolidate or cluster the Town Annex departments (ZBA, Conservation Com, BoH, Planning) with other Town Hall departments (Select Board, Finance, Assessors) into one centrally located, accessible public facility, whether through lease or acquisition of existing building or new construction.
- Update and reorganize the Town's approach to developing the 5-year capital plan, to be led by the Town Manager with assistance from the Finance Director, Town department heads, F&A Committee, and board/committee chairs. Seek assistance from a qualified organization to assist the Town with improving the capital planning process.
- Create a structure to obtain and manage grant funding including additional staff support, provided within the grant, to find, write, coordinate, and implement grant opportunities across town departments.

### Near-term steps (3-5 years)

- Establish a Director of Planning and Sustainability reporting to the Town Manager, to coordinate, manage, and support town planning and permitting, grant writing, climate adaptation and sustainability planning and implementation across Town departments and boards/commissions.
- Provide a mentoring program and access to free or low-cost training opportunities for Town staff and volunteers.
- Evaluate staff support for its committees and develop a support policy for their staffing.
- Continue to update a Volunteer Handbook to assist volunteer members of Town boards, commissions, and committees to understand their roles and responsibilities. Town staff should provide support to the committees.
- Improve and invest in technology, digital tools and practices.
- Conduct a feasibility study to relocate the Police Department out of congested, hazard area.
- Determine need for a regional emergency manager / management coordinator role and act on the findings.
- Complete a Town Facilities Master Plan.
- Incorporate findings from Facilities Master Plan into the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Evaluate and incorporate climate risks into Capital Improvement Plans and financial considerations for publicly funded projects and infrastructure maintenance.
- Establish a Revenue Assessment Task Force to evaluate town revenue sources and recommend changes, with the goal of increasing revenue to meet towns needs and the objectives outlined in this Master Plan. Develop additional revenue sources outside of traditional property tax assessment such as harbor revenue, fees, licenses, grants, tax structure, etc.

- Use Hazard Mitigation Plan critical infrastructure inventory to prioritize, upgrade, relocate, or adapt to climate impacts through the Capital Improvement Program. Ensure that inventory and prioritization is complementary to other hazard mitigation planning.
- Complete a Park facilities plan that includes a maintenance schedule; a map of public land that could accommodate park facilities; and a decision-making process for new uses of town-owned land.

### Longer-term steps (5+ years)

- Quantify the island-wide burdens disproportionately shouldered by Tisbury and meet with island towns to discuss ideas to share the burden in an equitable way. Prepare a report for the Select Board.

### Steps we need to take every year

- Conduct an annual strategic planning retreat for the Town Manager, town boards, and department heads to evaluate progress on Master Plan implementation, plan for board- and department-level implementation for the next year, and consider needs for plan amendments, if any. Provide yearly progress report to Select Board at a Select Board meeting as well as Town Meeting.
- Collaborate with the Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) and island towns and entities on regional solutions such as shared services, climate change, workforce, transportation, solid waste, emergency preparedness, and supply chain among others. This may include creating an online island-wide survey to understand how people feel about an island-wide approach to some key issues.





## Goal 2. Act as responsible stewards for our natural environment and partner with other island towns whenever possible.

### How? What is our strategy?

**2.1:** Preserve and enhance biodiversity of the natural environment, open space, parks, and scenic views throughout the town, including downtown and commercial areas.

**2.2:** Use multiple approaches, including regulations and public education, to protect the health of our environment, water supply, wetlands, water quality of our estuaries and other waterbodies, and reduce nitrogen loads in Lake Tashmoo and Lagoon Pond, and other areas as required.

**2.3:** Use the best available data and science on the projected impacts of climate change to make decisions on land use, infrastructure, public health, and delivery of services.

**2.4:** Set pollution reduction targets across known pollution sources, reduce and control waste, and monitor and reduce emerging chemical pollutants and plastics.

## Why is this goal so important?

- *Tisbury needs to protect its natural resources. West Chop Woods, Lake Tashmoo, and the Town's public beaches are some of its most valued places. Open space held by the Land Bank or non-profit conservation groups is protected in perpetuity, offering significant recreation, wildlife habitat, and aquifer protection benefits. However, Town-owned open space and parks are generally not protected. The Town has problems that must be addressed.*
- *Vineyard Haven's wastewater infrastructure has limited capacity for growth. The rest of town relies on on-site septic systems, and they are the primary driver of nitrogen loading in Lagoon Pond and Lake Tashmoo. The Massachusetts Estuaries Project (MEP) estimates that septic systems are responsible for most of the controllable nitrogen sources in Lagoon Pond and Lake Tashmoo.*
- *Eastern Tisbury neighborhoods, especially along State Road and in Vineyard Haven, have high concentrations of impervious surfaces that contribute to stormwater runoff and the pathogen Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) for Vineyard Haven Harbor. This harms habitat quality, local shellfisheries, and recreation. Impervious surfaces, coupled with the lack of extensive tree cover in eastern Tisbury and Vineyard Haven, mean that average temperatures trend higher and Tisbury experiences more high-heat days, contributing to concerns about climate change and sea level rise.*
- *Recreational use can contribute to environmental degradation, too. Concerns about eelgrass disturbances from block and chain moorings and anchors, as well as noise, prompted the Select Board to impose a temporary moratorium on anchoring in Lake Tashmoo in March 2023. In addition, Tisbury needs to address wastewater pump-out service for vessels in Lake Tashmoo.*

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## Choosing to Protect

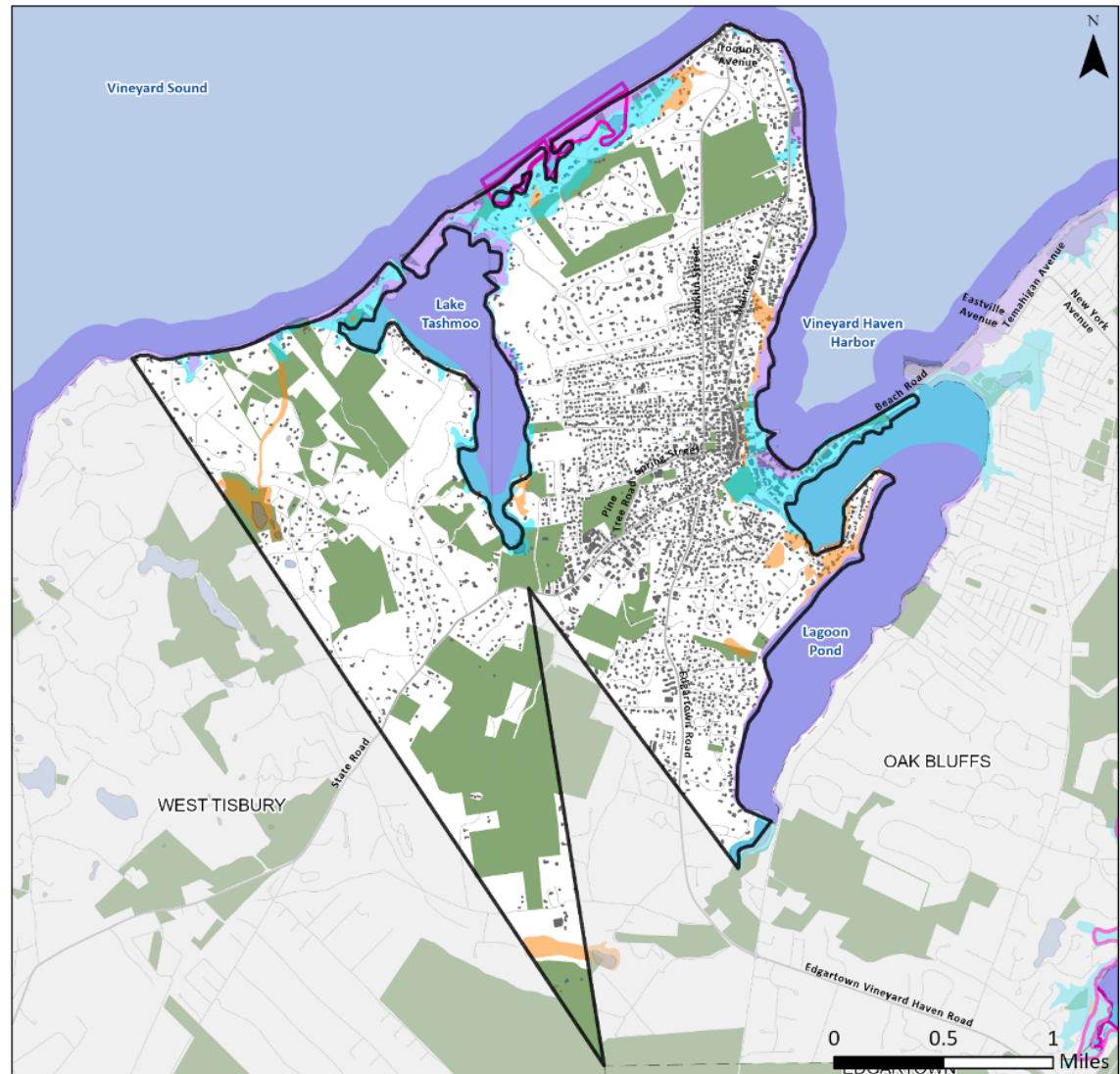
- *Tisbury is working to address its long-term wastewater needs. In addition to the State Road Sewer Expansion Project, the recently completed Phase I Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) will serve as a guide for environmentally and financially sound decisions about wastewater management infrastructure. DPW's Impervious Cover Disconnection (ICD) Project will also help address water quality and flooding issues by prioritizing projects.*
- *Tisbury benefits from working with partners across the island on natural resource planning and protection. The Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) organized all six towns, the Wampanoag Tribe, and community stakeholders to develop the 2022 Martha's Vineyard Climate Action Plan. Collaborations like these can help Tisbury address long-term challenges to improve water quality, wildlife habitat, and resilience of natural resources against climate change.*

## The steps we plan to take right away (1-3 years)

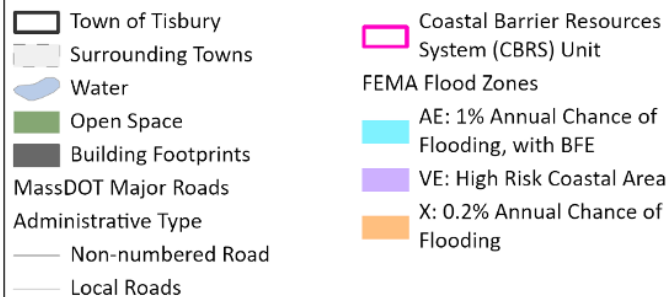
- Implement priority stormwater management projects as identified in the Tisbury Drainage Master Plan and the EPA study.
- Continue to implement a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan, including specific management plans for Lake Tashmoo and Lagoon Pond, to comply with the State's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for nitrogen.
- Use data and assessments in the Dukes County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, in conjunction with the MA Integrated Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan, in local decision-making around public and private investments to understand vulnerabilities and implement plans associated with sea level rise, coastal erosion, flooding, and other hazards.

## Near-term steps (3-5 years)

- Develop a Land Management Plan, that includes a biodiversity inventory, to assess and actively oversee town-owned open space. Identify ways to institute Conservation Restrictions on public land important for preservation, establish evaluation criteria and review process for any new use of public lands, and identify partners in overall implementation.
- Develop a policy for comprehensive park planning including a continuing public engagement process to enhance and add recreational facilities and programs.
- Raise awareness of parks, beaches and open space through multiple methods that reach diverse users, such as through the Town's website, printed materials, and holding events at town spaces.
- Review existing policies and modify as needed to better manage boating (including anchoring and mooring) on Lake Tashmoo, Lagoon Pond, and the Harbor, to ensure



### FEMA Flood Hazard Area



Date: November 2022 Source: Town of Tisbury, Martha's Vineyard Commission, MassGIS, and MassDOT



long-term protection of these important and valuable waterways to address environmental impacts.

- Establish Town Meeting approved (article 13 in the June 13, 2020) committee to create an action plan and bylaw to manage plastic reduction and mitigation.
- Adopt regulations to limit plastic use and waste streams within municipal and commercial operations.
- Use nature-based solutions and green infrastructure that provide co-benefits to manage stormwater runoff.
- Enhance public awareness campaign on the importance of reducing pollutants in stormwater runoff and ways individuals can contribute.
- Adopt a land clearing and grading bylaw to limit development and construction impacts related to erosion and sediment.
- Conduct a study about where it is appropriate to fortify, accommodate, and/or retreat and evaluate options.

### Longer-term steps (5+ years)

- Establish a process to prioritize the acquisition or preservation of open space properties of interest, including but not limited to those that confer public safety/hazard mitigation benefits or protecting existing and future water resources.
- Develop a tree management plan for trees in public rights-of-way and on town land that includes strategies for a tree inventory, long-term management of existing trees, removal and replacement of trees, types of trees to plant, and other key elements.
- Use existing studies and efforts to develop local actions that will reduce major sources of pollutants that impact water quality, such as the use of fertilizers, insecticides, wastewater discharges, and septic systems, among others. This may include bylaw changes, increased enforcement, or other approaches.

### Steps we need to take every year

- Continue to work with the Martha's Vineyard Land Bank (MVLB) and other conservation groups to identify potential opportunities for preservation and conservation restrictions in Tisbury.
- Develop a planting program and require the use of native, drought tolerant, and pollinator-friendly vegetation appropriate for the urban environment on Town-owned land and site development standards for private property.
- Protect the Town's drinking water supply through land acquisition, bylaws and regulations, enforcement, and public education.
- Work with nonprofit community and conservation partners, town committees, state agencies, and private property owners to protect coastal open space that could serve as a buffer from storm damage and sea level rise.
- Continue to participate in the implementation of the Climate Action Plan to identify and support town and island wide actions.
- Continue to support actions to meet the non-binding advisory resolution made by the Town in 2021 to become 100% renewable by 2040.

## Goal 3: Foster a beautiful, enduring and sustainably built environment.

### How? What is our strategy?



**3.1:** Update the Zoning Bylaw and other regulations to ensure they are easy to use and aligned with the Town's Master Plan and its goals.

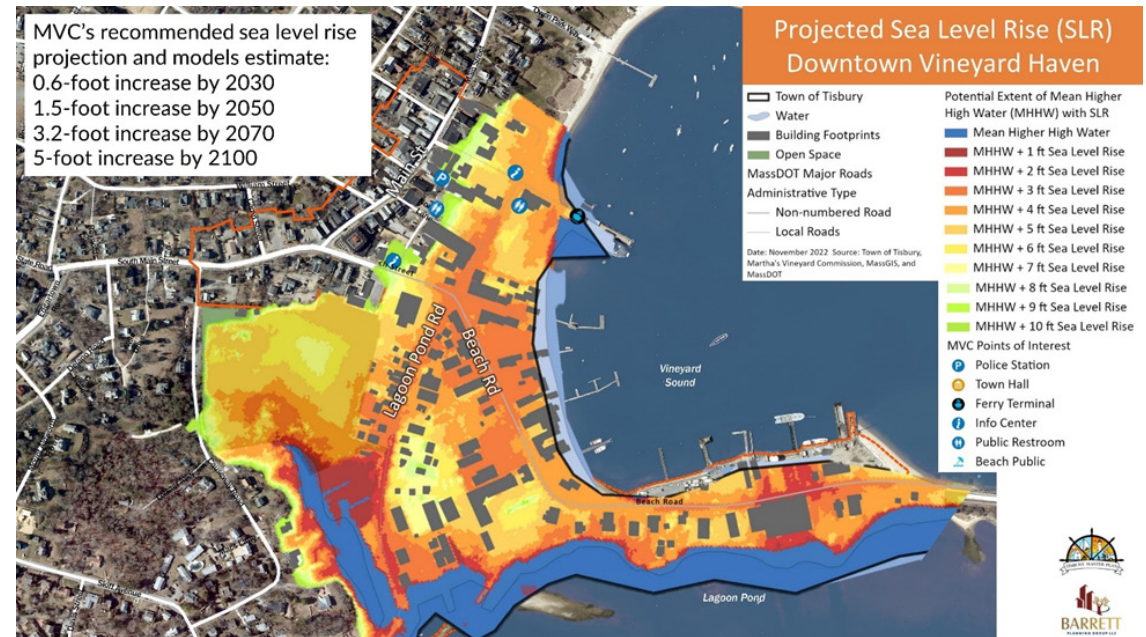
**3.2:** Support the efforts of private property owners, using both incentives and code enforcement, to improve unmaintained properties and keep them in good condition in the future.

**3.3:** Protect the architectural character of the town and the environment by developing regulations for the preservation and demolition of public and private buildings within a building's useful life.

**3.4:** Re-imagine properties limited by current infrastructure and utilities to enhance public use and future infrastructure needs.

## Why is this goal important?

- *Tisbury's Zoning Bylaw hinders the Town's ability to regulate land use and development effectively. The bylaw is disorganized, the subdistricts of the Waterfront Commercial District are not delineated on the zoning map, and the parcel-by-parcel regulations for Lagoon Harbor Park create the potential for legal challenges.*
- *The zoning regulations in Tisbury sometimes limit or unduly complicate badly needed types of development. Many proposals require multiple layers of discretionary review: special permits from the Planning Board, advisory opinions from the Site Plan Review Board, review or approvals by the Zoning Board of Appeals and others, and sometimes additional review by the Martha's Vineyard Commission.*
- *The B2 District is a complex area that has grown organically into a mix of retail, restaurant, service, entertainment, and light industrial businesses, town facilities, transportation infrastructure, and housing. Like many areas that grew without an overall plan, the area has a mixed character and functional challenges, including congestion, unsafe conditions for people walking and bicycling, inefficient parking, and inconsistent signage and building design.*
- *The Commercial Districts Vision Plan embodies design principles that can allow existing businesses to thrive while improving the visual character of the B2 District and opening up opportunities for redevelopment. Existing zoning does not enable or encourage these kinds of changes.*
- *Over time, obsolete structures in the B1 District could be replaced with appropriately scaled new buildings that reflect the downtown area's unique character while meeting contemporary*



*business and housing needs and expanding the town's tax base. Zoning needs to be updated to enable improvements to make downtown an even more functional, livable, and enjoyable heart for the Town.*

## Choosing to Thrive

### The steps we plan to take right away (1-3 years)

- Complete Phase I of the Zoning Bylaw Update. Recodify the Zoning Bylaw including a review for clarity, internal consistency, organization, and consistency with state law and current zoning practices.
- Establish a coordinated process to work through redevelopment of impactful uses or large properties with property owners and developers.
- Study septic lagoon area (42A-18) for equipment storage purposes (fisher community, town assets, etc.).

### Near-term steps (3-5 years)

- Complete Phase 2 of the Zoning Bylaw Update to achieve substantial consistency with this Master Plan.
- Inventory vacant, underutilized, and poorly maintained properties throughout the town and develop strategies to improve them.
- Prepare a Community-Wide Preservation Plan, that also documents buildings with high value architectural character and identifies any restrictions that exist on a property-by-property basis.
- Establish rules/programs in the Zoning Bylaw or a General Bylaw for preservation and reuse of buildings and reuse of demolished materials.

### Longer-term steps (5+ years)

- Design and obtain funding for a commercial property improvement program.
- Study the former landfill site to evaluate options for future development.

### Steps we need to take every year

- Work with property owners who wish to expand public access to the waterfront and extend trail networks to points of interest. Provide incentives via zoning. Leverage grants and other funding sources, where possible.
- Develop a conceptual plan to examine co-siting opportunities within the utility corridor that advance other Master Plan (or Town) interests/priorities.

## Goal 4: Encourage private investments and improvements to the business districts (Waterfront Commercial, B-1, and B-2) to drive the economy, while maintaining the character of the town and its harbor and being responsive to the impacts of climate change.

### How? What is our strategy?

**4.1:** Foster a business-friendly town government that encourages creation of sustainable jobs for year-round residents, prioritizes islander-owned year-round businesses, and offers a transparent regulatory environment.

**4.2:** Encourage and incentivize businesses that build on the town's current year-round services to create a strong service and retail economy serving the island community.

**4.3:** Strengthen the economy by enhancing the public experience, creating a coherent and connected pedestrian network, and improving harbor services and access.

**4.4:** Embrace the Blue and Green Economy and the Creative Economy.

**4.5:** Prepare for the impacts of climate change by protecting the water dependent economy and low-lying commercial areas, helping to relocate non-water dependent businesses, and preparing a workforce to fill new jobs created in response to climate change.



## Choosing to Prosper

### Why is this goal so important?

- *The three commercial districts are Tisbury's economic engine: the main place where goods and services are bought and sold, where jobs are created and maintained, and the focus of the town's commercial tax base. These areas are central to most of the Town's transportation systems, drinking water, stormwater and wastewater systems; its parks and open spaces, and environmental resources; its housing supply, and its town facilities.*
- *They are also the places where the town's greatest challenges and opportunities are playing out. Climate change and sea level rise are showing impacts in the Waterfront District.*
- *Despite their challenges, the commercial districts have many opportunities to improve and in doing so, benefit the property owners, the community, and the Town. Improvements will be incremental, and they cannot happen without coordinating public and voluntary private efforts.*
- *Focusing on the commercial districts enabled the new Master Plan to develop and test alternative ideas for the future of Tisbury, to see how policy decisions could play out on the ground, and to build out the Master Plan's action strategy.*

Top: current conditions looking North on Cromwell Lane towards the police station. Bottom: Potential improvements following the recommended design principles in the Commercial Districts Vision Plan. (Dodson & Flinker, Inc.)



### The steps we plan to take right away (1-3 years)

- Partner with the business associations to encourage economic activity.
- Study expanding moorings and improved launch capabilities. Adopt an online harbor mooring / online reservation system for all reservation and fee-based activities, permits, and licenses.
- Conduct temporary short-term tests of partial or full pedestrianization of selected streets and municipal properties in the Downtown.
- Implement measures to reduce flooding from relatively frequent storms, rain events, and sea level rise.
- Provide public information and engagement regarding potential funding prospects to implement measures commercial and residential property owners can take to contend with sea level rise.

### Near-term steps (3-5 years)

- Continue to support and expand workforce development programs to meet existing and future needs of local businesses as well as career objectives of residents.
- Make the Retail Gap Analysis - an evaluation of retail development potential - available to businesses and private developers.
- Further develop and implement a comprehensive wayfinding system for the town with a focus on commercial districts and visitor destinations. Consider installation of temporary wayfinding elements for areas where significant changes to pedestrian routes are being explored.
- Develop a strategic plan to encourage green practices and a circular economy and support businesses that provide these services in Tisbury and across the island.
- Study town-owned land in the B2 district and potential financial mechanisms to be used for existing businesses migrating out of the Waterfront Commercial District owing to climate change.

### Longer-term steps (5+ years)

- Sponsor a program featuring speakers who address the potential benefits of focusing on the Blue and Green and Creative economies.
- Implement resiliency measures for sea-level rise in the waterfront commercial district, including residences in that area.

### Steps we need to take every year

- Design and implement improvements to the pedestrian network, including shared pedestrian vehicular streets. Focus on accessibility of commercial areas and key destinations, especially from points of entry and transit connections for the purpose of placemaking and improvement of harbor access and services.
- Support expansion of aquaculture.
- Support the Vineyard Haven Harbor Cultural District activities to support a Creative Economy.

## Goal 5: Develop a multi-modal transportation system that reduces congestion and dependence on automobiles and creates a safer environment for residents and visitors.

### How? What is our strategy?



**5.1:** Develop a comprehensive traffic, parking, pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and water transportation strategy to accomplish multiple goals that include: reducing congestion and automobile dependence; increase use of public transit; minimize truck impacts; encourage bicycle and pedestrian activity through increased use of bike paths and sidewalks.



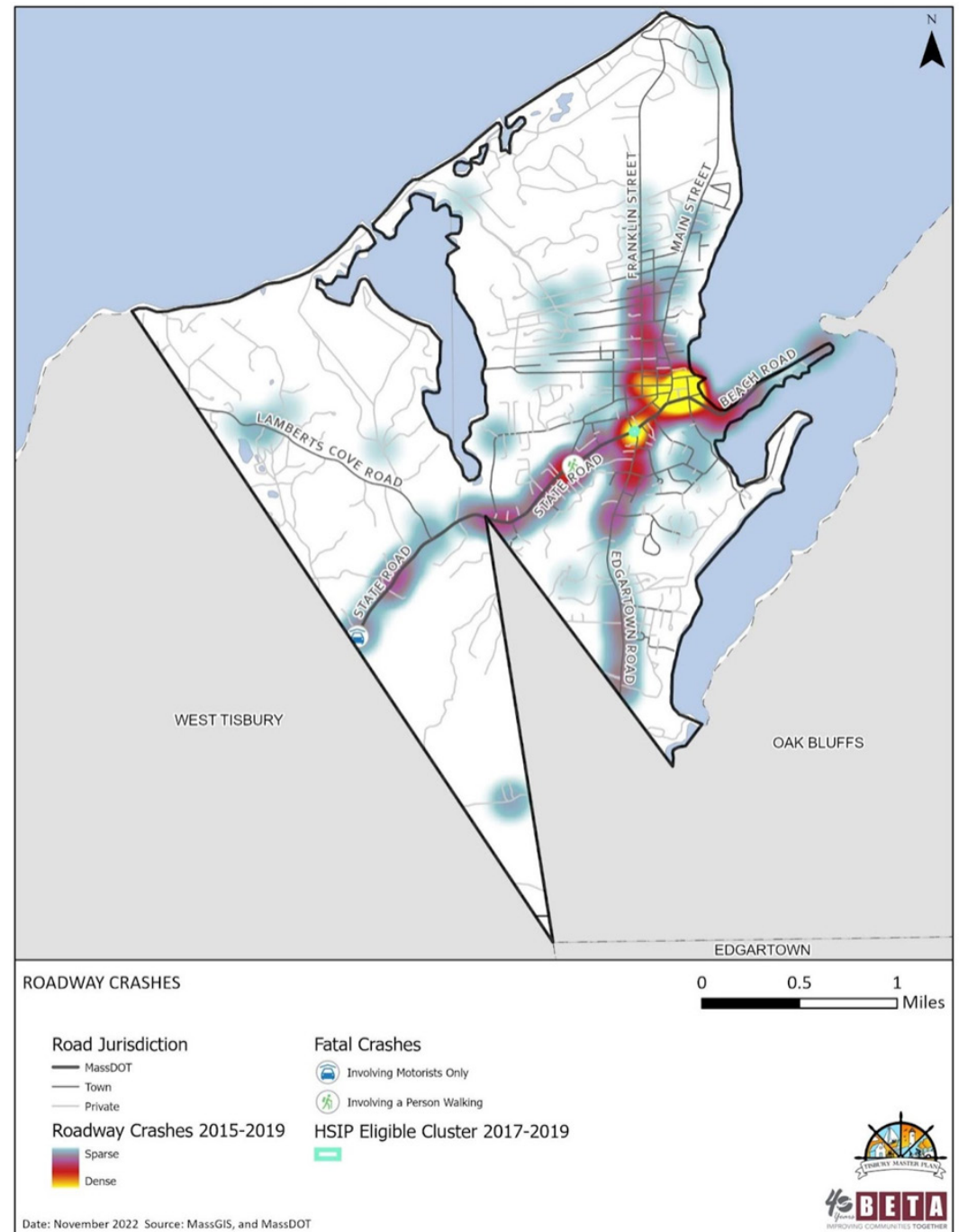
**5.2:** Work with the Steamship Authority (SSA), MVC, and other port users to develop a strategic plan that identifies infrastructure improvements that must be made to ensure continuity of service in the face of the impacts of climate change and anticipated Sea Level Rise (SLR).

**5.3:** Develop and implement a strategy to improve the safety of key intersections and roadways including Five Corners, the State Road intersection with Edgartown Vineyard Haven (EVH) Road and Look Street, and the MassDOT-owned corridor that runs through Tisbury.

**5.4:** Add new transportation infrastructure that creates a more efficient network of roads and pathways that strengthen multimodal connections within and to other towns, while reducing congestion.

## Why is this goal important?

- As the only year-round ferry terminal on Martha's Vineyard, Vineyard Haven is always accommodating freight, vehicle, and transit traffic moving to and from local and regional destinations. Congestion and parking challenges, have become a way of life at the Steamship Authority Ferry Terminal and surrounding streets.
- Multimodal conflicts plague the Five Corners area, including mobility, connectivity, and safety problems for all users. Vineyard Haven has other transportation challenges, too: at the Town parking lot by Stop and Shop, the Vineyard Transit Authority (VTA) bus terminal, confusing streets, and narrow sidewalks.
- Congestion town-wide lengthens travel times. Traffic backups at State Road and Edgartown Vineyard Haven Road cause delays at other intersections during the summer and shoulder seasons.
- MassDOT has identified State Road at Edgartown-Vineyard Haven Road, Five Corners, and State Road at North Main Street as high crash intersections, and South Main Street and State Road as an HSIP Crash Cluster between 2017-2019.
- Tisbury's coastal roadways are susceptible to flooding from storm events and eventual sea level rise. Beach Road and the Five Corners intersection experience severe flooding during storm events.
- Tisbury has shared-use paths, sidewalks, and bike lanes, but critical gaps in these networks inhibit movement by people walking, biking, scooting, or using a wheelchair. Vineyard Haven has narrow sidewalks and obstructions from utility poles and signs.
- Tisbury has very few bicycle and pedestrian connections to the beach areas and waterfront. State Road, the major east-west running arterial in town, has no accommodation for people riding bicycles.
- Tisbury has many private dead-end roads that limit connectivity and access for all modes, increase vehicle miles traveled, and increase emergency response times.



## The steps we plan to take right away (1-3 years)

- Develop a townwide Transportation Plan that includes parking, mobility, safety, circulation, and connectivity for vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, public transit, and the SSA.
- Form a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC would assist the DPW in ongoing projects and will help coordinate future planning including managing TIP projects for the town.
- Develop a wayfinding signage program to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the waterfront and other destinations.

## Near-term steps (3-5 years)

- Develop a program to teach bicycle, e-mobility, pedestrian rules and safety protocols in Tisbury public schools.
- Initiate an all-island Task Force to evaluate the impacts of Tisbury serving as the gateway to the island, including reducing the number of vehicles on island to improve the quality of life for residents, visitors, and businesses (while not reducing the number of visitors). Including restricting the number of vehicles via ferry, and per vacation rental.
- Develop a traffic operations and simulation model for existing and projected movement of traffic through key intersections and corridors in Tisbury. Use the model to test effectiveness of potential improvements (e.g. traffic signals, roundabouts, bus lanes, and shared-use paths).
- Develop an ADA Self Evaluation and Transition Plan (SETP) to identify obstacles to accessibility, prioritize improvements and identify potential funding as required by the ADA Title 2. Accessibility within the public Right of Way includes existing sidewalks, curb ramps, pedestrian crossings, and pedestrian signals.
- Develop a traffic calming policy and program to identify intersection and roadway improvements to reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit. Identify sidewalks, crosswalks, and walkways for improvement to meet ADA compliance.
- Within the comprehensive transportation plan, finalize design plans for a new street that connects State Road to EVH Road. Ensure the

## Choosing to Improve

street is suitable for pedestrians, bicyclists, passenger cars, and trucks. Pursue project funding through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

- Pursue the establishment of publicly accessible shared-use pathways or trails in utility corridors.
- Map informal paths and access routes and then find a mechanism to compensate the property owners. Prioritization should be included.
- Develop continuous sidewalks and safe bicycle infrastructure between the B2 district and downtown commercial area.

## Longer-term steps (5+ years)

- Convene meetings with SSA and port community towns to jointly prioritize resiliency feasibility of future SSA terminal options; collaborate with SSA in submitting a multi-stakeholder funding request to support feasibility options study.

## Steps we need to take every year

- Develop a harbor wide resiliency program that includes Water Street, Beach Road, Lagoon Pond Road, the SSA and other harbor users. Establish timelines and funding mechanisms for top priority infrastructure improvements. Collaborate with MassDOT and regional efforts.

## Goal 6: Increase equitable and sustainable housing choices.

### How? What is our strategy?

**6.1:** Use regulatory strategies to provide housing choice for year-round and seasonal residents, mainly through adaptive reuse of existing housing stock and infill in developed areas.

**6.2:** Create and provide a variety of incentives to create permanently affordable and attainable housing.

**6.3:** Ensure energy-efficient design and use of sustainable materials in construction, to maintain long-term affordability and a safe residential environment.



## Why is this goal important?

- *Tisbury has a high proportion of rental units compared to the rest of Martha's Vineyard. Areas like Vineyard Haven have existing residential density and access to utilities, amenities, and transit. However, the proliferation of short-term rentals throughout the Cape and Islands region concerns both year-round and long-time seasonal residents.*
- *Growth in housing costs affects year-round residents and many long-time seasonal residents. Over the next five years, households 65-74 years will comprise the largest relative growth of all age cohorts in and around Tisbury.*
- *Tisbury has worked well with nonprofit partners like the Island Housing Trust to produce permanently affordable units. Still, Tisbury remains well below the 10 percent minimum for low- or moderate-income housing under Chapter 40B, the Commonwealth's affordable housing law. In 2023, just 5.76 percent of Tisbury's year-round housing is listed on the Chapter 40B Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), leaving an existing shortfall of about 100 units.*
- *The 10 percent minimum under Chapter 40B is not a measure of housing needs. The 100-unit shortfall does not begin to capture the number of existing households paying more for housing than they can actually afford. According to the U.S. Census Bureau and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 515 low- or moderate-income households in Tisbury are housing cost burdened, i.e., paying more than 30 percent of their monthly income for a mortgage payment or rent and utilities. About 64 percent of these cost burdened people pay more than half their monthly income on housing.*
- *Tisbury needs effective strategies to increase its housing supply and in doing so, leverage greater affordability – and deeper affordability - from new development.*

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## Choosing to Grow

### The steps we plan to take right away (1-3 years)

- Examine as-of-right attached and detached accessory dwelling unit conditions to be developed in the zoning update.
- Develop a bylaw to regulate the operation of short-term rentals (STR) as provided for in G.L. c. 64G, including a ban on commercial (corporate-owned) STRs. Review bylaws adopted in Great Barrington, Lenox, and Provincetown for guidance.
- Increase the short-term rental registration fee and allocate a significant portion of the short-term rental income to be used to preserve existing and support new year-round housing.
- Adopt the 3% Local Option Community Impact Fee on professional managed/multi-unit STRs, and dedicate the amount collected to the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust.

### Near-term steps (3-5 years)

- Encourage mixed-use development with upper-story housing in the B2 district.
- Encourage multifamily housing and apartments within and in close proximity to the B2 district under clear regulations and approval procedures.
- Adopt inclusionary zoning for modest apartment development.
- Formalize collaboration between the Community Preservation Committee, Affordable Housing Committee, and Affordable Housing Trust (CPC/AHC/AHT) to streamline the process for committing funds to affordable housing projects.

- Maintain an up-to-date inventory of Affordable Housing units.
- Update the Housing Production Plan.

### **Longer-term steps (5+ years)**

- Investigate feasibility of a buy-down program.
- Design and administer a tax incentive financing program to support the feasibility of developing affordable housing.
- Review and update historic preservation goals and requirements in concert with housing needs and climate risk to remove conflicts and facilitate projects that can address all three needs jointly.
- Develop a policy that may require all new multi-family residential and/or rental apartment construction and major renovations to include a conduit to convenient charging location and breaker for future EV charger.

### **Steps we need to take every year**

- Continue to support the Island Housing Bank.
- Join with other Cape and Island communities to promote amendments to state law to allow deed restrictions for year-round housing.
- Continue to use CPA funding to support moderate-income and community housing.



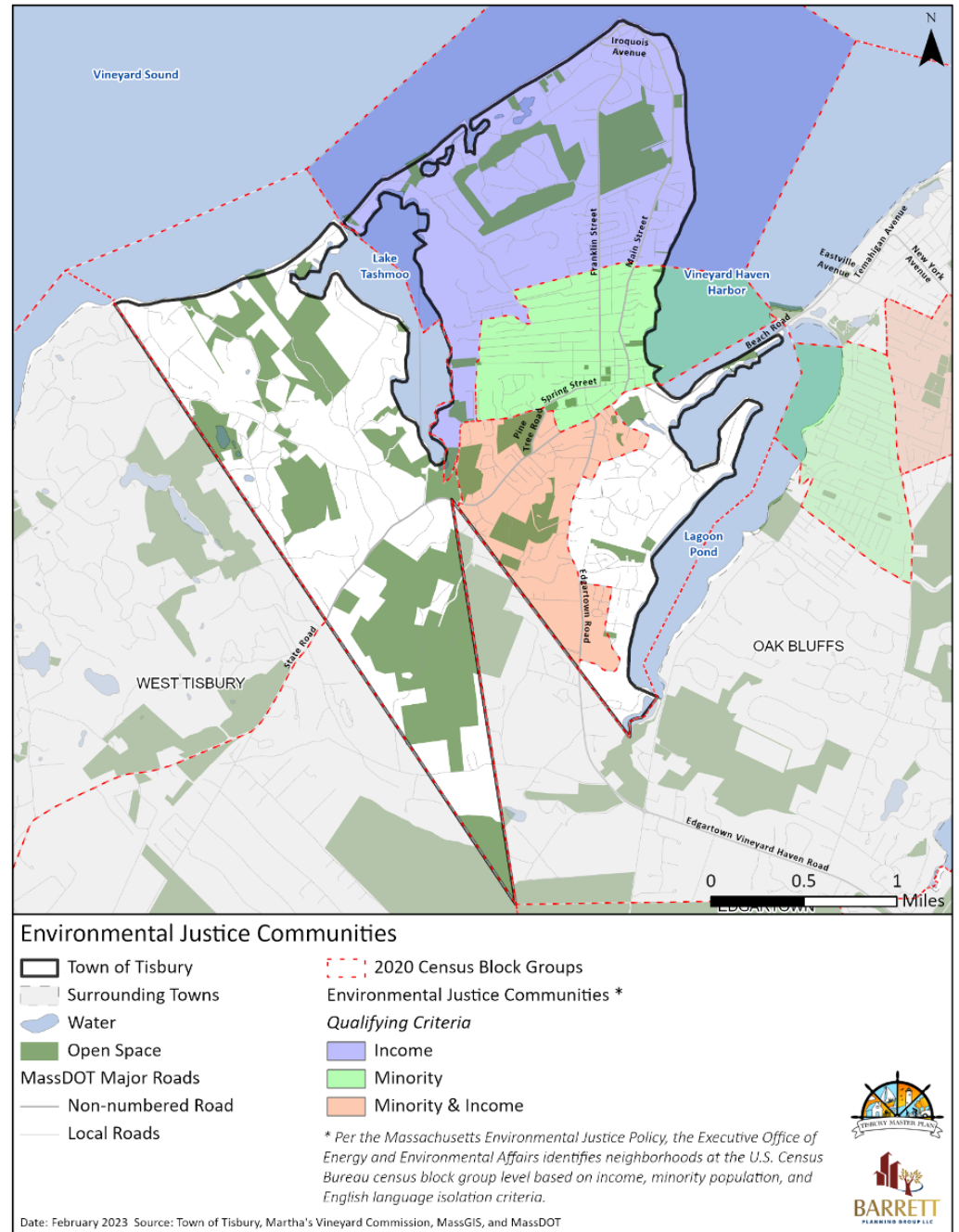
# Goal 7: Ensure our year-round residents, including our under-resourced populations, seasonal residents, and visitors have access to quality health services.

## How? What is our strategy?

**7.1:** Support local and island-wide initiatives that build equitable access to essential public health services for year-round and seasonal residents.

**7.2:** Collaborate with local, state, and federal programs to mitigate hazards and support efforts to address emergency response and the effects of climate change on residents.

**7.3:** Support the efforts of the community in educating, preventing, and treating residents and employees with substance use disorders, mental health, and other community health concerns.



## Why is goal so this important?

- *Community health is linked to employment and income security, housing affordability, transportation needs, and other local needs.*
- *Health care services and treatment are limited island wide. Clinics and health care providers cite capacity challenges associated with staffing, funding, and space to provide services.*
- *The Martha's Vineyard Board of Health reports that lone star ticks, believed to be the main cause of Alpha-gal Syndrome, continue to spread throughout the island.*
- *Over time, the impacts of climate change, including increased temperatures, changes in precipitation, more frequent and intense storms and other weather events, and sea level rise, can change environmental conditions and increase risks. Populations with the highest risks are the elderly, young children, pregnant women, those with chronic illnesses, people with lower incomes, and people with limited English proficiency.*
- *In Martha's Vineyard food security is a key issue for the Brazilian population, the chronically ill, and the island's older residents, but it is also important to recognize that food insecurity impacts all communities and individuals of all ages. More than half of the students in the Tisbury School District are eligible for free or reduced lunch, and many families do not participate in food assistance programs.*



## The steps we plan to take right away (1-3 years)

- Translate municipal materials, both print and online, into different languages to improve bilingual education and outreach to underserved and immigrant populations. Partner with organizations that already provide these services to maximize limited resources.
- Prioritize the Town's EJ communities and its most vulnerable residents to provide information about climate risks (including flooding, severe storms, drought, and excessive heat) and ways to reduce those risks. This might include FAQs, demonstrations, or other public events. Collaborate with existing networks that already serve these populations to build trust and create materials that are accessible (consider language, culture, literacy, hearing or sight disability, etc.) and are trained in mental health awareness.
- Establish a schedule to continuously revisit emergency response protocols to ensure that information is up to date regarding locations of vulnerable

residents and contact information to reach them during emergency situations, including hurricanes and other severe storms, heat waves, drought, and other events. Protocols should ensure access to critical services and needs of these residents. Build in communications that are accessible (consider language, culture, literacy, hearing or sight disability, etc.).

- Create an Ambassador Program, that includes high school, middle school, and charter school aged youth, that establishes better communication channels with town departments to better represent youth/adolescent interests.
- Support outreach efforts of local and island-wide health and community organizations in their efforts to reach the Town's most at-risk residents for substance abuse, mental health conditions, and other public health priorities.
- Work with island-wide partners to better understand food insecurity in Tisbury. Based on available resources, develop collaborative strategies to address needs. This might include distributing information on available resources or sponsoring public events that highlight food insecurity awareness in Tisbury.
- Collaborate with state and island partners in routine tick and mosquito surveillance and community outreach on tick and mosquito borne illnesses and other infectious vectors, including prevalence locally and island-wide, prevention, identification, and treatment. This might include updating the Town's website as new data and resources are available through partners, holding events to increase public awareness, and other actions.
- Implement mental wellness programming and provide mental health resources for emergency response personnel, including Fire, Police, EMT and staff.

## Choosing to Provide

### Near-term steps (3-5 years)

- Convene municipal departments and others to educate and bring awareness of the impacts of local decision-making on public health issues in Tisbury.
- Build consideration of societal and economic impacts of climate change on residents (particularly EJ communities and the Town's most vulnerable) into the planning process (e.g., development review, planning for infrastructure investments, long-range planning studies). Ensure that benefits of resiliency investments are equitably distributed among residents.

### Steps we need to take every year

- Continue working with island-wide partners, such as MV Hospital and other agencies conducting health assessments, to identify gaps in needed health services and barriers (including physical, cultural, and economic barriers) to accessing these services, particularly for Tisbury residents.
- Prioritize outreach to Environmental Justice (EJ) communities and the Town's most vulnerable populations that may be difficult to reach. Examples might be distributing information about opportunities developed by partners through the Town's website, Tisbury School, or printed materials at town events.
- Participate in data collection and outreach for Community Health Needs Assessments of local health care providers to ensure all resident needs are identified. At the direction of providers conducting outreach, employ the best opportunities through existing municipal programs and services to reach residents.

