STAFF REPORT

DATE:	May 25, 2000
TO:	San Juan County Board of Commissioners
FROM:	Pat Mann, Senior Planner
RE:	Study of Socioeconomic Impacts of Growth Pressure in Selected Seasonal/Resort Communities.
INTRODUCTION:	The Planning Department contracted with Aquatic Resources Conservation Group of Seattle to study the impacts of growth pressures in selected seasonal and resort communities.
PURPOSE:	To transmit the report highlighting Staff's concerns based on the study.
RECOMMENDATIONS:	Consider information in the report in anticipating the impacts of planning decisions.

Background

The Board of County Commissioners requested that Staff evaluate the socioeconomic impacts of potential downzoning on the current population of the San Juan Islands. Among the work conducted as part of this evaluation was an examination of the experience of other communities facing growth pressure, conducted by a consultant.

Report Summary

The report reviewed the recent history of growth and change in Nantucket, Massachusetts and Aspen, Colorado. Some information was also obtained on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and Block Island, Rhode Island.

The report indicates that in each of these communities, wealthy purchasers of vacation homes have changed the character of the communities and placed substantial pressure on previous residents. The principal impact is to increase land values to the point that local residents depending on wage income no longer have substantial choices of residence. Increasing property taxes force fixed-income owners to sell unless some form of owner tax inflation relief is provided. A large percentage of rural and low-density lands turn over in the space of 20 to 40 years to wealthy individuals. The wealthy include a few local residents who became wealthy through sales of their property, and a much larger number of people who purchased second homes or vacation homes.

Government professional staff, business owners, and local interest groups contacted in each of the communities studied now considers affordable housing for residents and employees to be a substantial problem. Whether or not the new wealthy owners consider this to be a substantial problem cannot be determined from the data.

Each of the communities is expending substantial sums of money to preserve some of the remaining open space at now greatly increased cost. Nantucket has long had a land trust funded by a 2% real estate transfer tax. Nantucket recently adopted a $27-million bond issue to increase the available funding for its land trust. Pitkin County (surrounding Aspen) established a land bank in 1990 which has acquired 7200 acres of open space land. Maps in the attached report illustrate the substantial areas of trust lands in these communities.

Each of these communities is also currently attempting by government intervention to override the housing market and provide affordable housing for local workers.

Conclusions

Staff's expectation from this analysis was that the consultant might find some characteristic of the San Juan Islands that differentiated it from the situations in these communities that have transitioned to a dual market in which long-term residents and local workers are squeezed into narrower choices and disrupted lives. The report does not provide such hope for the San Juans. On the contrary, the similarities in size, scale, access, environment, and trends make us look very much like these communities as they were 20 to 30 years ago.

The San Juans appear to be headed the direction of Aspen and Nantucket. The lessons of those communities seem to be:

1. There is little that can be done to prevent the wealthy from taking over privately owned rural lands and converting farm and forest

to estates and trophy homes. It is difficult to persuade current owners not to sell to the highest bidder.

2. The problems of finding housing for workers and the children of current residents who are not wealthy will become much worse. As the transition to ownership of a substantial portion of rural lands by the wealthy occurs, rural lands will no longer be available for private ownership by local wage earners or small business operators.

3. While downzoning certainly has mixed effects, the transition to extremely high property values in rural lands would be expected to be accelerated by downzoning. This result would be expected because downzoning will reduce the potential number of rural parcels available for development, so the fewer available parcels will be bid up more rapidly by the potential purchasers. Downzoning may slow population growth somewhat by increasing the market entry cost for rural lands above that affordable to a larger portion of the population. However, the rate at which *land* is consumed for residential use would be expected to be just as high or higher.

4. In such a market environment, affordable housing for local wage earners and small business operators without substantial investment income can be provided in the private market only if sufficient land is available for development at urban densities with urban services. Apartments, condominiums and small homes would need to be delivered in the private market at urban densities at a cost of $80,000 to $150,000 per unit (Appendix A, Table 2 in the draft Housing Element) to be affordable to a range of households from low-income two-person households up to moderate-income four-person families. These are realistic expectations if sufficient land zoned for urban density is provided. If the County cannot, or does not desire to, make available a substantial amount of land for development at urban densities, then affordable housing for these groups can only be provided by artificial means such as public ownership or public subsidy.

5. It is possible to retain many of the aspects of rural character over time while providing for substantially more population and development, provided that this development is strictly limited to tightly-constrained growth areas developed at urban densities. The European model of development, in which densely developed villages are surrounded by rural farmland and forest, clearly illustrates this potential.

6. The ability of each person to build a fence around his or her own portion of the rural landscape at a reasonable price will soon disappear in the San Juan Islands as a consequence of basic economic forces and desirability of the island environment. To prevent this, the Islands would have to be made an undesirable place to live.

7. The rural landscape will only be available to those of modest means on public land or on land legally constrained to rural activities and patterns of development.

Rural land and rural character will only be available if substantial amounts of rural land are retained in public ownership and management, or if government control manipulates the private market to preserve rural character by substantially restricting the options of private property owners.

8. Societal controls that may in the past have discouraged the conversion of rural lands to estates and trophy homes do not act to discourage these actions by purchasers from outside the islands.

Socioeconomic Impacts
of
Growth Pressure

In Selected Seasonal/Resort Communities:

Document Analysis and Interview Summaries

Aspen, Colorado and Nantucket, Massachusetts

A Report
Prepared for
The San Juan County
Planning Department
Friday Harbor, Washington

Aquatic Resources Conservation Group
Seattle, Washington

Final Report
May 22, 2000

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The San Juan County
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Friday Harbor, Washington

This document is the final report in fulfillment of a contract with the San Juan County Planning Department of May 4, 2000.

Aquatic Resources Conservation Group is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) consulting organization specializing in marine and watershed resource issues and land use planning. Offices are located at 3706 SW Hill Street, Seattle, WA 98126. Telephone/Fax: (206) 932-3100. E-mail: bobrick@igc.org

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I. Introduction

We were asked to do a brief study of several communities, which were facing or had faced substantial growth and gentrification pressure, in order to evaluate the effect of these changes on the current population. Communities were chosen with one or more additional characteristics similar to the San Juans so that similar conditions could be evaluated. Among these criteria were:

- Ferry-served islands;
- Seasonal or resort communities where visitor influxes dramatically increase the small, permanent resident population;
- Communities with substantial regional or national appeal as locations for second homes and/or retirement;
- Communities where the quality of the natural environment and/or small town, rural character were part of the community appeal.

We were to point out socioeconomic problems associated with these situations and the solutions being attempted. Further, we were to talk with local citizens as to how they viewed the introduction of this new wealth and the changes it brought to their community and to individuals there before the change.

In consultation with the Planning Department, we chose only two communities because of the limited time available. We studied Aspen, Colorado, and Nantucket, Massachusetts, but also looked briefly at the problems and solutions current on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and Block Island, Rhode Island. In each case from Aspen to Block Island, and in that order of severity, the problems were loss of environment, loss of the character and charm and small town rural feel of the area, the loss of affordable housing, increasing traffic, noise and other less desirable aspects of urbanization, and infrastructure that could not keep up with demand.

Below we will discuss the two focus communities, offering a brief description of their geography, history, and demographics, and describing the changes occurring as they grow. Both are involved in a review and a thorough update of their growth management strategies. We will analyze this process in hopes that what is happening in Aspen and Nantucket can help inform the decisions of San Juan County.

Both of the studied communities have grown in such an ungainly fashion that the increasingly great disparities in wealth of the last decade have been placed front and center, squarely before them on their city streets and rural lanes. Whereas both have at least some valid claim to a blue collar past, full of character and characters, today the fact is that working people of modest means have a harder and harder time living in these communities. This includes the long-term, year-round residents (and their offspring who might like to stay at maturity) and seasonal workers instrumental in the communities' success. As the San Juans become increasingly popular, with tourists, for second homes and for retirement, it could be viewed as tracking this same path. Certainly, it has not reached the level of Aspen or Nantucket; but the same forces that acted there are clearly visible on the horizon.

In summary, it appears that at some point in what could be viewed as a process of growth and change, an almost magnetic pull begins to exert itself and to get progressively stronger as the change continues, which in turn causes the change to accelerate… and so on. Eventually virtually no thing of the old community is left except its place on the map. In this study we found that the worse the situation and the greater the change, that is, the closer the community was to losing what had made it unique and desirable in the first place, the more stringent the growth management procedures became. Aspen has restrictive growth procedures now and is proposing even tighter controls. Nantucket is embarking on a much more proactive course of action, but only after it saw remarkable growth and change in the 1990s. By comparison, rural, and still remarkably idyllic, Block Island has no growth "pacing" device at all, beyond three-acre minimum zoning. Whether Aspen, despite an intelligent, energized and vocal group of people who want to retain and regain the diversity of the past, and a government ready to initiate greatly improved controls on growth, can become a socially and economically mixed community again is highly doubtful. Unfortunately, though not as far progressed as Aspen, Nantucket is probably in the same boat – although they could end up with a greater vestige of their former character. Block Island's test is yet to come, but they must act soon.

The test for the San Juans is now. If it decides not to duplicate what we show has happened to like-situated communities elsewhere, it will have to dedicate itself to establishing how it wants to be in five, ten and twenty years. It then will have to control and moderate growth accordingly. It will have to decide its carrying capacity and determine how to assure that it is not exceeded. If it wants residents of modest means to be able to live and work on the island as well as be able to have seasonal workers present to provide services, it will have to develop a parallel, affordable real estate market. And if it wants to retain its rural sense of open space, it will have to develop a comprehensive plan to identify and preserve the places essential to that vision.

If there is one lesson to be derived from this study, it is that there are currently some quite good ideas out there as to how to accomplish these goals – to allow growth, retain a vibrant, diverse community and control the loss of a unique, rural/small town experience. The trick is in the timing; that is, when you put these mechanisms in place. In our study none of the communities installed them early enough. Fortunately, that option is still available for the San Juans. The information in this report is provided for consideration in that regard.

II. Aspen, Colorado

Geography

Aspen, in Pitkin County, is located in west central Colorado at the upper, southern end of the Roaring Fork River Valley, 220 miles southwest of Denver. Growth is constrained by the rugged Rocky Mountain Range and by federal lands of the White River Natural Forest. Warm summer days and cool nights in a dramatic natural setting, and snowy winters with many bright, clear days, have made it a mecca for skiing and for summer arts and leisure. The town now encompasses 1.9 square miles, with an Aspen metro area of about 10 square miles.

History

The valley's first non-native settlers arrived in 1879 in search of silver. Colorado, Governor Frederick Pitkin fulfilled the Aspen area residents' request and established Pitkin County on February 23, 1881. The incorporation of Aspen occurred by May of the same year. During the first four years of the area's settlement, population fluctuated depending on both the weather and the hostility of the natives. By 1883, an estimated 500 people resided in Aspen. In 1884, the population increased to 3,000 people. In 1887, both the Midland and Rio Grande rail lines reached the city. The accessibility provided by the railroads resulted in staggering growth; Aspen became the third largest city in Colorado, inhabited by approximately 12,000 residents. The area flourished for six years until the price of silver fell drastically. Throughout Colorado, silver mines were shut down. By the turn of the century, only 3,300 people remained in Aspen, and the population continued to decrease until it hit a low of 700 in 1930.

Tom Flynn, son of a local miner, built a single, 3000-foot ski run, "Roch Run" on Aspen Mountain in the late 1930's. In 1941, the World Alpine Championship was held there. Further development was put on hold until after W.W.II. In the years to follow, wealthy investors arrived from the Chicago area, including Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke. They provided money for both the ski resorts and the area's arts and culture. During the 1950's Aspen became the first site in the United States to host the World Ski Championship. Development of the area continued, three more ski resorts were built between the 1950's and the 1970's, and, as they say, the rest is history.

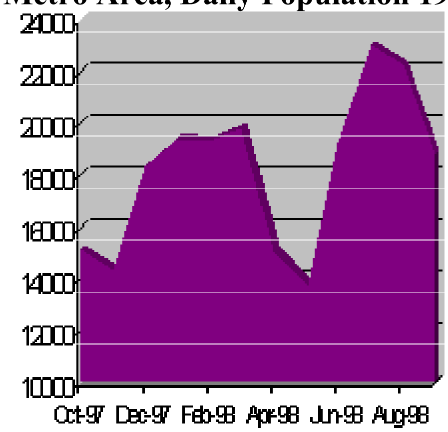
Demographics

Aspen's population of now varies within the year as it once did over the boom/bust years of silver mining. It remained a fairly stable, small town with good skiing until the early 1970's, when the population growth began again in earnest. Between 1990 and 1998, Pitkin County's permanent population increased 12%, from over 12,500 to over 14,000. These numbers include Aspen, which grew from 5,000 to over 6,200 (+23%) and Snowmass Village which grew from 1,450 to almost 1,900 (+29%) during that same period. The table below shows the near parity of permanent residents and temporary ones. These numbers do not reflect day visitors, which can account for 10,000-15,000 more people in the metro area per day.

Aspen Metro Area Seasonal Population – 1997

Average Summer			**Average Winter**	
Residents	7,397		Residents	7,397
Occasional residents	1,852		Occasional residents	2,066
Overnight tourists	4,466		Overnight tourists	5,051
Total	**13,715**		**Total**	**14,514**

Aspen Metro Area, Daily Population 1997-1998



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In order to gauge the level of activity in season, consider that the area's four ski resorts recorded over 1.5 million ski visits (visitors per day, both residents and non-residents) in the 1997-1998 winter months.

Because of cost of living concerns, population has spilled over into adjoining jurisdictions such as Garfield County and its city of Glenwood Springs, and Eagle County and the City of Basalt/El Jebel. The latter municipality has grown, basically as a bedroom community for Aspen, from approximately 1,200 residents in 1990 to 6,500 in 1998, a 443% increase. While not discussed in this report, the entire valley is becoming a 45-mile corridor (Aspen to Glenwood Springs) of development, spawned by the resort and, in turn, the second home economy.

Planning

Aspen's first Growth Management Policy Plan was issued in 1976 and established a framework designed to preserve the environment and social quality and maintain a balance between economic needs and the fiscal capabilities of the community. The 1993 Aspen Area Community Plan built on this and focused on the permanent community, transportation, sustainable development, and maintaining the character of the built environment. In the spring of 1998, the community came together again, and earlier this year released the 2000 Aspen Area Community Plan Update (AACP).

Growth Issues

Even with an entailed quota management system established in 1993, it was recently estimated that 88% of the true growth in the Aspen metro area was escaping control. Even with an aggressive, publicly supported affordable housing program, Aspen's home prices had escalated beyond the reach of a majority of the area's workers, and they were migrating out of the community to less affordable towns and counties. With average single-family homes in the Aspen/Snowmass Village area selling for well over $2 million, fully 65% of the Aspen work force commutes from outside of town and over 50% of all workers in the city/county area come from outside Pitkin's borders. Though jobs are increasing in number, worker's wages do not keep up with the increased cost of living. With the demand for more building, loss of the natural environment is an increasingly important issue. As always, traffic congestion continues to be a problem. A brief analysis of the major sections of the AACP and its accompanying action items, as supplemented by other reports, is illustrative of how Aspen is dealing with growth.

Aspen Area Community Plan

<u>Managing Growth and Rate of Change</u>

The overall stated philosophy of the AACP is to seek and maintain a balance between "Aspen the Community and Aspen the Resort." The plan is first to revise the code that allows very little containment of actual growth because of a list of exemptions. Basically, the idea in 1993 was to inventory each sector (residential, commercial and tourist accommodation) and to keep those in balance by controlling the rate of growth (for instance, 3.4% in residential housing or 24 units annually). Both Aspen and Pitkin County adopted Growth Management Quota Systems (GMQS) which reviewed new building permit requests using a scoring competition. To develop, you had to apply. However, instead of competing in this point quota system, developers/builders took advantage of a large number of exemptions the law provided. These got developers to do other things that the act also determined to be beneficial to the community. They included providing an array of types of affordable housing. There are also exemptions for remodels, rebuilding, certain essential facilities and commercial structures. It is an exhaustive list. Plus, in 1993 there were a huge number of lots and parcels, especially in the county, that were established before a certain cut off date and they were exempt. Colorado State law also allows subdivision of a parcel into 35-acre units as a right. The new plan is to tighten controls on the scope and number of exemptions and to restrict the number of parcels grandfathered.

The second major focus will be to direct growth into the city and away from the non-metro, "country" part of Pitkin County. This will be done by establishing an Aspen Community Growth Boundary (CGB). It is then proposed that a maximum population of 28,000-30,000 be set within the CGB (this based on the busiest month in 1998, July). This would be accomplished, using a revised quota system as mentioned above, and by setting a true rate of growth of 2%. This population number is subject to further discussion -- one AACP work action item is to develop a "peak capacity standard" which looks at both peak physical and social infrastructure capacity. This would relate infrastructure to ultimate available buildout and population potential. More subjective actions would include developing community sustainability indicators (such as have been done by Sustainable Seattle). As part of the CGB infill design, Aspen will also look at Transferred Development Rights (TDR's) and at dedicating the downtown core as a TDR receiving site. Proposed as well is that there be carried out, every 5 years, an updated current population analysis both of permanent and part time residents and visitors. Finally, a procedure would be constructed to analyze buildout annually.

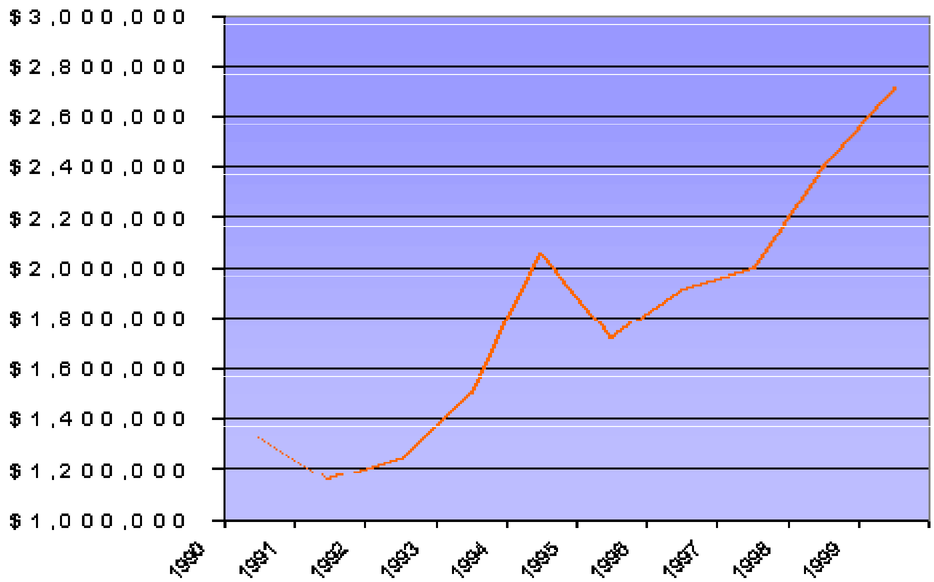
Transportation

Like any seasonal resort, Aspen is burdened with pulses of automobile traffic which foul the air, bisect and take up land and, when congested, shorten tempers. In the peak summer season, up to 30,000 cars might enter the town versus 18,000 per day in the shoulder season. The AACP notes that without improvements, as many as 4000 additional parking spaces will be needed in town in 18 years. It links forestalling this eventuality with encouragement of auto alternatives. The plan encourages new development only when it can be served by transit and only in compact, mixed-use patterns conducive to bicycling and walking. It also intends to limit the entrance highway into town to 1993 volumes, and its current two lanes. Public parking within the CGB will be maintained at 1998 levels, except that necessary for affordable housing. The plan also seeks to improve the quality of air travel, as an alternative way of entering the community. One of the major problems is the commuting of metro area workers from down valley towns and counties. In peak season, this can reach 10,000 a day, coming from many places along the 45-mile valley corridor and converging on Aspen. While there is currently a resident-preference parking program (with day-pass sales), the newest proposal is to develop light rail as far as Garfield County through implementation of a Rural Transit Authority. Unfortunately at the same time as the AACP was being put together, the major valley highway has been 4-laned from Glenwood Springs to within a few miles of Aspen.

Housing

Even with arguably the most aggressive affordable housing policy in the resort world, it is still difficult for the average worker to live in Aspen or Pitkin County. The average metro area price of a free-market, single-family home is now $2.8 million. Condominiums average more than $600,000. In nearby Snowmass Village, residences average $2.2 million and condominiums and half a duplex, $600,000. Aspen area homes cost approximately 292% more than the national average.

Average Cost of Single-family homes in Aspen between 1990 and 1999



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The result has been an increasing move down the valley and out of Pitkin County. In the mid-1980's, 73% of those employed in the county resided there. By 1990 the figure was down to 59% and is now less than 50%. Aspen began in the 1970's trying to keep the workers, and a sense of community, in the metro area. In 1993, the goal was to have 60% of the people working there living there. And while, through a number of programs, more than 1,500 affordable housing units have been constructed, the goal is unmet and has been abandoned to a more qualitative standard. Their approach to affordable housing is instructive however.

A three-pronged system is currently in effect. Approximately one-third of the deed restricted systems have been produced as a result of GMQS requirements as mitigation for new development. Another one-third are the result of zoning incentives in districts exempt from GMQS. A final one-third are public sector projects, supported by cash instead of mitigation under the GMQS, bonds and local taxes designated for housing. This includes five different types of affordable housing units available to workers in Aspen and Pitkin County. They are:

- Category units: owned or rented, regulated as to size, type, occupancy, and sales or rental price by housing guidelines – built privately or by the city or county – and for low, moderate, and middle income employees. They range in size from studios to four bedrooms, multi-family units and single-family homes.

- Resident occupancy (RO) units: primarily serve local professionals and business owners – built by the private sector. Income limits, sales price, and size are higher than category units – as high as $425,000 (or more with a special review; there were no limits on sales price until 1999) – must be deed restricted to maintain affordable price -- cap on appreciated value when resold. Most are single-family but cannot exceed 2200 square feet.

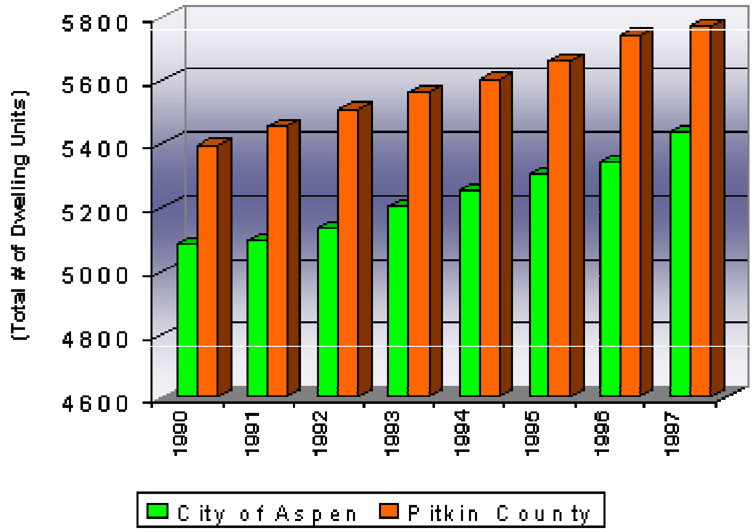
- Attached or detached employee dwelling units (EDU's): permitted as of right in certain zones and as a special review use in others. They are restricted to 700 to 1500 net livable square feet, deed restricted, and rented to employees who work in the area at prescribed rates.

- Accessory dwelling units (ADUs): are allowed by Aspen adjacent to single-family for resident owners. They must have 300 to 700 square feet of livable space, be deed restricted and be rented to a worker employed in the city or county, if occupied.

- Caretaker dwelling units (CDUs): are allowed in a number of residential zone districts in the county and can range up to 700 square feet. If occupied, must be by a member of the immediate family of the owner or rented to resident employees.

The Aspen/Pitkin County Housing Authority (APCHA) regulates this sector as well as is owner/manager of a number of units. Their effort is funded in part by a real estate transfer tax, similar to those often used for open space acquisition, and a .045% sales tax. Currently, at the upper limit, a family of four with an income of $106,000 (median family income in Pitkin County in 1998 was $52,976), can still qualify for affordable housing. The history of growth of restricted, affordable units compared with the growth of all dwelling units and price differences are reflected in the following graphs and table.

Residential Dwelling Units-City of Aspen and Unincorporated Pitkin County 1990-1997



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Growth and Deed Restricted Dwelling Units Aspen and Pitkin County 1980 – 1999

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Number of Deed Restricted Units Permitted in Aspen and unincorporated Pitkin County byYear	1172	1206	1242	1339	1353	1384	1430	1594	No data avail.	1519

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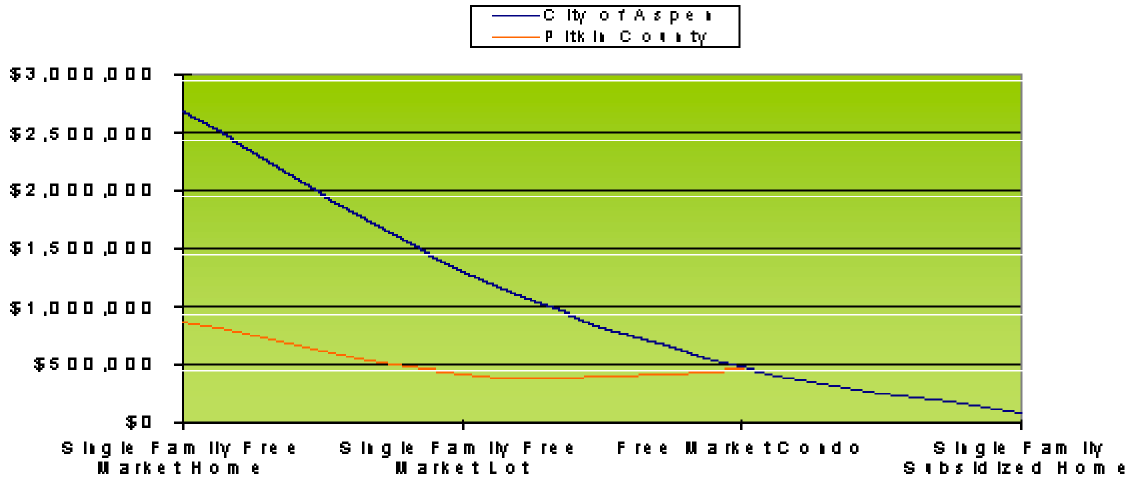
Average Property Prices in Aspen and Pitkin County, 1998



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The overriding idea for the area's revised affordable housing effort, as set out in the AACP, is to provide a “critical mass” (no longer 60%) of permanent local residents living within the CGB. Importantly, the new housing policy emphasizes the development of neighborhoods and community, not just units. In other planned changes affecting housing, the plan recommends altering land use codes to encourage upper floors in the downtown core to be developed for housing and discouraging “cash-in-lieu payments” as affordable housing mitigation for developments, as is now allowed.

As noted earlier, the AACP is considering TDR's. Pitkin County has a limited TDR program begun in 1995 in a zoning area that restricted development to 1,000 square foot cabins (Rural and Remote Zone District). The program allows owners to sell their development rights when they extinguish their mining claims (restricted to this type of ownership only). Once officially registered, the TDR could be sold (current worth about $100,000-150,000) to others who could use them to meet GMQS requirements or to “buy” additional square footage for their luxury homes, since Pitkin has limited total square footage to 15,000. The theory is that this transfer preserves large expanses of backcountry. Controversial from the start (e.g. is it valid to gain a TDR if the mining claim land is really undevelopable?), the program is under review; one option is to expand it to other types of land besides mining claims.

In what is the most innovative work being done on housing in the area, Pitkin County has prepared code amendments which compute the real cost of residential development to the community and its workforce. This was most visibly brought about because of the requirements of new trophy houses – very large, 5000+ square feet places, often second homes – which require, large diversified, and skilled work forces. In fact, the county has imposed a six-month moratorium on building permits for houses larger than 3,500 square feet, until a vote is held on the amendments. This code modification, one part of a slate of changes in growth management outside the CGB, is deemed "Fair Share Requirements." These impact fees tie the actual employee generation to the expense of construction using a formula involving square footage and/or the size of the home. The goal of the regulation is for new residential, commercial, and tourist accommodation development to mitigate for the affordable housing needs of its resident employees. This mitigation will assure that the county will achieve its goal of providing affordable housing for 100% of the employees generated by new growth and development there. Simply put, if the work requires an employee, then the employer must pay a fair share toward that worker being able to live in the community. (This current amendment also looks to assess impact fees for roads.) An excellent report prepared by Clarion Associates for the county, used as a basis for the code revision, sets out appropriate ways to measure the impacts on affordable housing from development. In addition, it outlines types of mitigation similar to those used as affordable housing exemptions in the current GMQS. As the Pitkin County Commissioners will vote on this in late May or June, it is an unfolding process that bears watching.

Economic Sustainability/Making a Living

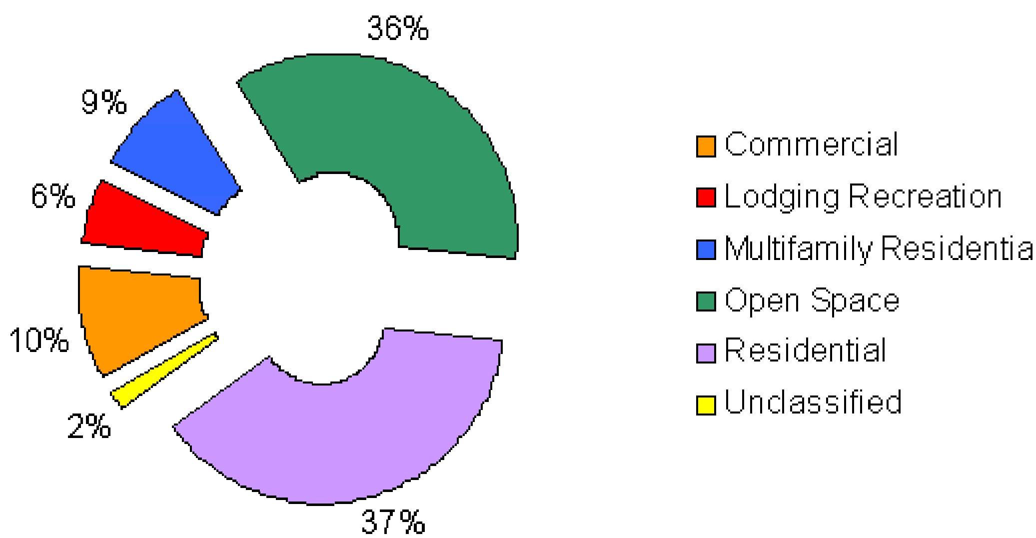
The AACP promotes the idea that a healthy community means a better resort; and focuses on mechanisms to "enhance the wealth generating capacity of the local economy which minimizes the rate at which cash flows through [and out of] the local economy". As discussed above, while employment has grown over the last decade in Aspen and the county, wages have tended to remain level and houses have become more expensive. Furthermore, the amount of housing offered in the free market at rates that can be afforded has decreased.

The economic growth of Aspen/Pitkin County in the last decade has been remarkable. In the five years between 1992 and 1997, unemployment fell from 8.1% to 4.0%. Total county business earnings increased from over $167 million in 1980 to over $366 million in 1990, rising another 47% by 1996 to over $536 million. Despite this economic growth, it has not been spread evenly. In the five years between 1993 and 1997, employment grew at an annual rate of 3.6% while earnings grew at 6.8%, indicating an annual rate of individual earnings growth of a modest 3.2%. Of those new jobs, construction, with a growth of 25%, is second only to the broadly defined service sector, and is followed by retail. Unfortunately, these three sectors have not seen much growth in individual earnings, that being reserved for the wholesale trades and finance, insurance and real estate sectors, which have added relatively fewer new employees. Thus those sectors adding the most jobs do little to ease the disparity between earnings and the cost of living. And to add to the conundrum, limiting the rate of growth would affect the construction trades. So as is the case in other communities that depend on tourism, and now the second home economy, Aspen is seeking to diversify methods of keeping its employee base working; and working at wages that afford them the opportunity to live where they are employed. A number of options that should be pursued are suggested. One of the most interesting involves establishing a Sustainable Economic Development Task Force to be made up of a wide range of interested parties.

The Natural Environment

Open space and biodiversity are now, as with most resorts, of great importance. Over one-third of Aspen metro area is preserved as open space.

Aspen Metro Area Land Use



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In 1990, popular vote established the Open Space and Trails Program in the county, operating in a manner similar to conservation land banks and funded through an additional property tax. In a decade, it has acquired over 7,200 acres of open space and more than 5 miles of trail. It recently has been extended for another 10 years. The AACP seeks to continue that preservation and acquisition strategy in the city and county through growth planning mechanisms referred to above. Priority efforts will be focused on clustering and infill within the CGB, and in identifying and conserving essential areas. To aid in this there is a Future Land Use map, and the AACP calls for implementing a "Greenfrastructure" Plan with strategies as to how to channel growth and retain the most natural environment possible.

Other

Because of the history associated with the area, the AACP also sets out historic preservation needs and mechanisms; discusses design criteria standards; and notes the importance of encouraging the arts and cultural attributes of the community.

Comments of People Interviewed about Aspen

> What is there here in Aspen, that by magic draws me so;
> Is it the mystic ranges, and mountain peaks of snow;
> Or is it still something more, far precious than a vista fair;
> Is it, perhaps, a priceless gem, or jewels most desired and rare?
>
> Fair Aspen! I've been lonely, have wandered to and fro;
> E'er weaving vagrant fancies, thru hours of twilight glow;
> But now because I've found thee, enchanted and Divine;
> I'll never turn to other loves, forgetting thee as mine.

"Aspen" by Sunset Joe, Poet of the Southwest, as printed in the Aspen Democrat-Times, week of September 2, 1925.

The following questions were asked of all interviewees:

1. Has the recent growth dramatically changed the character/charm of the Area?
2. How do you feel about the RTA's proposed Roaring Fork Valley light rail? Is there a need for the additional public transport?
3. Is there a need for affordable housing? Do you approve/agree with current city and county involvement in the provision of affordable housing?
4. Is there sufficient employment in the area? Into which sector do most vacant jobs fall?
5. Has the area done an effective job preserving open space?

1. Alteration of Character
The majority of those interviewed were new comers to the Aspen area. They all felt both the character and charm of the area had been dramatically affected but most were not speaking on the basis of personal knowledge. One man, an Aspen resident for the past 26 years, who is actively involved in conservation at both the government and non profit level, agreed with the sentiments of the new comers. He said Aspen is not the place it was, there is a crowded feeling both in the metro area and on the ski slopes.

The same respondent felt the city and county were largely responsible for the loss of character in the area. They are the largest contributors to the construction industry. In their attempt to supply affordable housing, they have taken the controls off growth: "They are shooting themselves in the foot, the head...somewhere in between."

2. Transportation

One respondent was completely in favor of the Roaring Fork Valley line, while he felt it was not the "silver bullet solution" for all the area's growth problems, "Anything that will get people out of their cars is a needed and worthwhile solution." He was from the East Coast originally and therefore was used to trains. He felt the West needed more, despite the occurrence of vast open areas. "After all, dependence on reliable mass transit is a viable answer to concentrating growth in urban districts."

Another respondent also thought the train line was a great idea. When asked if uses the line that currently runs throughout Aspen or any of the area's buses, he replied with a simple, "No."

The longtime resident feels a perfectly appropriate, under-utilized bus system is already providing adequate transportation service throughout the Roaring Fork Valley. He cannot figure out why so few people ride it now and why the county and city officials feel spending an exorbitant amount of money on a new system will do anything but cost taxpayers more money. He does feel, however, that mass transit is the solution to the over development of the upper valley. The buses provide people a means to commute economically and efficiently. This in turns allows employees to live down valley where they are capable of purchasing or renting a home in the free market (This interviewee was an advocate of taking the government out of the business of providing people affordable housing and was concerned with the over development of the upper valley).

A very active member of the community felt that the majority of the areas citizens were opposed to the light rail proposal. Those least responsible for the over burdening of the area's infrastructure would foot more of the bill.

3. Affordable Housing

"It is certainly not simple," said an owner of deed restricted, resident only (RO) single-family home in Snowmass Village, speaking to the affordable housing issue. She and her husband, former business owners, have lived in Aspen and the area for 25 years. "It gets even more complicated when resale arises," she explained. "Now the housing authority (the APCHA) is committed to establishing a system where, even though RO houses are privately owned, the APCHA will conduct sales between RO owners and new purchasers." This involves use of a lottery to chose new buyers and has come about because many RO owners feel the appreciation cap of 4% annually is unfair. There has been talk of possible "under-the-table" deals where cash "bonus" or "sweetener" money is exchanged outside of all written records. She says that if this happens (no such "deal" has been confirmed), it is because the housing market is so intense. "There also are cases of hard feelings about RO owners who have become wealthy. One man got a large inheritance a few years ago and now spends almost all his time in Hawaii. Some people believe he should have to sell – he is not really living here anymore."

Only one other interviewee owned his own home. He was also the owner of a moderately priced hotel in the Aspen metro area. One of the hardest problems for him as a businessman is maintaining a reliable and knowledgeable staff. With a low priced one-bedroom apartment renting for $1,200, he is hard-pressed to find people willing to work for $12/hour.

Another area resident, who lives in employer-provided housing, offered a solution although he was not sure it was legal. He wanted to find a way to increase the property tax for second homeowners. He said, "The burden they are creating on our infrastructure is unfair."

Both of these respondents felt a collaborative effort between the public and private sector was the best approach toward reaching a solution.

The director of a local non-profit, who sits on a county board, feels government intervention in the provision of affordable housing is a misguided and unbalanced effort. He also works for an organization that supplies both its full time permanent and short-term workers with housing. In his opinion both the city and county governments are adamantly opposed to employers providing the only source of affordable housing in the area. "The government is blind to the other side of the coin; if employers can not provide for the stability of the workforce, the local economy is not healthy." The government fears placing citizen housing at the "whim" of the employer, because it equates to: if you lose your job, you lose your house. He felt the free market, with the involvement of citizens, could supply a solution to the problem. If employers supply adequate housing, they can maintain a viable work force, which will provide well for all in community.

4. Employment
"A look in the classifieds reveals a gross disparity between jobs, which are available, and housing, which is not."

There is a consensus in the area that there are more jobs than can be filled. This past winter a number of ski lifts were never operated due to the shortage in staff. The wealthy and second homeowners have soaked up much of the available labor force, as one interviewee put it, "They [the wealthy] need someone for everything...someone to blow their noses. The rest of us have had to learn how to do our own plumbing and electrical work because all the trades people have been hired by them." It is very hard to find quality (or any) workers for available positions.

5. Open space
"Until you have a crisis, you don't think there is a need." All of those interviewed feel the county has done a great job at the preservation of open spaces. The only complaint, by a member of the open space program, was that they should have started 30 years ago. Smuggler Mountain, which rises above the city, was sold then for $250,000. One of those interviewed used to look up and say, "No one will ever go there. Smuggler's owner is now looking at developing the property and his profit will be in the tens of millions of dollars."

The advice from the member of the open space program: "Assume if it can be developed, it will be; buy it today".

Summary

What becomes clear, after a brief look at this area, is that Aspen will have an uphill battle recapturing more than a scintilla of the community diversity it has lost in the last several decades, even though there is a very vocal and active citizenry that is committed to the fight. While it continues even more innovative approaches to link development with affordable housing, other areas in the region which have been affected by Aspen's economic rise, are looking at different ways to retain a sense of community. Most have chosen, for instance, not to pursue the aggressive public housing (sometimes called "social engineering") solutions of Aspen. But when the average single-family lot sells for almost $1.5 million (as it did in Snowmass Village at the end of 1999), then perhaps any system that keeps at least some local employees living locally is a good show.

III. Nantucket, Massachusetts

Geography

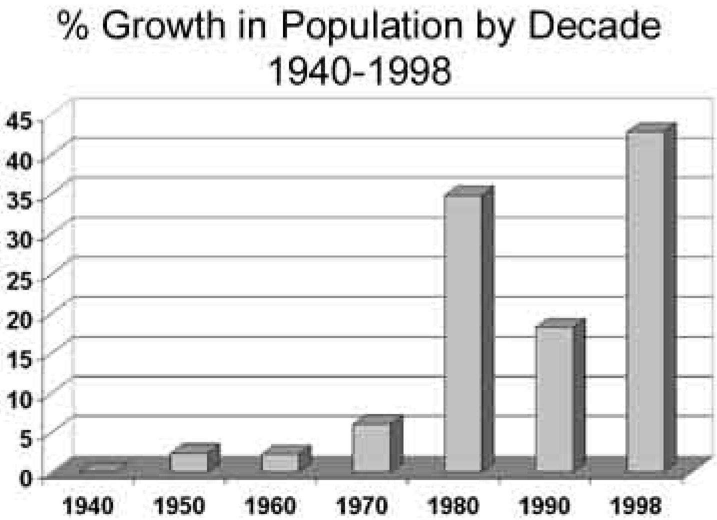
Nantucket Island, which comprises Nantucket County, is, with Martha's Vineyard, the most northerly coastal island of North American influenced by the warmth of the Gulf Stream. Left as a result of the meeting of two major ice fronts at the final stage of the last glaciation, it is a rolling landscape 13 miles long by 10 miles wide at the widest. It is 30 miles from shore, a 50 square mile land mass with a good harbor, sandy beaches, wetlands, fresh and brackish ponds, cliffs of sand and clay, and level agricultural lands, hilly thickets, and woody moraines.

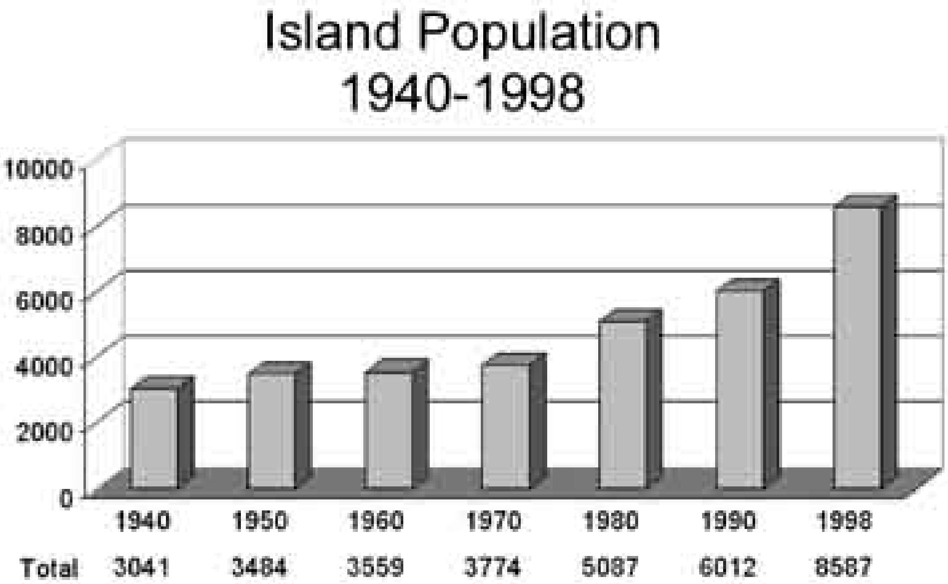
History

Nantucket was settled in the 17th century and was a major port for whaling (right and sperm) and associated industries in the 18th century. By the middle of the 19th century, whaling from Nantucket was in decline, and by the end of the 1800s there was the beginning of tourism as an income supplement. Fishing also continued with a fleet based here, gaining prominence in the local economy as whaling failed. As many as 40 vessels worked the area until after WWII. In the early 1960s, a New York entrepreneur, Walter Beineke, Jr., saw the future in the island's situation as a basically undisturbed piece of history, with a mild climate; and he began what is today the Nantucket tourist/resort industry.

Demographics

From a base of a few over 3,000 people from 1940 to 1970, permanent year-round residents now number approximately 8,000; and the population soars in mid-summer to over 30,000. It is the state's smallest county, and the fastest growing one over the last decade (a 43% increase), having surpassed Martha's Vineyard (Dukes County) which grew fastest in the 1980s.





Location: (<http://www.nantucketcomplan.com/planindex.html> 5/17/2000

Planning

Threatened with a growing sense of total loss of place, citizens came together in the late 1990s with a new planning director at the Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission, and over 3 years produced and released on January 1, 2000, the Nantucket Comprehensive Plan (NCP). In its 160 pages it identifies the elements of growth and lays out a strategy for managing it. Nantucket has planned for its future before, establishing a Historic District Commission in 1955 (expanded island-wide in 1970), adopting zoning controls in the '70s, and in 1983 (renewed in 1990) developing a community Goals and Objectives document. It also put in place the first land bank in the US, using a 2% tax on real estate sales prices to fund acquisition of open space. In 1997 it passed a $25 million bond issue to acquire open space. This current document, however, with over 400 specific actions and the need for over 40 bylaw changes and the passage of a home rule act by the state, is a dramatic attempt to move ahead of growth that continues to occur at an ever increasingly rapid rate. Public hearings have been held and comment solicited and a revised document will be put before a Special Town Meeting in the late fall of 2000.

Growth Issues

In the last 5 years, the cost of housing has gone up 75%. Since the 1960s, Nantucket has seen the building of 4,000 houses, as many as were built in the first 310 years and are still standing (the oldest remaining house, Sunset Hill, was built in 1686). With discovery of its charm and once apparent timelessness, the price of real estate has also skyrocketed. The average price of a single-family house for the first quarter of 2000 was $1.25 million, up 36% from the same period in 1999. The median, middle of the market home rose from $450,000 to $600,000, 1998 to 1999, and is now up to $695,000, a 165% increase from the median home price in 1991 of $265,000. With the loss of affordable housing goes a loss in the stability of the community -- renters do the Nantucket shuffle in the summer, when even small cabins may rent for $3000 a week, houses for $20,000 a month. There is also the problem of where to house the seasonal workers that make tourism possible. In short, the inflation of housing is held to be at the heart of Nantucket's economic, social and environmental problems. Other problems are zoning for large lot size which means sprawl which eats up land. And sprawl means more cars -- so many that a buildout with the current projections leaves engineers with no solution as to how to manage the traffic jam. The building pace is so rapid that as many as 400 workers commute daily to the island -- building today what could provide jobs in the future for the island trades people . And with all of this comes the need for new and better infrastructure, and the specter of rising taxes.

Managing Growth and Rate of Change

The current growth management scheme is as standard as the list enumerated above is intuitive. Progress is controlled by zoning for large parcels (1-3 acres for a single-family home); no boundary between town and country exists; and there is a residential construction cap of 120 dwelling units per year. With each primary dwelling unit, there is the right to build a secondary dwelling unit. There is no impact fee and no tourist tax in place.

A strong economy, a desirable place, a proximity to the huge populations of the Northeast Corridor, these growth management mechanisms, and the knowledge that something has to change all have led to a gold rush mentality: get a place on Nantucket now, no matter the price, before the door is finally closed.

The theory behind the NCP, and mechanisms to seek consensus and action, may best be illustrated by text from the Introduction. Under a 1955 photograph of scallopers in Nantucket harbor are these paragraphs:

> In 1980, Nantucket fishermen landed more than 100,000 bushels of scallops, driving an industry that pumped more than $3.7 million into the island's econ-

omy. Immediately afterwards, the scallop fishery entered a period of decline from which it has not recovered: harvests spiraled steadily downward—with on brief spike back up—and by 1998 the 100,000-bushel harvest had become a meager 5,000 or less, the $3.7 million returns now barely $250,000.

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While this may seem like an odd way to introduce Nantucket's Comprehensive Plan, in many ways the efforts to preserve our shellfish are similar to the larger effort of preserving our island. Scalloping, like many of the challenges that face our community today, represents a cherished part of Nantucket that is diminishing at a frightening pace, with no clear consensus on how to save it. In truth, there is no one action or solution that will bring scallops back: it will be a long process that will likely include hard decisions about waterfront development, landscaping, and the number of boats our harbor can safely sustain. Similarly, there is no magic philosophy that will guide Nantucket's future: we will not find our way by adhering to an economic or an environmental agenda alone, nor by glaring at each other across an ideological divide between the two. Rather, it will take a careful balancing act, understanding how different actions impact different areas, and always drawing the line before one-segment tips too far and upsets the scales. Maintaining this balance in the harbor will allow the scallop fishery to be both sustainable and profitable; maintaining it for Nantucket will allow the island to thrive and its people to prosper well into the twenty-first century.

Location: (<http://www.nantucketcomplan.com/Introduction.html> 5/11/2000).

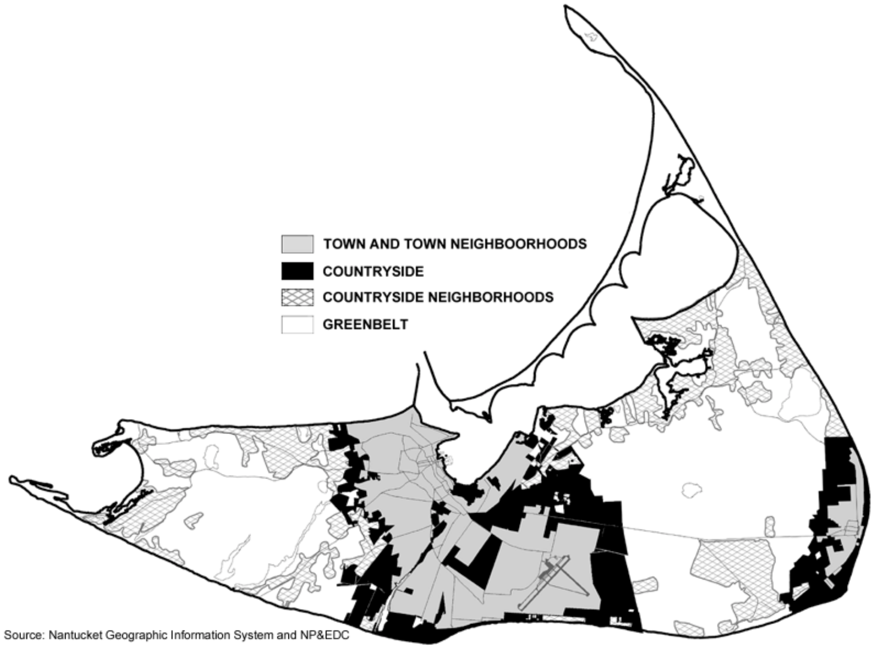
The document discusses, in subsequent chapters arranged without order of importance, growth, housing, making a living, managing transportation, providing needed infrastructure, and healthcare. We will digest those that seem relevant and may be helpful.

The Nantucket Comprehensive Plan

Guiding growth (Chapter 1)

While there are numerous goals, objectives, and specific mechanisms in the NCP, there are an overriding pair of tools seen as capable of retaining what makes the island unique. First is to slow the rate and reduce the capacity of buildout -- currently at approximately 45% with the management system that is in place. Second is to preserve traditional patterns of development by clearly demarking a boundary between town and country and treating the former with preference as to future housing and other development.

Nantucket Land Use



Location:(http://www.nantucketcomplan.com/TownCountryMap.html 5/17/2000)

The concept proposed is to regulate a return to the traditional town/country distinctions by creating a greenbelt zoning overlay district. The inner edges of greenbelt would define the outer edges of town. A priority would be placed on acquiring, for open space, fee simple or easement interests in parcels that fall within the zone. The town/country development dichotomy would then be reinforced by both the growth rate cap and buildout reduction systems. Some of these changes are discussed below.

The annual cap on dwelling units, supplemented by a point system, would slow and sculpt the rate of buildout. Buildout reduction would be obtained through acquisition of land, construction restrictions and through zoning changes that reduce the total number and size of dwellings (considered especially important for the countryside) that can be built on unrestricted private land. The growth rate point system is new; the idea of an annual building cap is not. For five years, beginning in 1981, there was a cap at 80 dwelling units per year, with a phase-in requirement that allowed only 10% of a development to take place per year. After a decade-long hiatus, a cap was re-instituted in 1997, at 225 per year; and was reduced each year to what is now the 120 limit, 10 of which can be issued each month. The phase-in requirement has remained in effect since 1981.

In April of this year, a Special Town Meeting passed an interim growth rate point system, which does some of the things mentioned above. For instance, 20 points are awarded if the dwelling unit is occupied year-round and five points are subtracted if the building will occur in an area with no sewer linkage; negative ten points, if in certain rural zones; plus 30 points if the unit is designated affordable. Lodging and commercial buildings are not within the cap but there is a moratorium in effect for major new or expansions construction primarily for retail purposes over a certain square footage (20,000 and 10,000 respectively). Guest lodging facilities involving more than 10 rooms must go through a major special permit review.

Other proposals here include encouraging Neighborhood Center Zones in the country where houses are built in conjunction with already established commercial businesses providing basic needs.

In summary, the growth rate point system not only controls growth speed and complexion, but also could encourage stable employment (as discussed in a following section of this report). And as this system slows development, it increases the chances to reduce ultimate buildout by conservation acquisition or easement. The greenbelt re-establishes an old pattern, facilitates containment and provides one focus for dedicated open space.

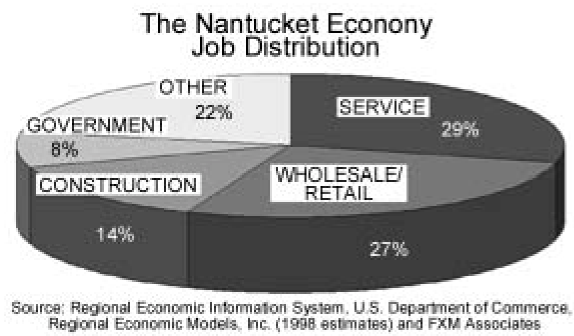
Housing needs (Chapter 2)
As noted earlier, it is increasingly harder to live on a moderate income and find housing on Nantucket – and as opposed to Aspen, there is no nearby county into which to move and from which commuting by car is possible. Last year, an exemption to the building cap was made for resident, first time homebuyers. How to make that affordable is answered in the plan. The growth rate point system proposed would, in addition to giving "resident only" (RO) housing applications sufficient points to be in a priority position, require commercial developers to create a certain number of RO units as a condition of permit. Subdivisions would be required to restrict some lots for RO housing, or provide the equivalent elsewhere in terms of real estate or cash. Special subdivisions of secondary dwellings onto separate lots would become available, with one permanently restricted to RO use, and no other dwellings allowed on either lot. (The subordinate size of one to the other must be retained.) Apartments over commercial areas in town would receive incentives. Though not possible without state legislation, other means of increasing RO housing includes a "linkage" fee based on square footage, after a certain exempted maximum (e.g.2000 sq. ft.), being paid to the town and being used for publicly built or subsidized affordable housing. The cap points would also encourage preservation of current house stock, to the extent of establishing a place where recycled buildings can be stored while awaiting a lot, and allowing siting of recycled houses in town on lots that have heretofore been deemed substandard and non-buildable.

Seasonal employee (SE) housing is looked at with the same goal: create a parallel market of housing through cap and point incentives as discussed above. Rezoning would be allowed to encourage creation of small, dispersed employee dorms. New commercial development could be required to assure that there would be housing for new employees (akin to a guarantee of ample parking spaces for cars).

Making a Living (Chapter 3)
Nantucket is sought after in part because it was, like Charleston S.C., so impoverished for so many of the years in the middle of the twentieth century that it escaped the destruction other places were succumbing to with "renewal" and "progress." For the past 30 years, it has thrived more and more on tourism. But by the late 1990s, Nantucket truly had undergone a remarkable evolution. As the NCP notes:

> Originally a town, whose success rested on the fact that it had not changed, the island had seemingly become a place where only change, in the form of building, could keep its residents afloat. But perpetual change is not healthy for a community whose prosperity is based on preservation: it creates a situation where, if left unchecked, our economy could devour itself.

The island's economy is healthy by all traditional measures, but despite the abundance of jobs, pay is often not keeping up with the cost of living. There is an increasing, and increasingly widespread, income gap. Wages rose 3.5% per year from 1993-1998 while cost of housing rose 15% for each of those years. With employees trying to pay higher wages necessary to retain workers, island goods became more expensive.



Location:(<http://www.nantucketcomplan.com/MakingaLiving.html> 5/15/2000)

It is important to point out that while the building trades component of construction comprises only 10% of overall employment, they account for 35% of all jobs in the winter and are the jobs capable of supporting a year-round, resident family. The plan acknowledges this while noting that new home construction is finite and destructive of the environment. Finite because the island is racing toward buildout with the help of 300-400 off-islanders commuting in everyday. Destructive because of increasing traffic, infrastructure demands and loss of open space.

The NCP concludes that economic diversification is necessary to allow: a slowing of the rate of construction; slowing or stopping of any increase in tourism (except possibly ecotourism in the off season); and development of new avenues for enterprise. The plan provides this reasoning:

> [T]he relentless expansion of tourism risks fundamentally altering Nantucket itself, not only in its physical appearance but in the way it is perceived. A community that allows a visitor-oriented economy to override all other aspects of its existence is a community willing to gamble away its character and its economic stability. When community character erodes, it is all too often replaced by market-driven contrivances that alienate both residents and visitors. We are already beginning to see this happen in our historic core. Originally appealing not only for its historic character but also for its year-round vitality, downtown today is on track to becoming a museum of itself—

a collection of upscale boutiques aimed exclusively at visitors, with little to offer the person who calls Nantucket home. By surrendering the core district to tourism commercially, we have surrendered it emotionally as well. As year-round establishments have disappeared from its precincts, so too have year-round residents. Islanders today feel a dwindling attachment to the downtown; they carry on their lives and businesses elsewhere and consider town to be less the "real" Nantucket than a sort of cobblestoned Disneyland. It is, in the end, a situation where everyone loses: visitors detect the diminished authenticity of their environment and residents feel like strangers in their own town.

To forward such limits and encourage diversification, aside from the cap concept that regulates the rate of buildout, a number of non-regulatory ideas are offered. These include investigating but not depending too heavily on new internet-based activities; changing the focus of the trades from building new homes to repairing, renovating and restoring the current house stock; revitalizing the scallop fishery to provide for winter employment; and marketing Nantucket specialty products as well as its shellfish and agriculture.

Protecting the Environment (Chapter 4)

Through an aggressive campaign of purchase and easement, over 42% of Nantucket is protected for conservation. Through custom, public use of privately owned beaches is the norm, contrary, for instance, to custom on Martha's Vineyard. The plan talks of ways to increase protection of what is left and warns that overuse/abuse of beaches by tourists may cause private owners to close them. Even though the 2% land bank tax on real estate sales has yielded $8 million in 1998 and $9 million in 1999, conservation purchases at market value are becoming increasingly problematic. Several strategies offered as alternatives include the increased use of conservation easements.

Finally, creating zoning prohibitions and building incentives to preserve open space should be fully explored. Clustering should be awarded positive points in cap system with negative points given to building in rural places (as is done in the interim growth rate reduction system discussed above), where housing will be a prominent and permanent detraction to vistas and open space. The NCP purposes that several comprehensive plans be developed so that a cohesive look at what open space is left can occur and a consensus as to how to manage it can be reached. A Strategic Land Preservation Plan would establish priorities and annual acquisition targets and would be done by all the involved groups on the island coming together and pooling their knowledge and expertise. A Protected Land Management Plan and a Vegetation Management Plan could all be linked to current Open Space and Recreation Plan. A focal point for efforts should be trying to gain public rights to 25% of the shoreline by 2025. The plan also suggests forming a Shoreline and Waterways Access Action Plan to help in this regard. Zoning bylaws should be amended to subject to further scrutiny new or enlarged buildings in proximity to the shoreline.

As in most older communities, especially small island ones, failed septic systems are a problem and the plan discusses site-specific solutions such as extending sewers, especially in the harbor area where cesspools have been implicated in pollution that may be retarding scallop recovery. The NCP also speaks to the potable water quantity concerns and suggests a Water Capacity Study, especially to look at the risk of saltwater intrusion into the fresh water lens because of excessive drawdown.

Transportation (Chapter 5)
The NCP goal: "[R]estore Nantucket to a place where life without a car is possible, pleasurable and convenient." Transportation planning requires a "look at the total combined impacts of all interrelated decisions about air and ferry access, road improvements, public transportation, automobile usage, parking, bikepaths, sidewalks, and growth management (including zoning and preservation of open land)."

The plan points out several dilemmas in trying to break dependency on the car on Nantucket. First, there is the idea that a vacation includes the use of a car -- so there is the desire factor. Then there is the need -- a convenient way to get to disparate places at any time. The latter is aggravated by the spreading out of services and the increasing blur of the town/country traditional pattern of rural life.

Between 1990 and 1998, Nantucket saw a 30% increase in the numbers of passengers arriving by sea and air; but at the same time, a 106% increase of those coming by air. Nantucket airport (town owned) is the second busiest in New England. The major transportation problem is that there is no overall transportation coordination. Players include the quasi-state Steamship Authority (SSA), which brings in cars and passengers (6 trips a day in summer, 3 in winter) and also provides a passenger-only fast ferry, which cuts transit time from 2 hours 15 minutes to 50 minutes; private ferries, which are licensed by the SSA; the air carriers; and the town. Several recommendations are offered including forming a coordinating agency, a Traffic Congestion Plan Work Group, which among other things would get a binding agreement with SSA to limit capacity. Currently the Authority has agreed not to expand summertime car access beyond the level established in 1997. At one way fares of $12.50 for a driver or passenger and $158 for an automobile (reservations required), there are only waiting list spaces left for cars to go Friday and return on Sunday between now (mid-May) and October first.

Traffic regulations could be established to require delivery trucks to use off peak hours and a parking system of loading zone (early) and car parking (e.g. after 10 am) could be established in town. Agreements could be sought for freight lines to bring items to the island in smaller trucks. A Transportation Impact Statement would be if a proposal were to increase passenger or vehicle numbers, infrastructure or rates on travel. Limits would be placed on night flights if legal.

Enlightened land use regulations could aid in dealing with transportation problems, with clustering and the clear separation of town and country functions. Subdivision of land could be made conditional on providing bike paths. Cul de sac use could be limited, instead linking residential streets to make car flow simpler. The NCP eschews further road improvements, stating that no road should be more than 2 lanes, no traffic signals should be installed and suggesting that an island-wide 20 mph standard should be sought. The shuttle service should be improved and offered year-round and tourist marketing should stress walking and biking. Developments would have to perform "trafficshed" analysis, with standards based on queue lengths, vehicle trips per peak hour and per day. Capacities would be established that could not be exceeded.

Perhaps the most interesting NCP recommendation is to institute a town-administered, seasonal (June to September) permit requirement to limit the number of all cars on the island used for personal purposes. Residents could be exempted, as would vehicles used for business. For tourists, permits would be obtained (if available) from the SSA at the same time car reservations are made.

<u>Infrastructure (Chapter 6)</u>
Low taxes and deferred spending have left the island with many needs. New ways to fund these are recommended including impact fees (would require new state laws) a visitor tax and a betterments tax. It is interesting to note that currently 60% of island taxes come from seasonal residents who put no burden on the school system.

Comments of People Interviewed about Nantucket

"We had a farm. We kept the house; hung up pictures; but the farm is gone."
Dr. Peter Sourian, NY writer and professor at Bard College, on his half-century relationship with Nantucket and how it has changed.

The following questions were always asked:
How do you feel about:

1. Controlling the number of cars during the summer and traffic on the island in general?
2. Affordable housing for year-round residents and seasonal workers?
3. Maintaining the historic character of the island?
4. Preserving the natural environment?
5. Making a living, diversifying the economy and restoring the scallop industry?
6. Capping annual building permits to extend the period to reach buildout?
7. Managing growth by coming up with a carrying capacity number for the island as opposed to using the rate of growth to control development?

1. Traffic

One interviewee said that in mid-July it was worse on Nantucket than during rush hour in NYC. All agreed that something had to be done. Perhaps it was best put by a local government employee and lifetime resident who said traffic was the most visible manifestation of the dramatic intensity of growth. "Because we are all so car dependent, we just drive everywhere, even if we could easily walk. More people, more cars. Nothing is really done to discourage cars." He does not believe permit system is legal, and feels that the transit system only helps those without cars (often seasonal workers), but concedes it moves a lot of people.

A different government official told of a public meeting where the idea of restricting car numbers on the island was discussed -- perhaps using a badge or permit system. One island resident stood up and commented, " When we said restrain cars, we meant theirs, not ours." Commenters also noted that many seasonal residents leave one or two cars on the island so they can fly back and forth; that there are 600+ rental cars; a number of taxis; and the cars are bigger. One person suggested that day trippers did not need cars but that those coming for a week should be allowed to have them. He did not feel it was bad enough to require permits, yet.

2. Affordable Housing

There were a number of stories of people who had problems with housing -- who had to move every summer when rents went weekly -- though some took in borders so they could rent year-round at inflated average monthly rates. The problem clearly seems to have gotten worse in the past two or three years. The planning director had to move 5 times on his first 6 weeks on the island before finding an affordable, long-term rental.

As interesting, is how people not directly affected looked at the issue. One, in his mid-40s, is a married government employee. His wife also works. He built his house in the 1970s. He has no children. He sees three categories. As far as permanent, year-round residents, he sees those being born and raised on the island, whose roots are here and who do not want to leave as those who should be helped in finding affordable housing. Other year-round residents he considers people who have made an economic choice to live on Nantucket: if they succeed, they can afford to stay; if they don't, it was a bad decision and they should accept it and move on. As to seasonal workers, he felt it was up to the employers – although he did tell stories of cramming people into houses when he was in high school – one guy had the closet under the stairs and had the best deal in the house because he could close the door and have privacy.

Several others mentioned the fact that employers wanted the town or community to take care of their, the employer's, problems of where to house workers, so they could pay as little per hour as possible. A 31 year old manager of a year-round cafe said he was lucky to be able to live on the island because his employer had three houses built to provide her workers an affordable place to live -- both year-round and seasonal ones. He pays $500/month to share a four bedroom, three bathroom house. They employ 23 people in season and to provide enough rooms they are technically in violation of zoning: too many are living in the one house (10 people five bedrooms, four baths). The regulation, evidently not enforced, he feels is inappropriate.

3. Maintaining historic character

When asked, one lifelong Nantucket resident commented, " You must remember, I grew up in what was a blue collar town."

"There is just not much relationship between the Nantucket of the 1960s." So says a Quincey, Mass. writer as she describes falling in love with a different island than " the over crowded, over priced, over populated mecca for the wealthy and the wannabees that it has become. Overrun with Mercedes and Land Rovers that clog the quaint cobbled streets and million dollar yachts that vie for space in the harbor…. Even though my husband and I have friends who live on Nantucket, we never consider going there in the summer, and lately even spring and fall are almost equally as crowded. It is sad to see some place you love become so over commercialized."

Another life long seasonal visitor and owner of property there for years, still goes, but he admits only out of a sense of nostalgia.

4. Preserving the Natural Environment
Several respondents felt that the trophy homes did this, remarkably enough, through landscaping, and that one home on a large piece of land might be preferable to many lots with two houses each.

Another said that the land bank benefited the rich, that acquisitions were targeted for areas where the wealthy lived, in order to protect them. Others fully supported the land bank.

Several spoke of the problems associated with cleaning up the harbor -- failed cesspools and polluting yachts were two agreed upon reasons, among many probable others, for the failure of the scallop population to rejuvenate.

5. Making a living
One confidant said that some of the locals, friends with the people who ran the island, have made a lot of money over the years, mostly speculating in property. Others have gone broke.

The cafe manager said he knows people working 85 hours a week to be able to live there -- and he feels that the high cost of living and the limited pay of jobs means that young people were leaving the community to move to the mainland. His café, open year-round "as a service to locals," provides all three meals and pays servers $2.63/hour plus tips.

Another spoke with knowledge of the building trades on the island. He said that he heard of a lead carpenter on one job who made $130,000 in a year -- that an average finish carpenter makes $40-$60/hour, a plumber $60-$65/hour and even a masonry tender, $40-$50/hour. Then he added that the new home owners were much more stressful to work for, with 100 page legal contracts, where as in the old days the Old Money would say in the fall, " I'd like a bathroom put in here," and when they came back in the summer, the bathroom would be done and the workers got paid and things were fine. He said that he did not believe the scallop industry would ever be more than just recreational. In the 1970s he had gone out and the $200 a day for a boat owner and $100 a day were good wages.

A life long resident put it this way – " It is still pretty easy to exist on Nantucket, it's just living that gets expensive."

6. Caps to extend period of buildout
Most seemed to think it was a fine idea. I asked the trades-knowledgeable person that if the building pace slowed down, would the island trades people be able to do all the work without importing mainlanders. He said not at this point. He explained that the very large, very expensive homes being built each had such unique systems for heating and air-conditioning, lighting and electricals that they exceeded the local knowledge base.

7. Carrying capacity vs. growth rate
Planning director John Paigini, when asked what he thought the capacity was, given all the growth concerns outlined in the NCP, said his gut feeling was 3,000-5,000 more dwelling units. There are currently 9,500, and estimates are that if there are no changes,

there could be 26,500 at buildout. He, like the city and county planning directors and the county attorney in Aspen, said that slowing the rate was Nantucket's chosen path -- while constantly trying to reduce buildout capacity.

The cafe manager said: "Establish an absolute number capacity, no way!" Others felt that the whole process, caps and all, would fail. One had been active for many years and finally had removed himself. He had not even read the NCP. His comment: "The problem is, what you want to do, is easy to say; the real difficulty is the mechanics of putting it into action. To make it function is much harder than dreaming about it".

Summary

Nantucket has a bold plan and a vigorous and dedicated planning director. Both have certainly raised the level of discussion of the issues the community faces. The Special Town Meeting in October should be an interesting one.

IV. Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

Martha's Vineyard was formed through the same glacial processes that made Nantucket and benefits from a similar location near the Gulf Stream. The Vineyard at 100 square miles, is the largest resort island in New England. Seven miles south of Cape Cod, it is 23 miles long and 9 miles wide at its furthest points. The small island of Chappaquiddick lies off its southeast point.

The first known residents were the Wampanoag Tribe ("easterners", or more poetically, "People of the First Light"), dating back at least 5,000 years. Whites first settled here in the mid-17th century. The three original towns (Edgartown, Tisbury [also known as Vineyard Haven], and Chilmark) split into the six that now comprise the island (adding Oak Bluff, West Tisbury and Aquinnah). Dukes County includes these plus the town of Gosnold, the Elizabeth Islands, and Norman's Land Island. As with Nantucket, good harbors and a plentiful, nearby quantity of whales was key to the economy until the Civil War. Tourism of a sort began in the mid-1800s when the Edgartown Methodists had camp meetings on the island and spread the knowledge of its charm. By the early 20th century, wealthy New Englanders were constructing summer retreats in the often-called Camp House style.

Permanent, year-round population as estimated in 1997 was about 14,250, which increased to over 105,600 in the summer. Ferries run from several points to service the island frequently -- even in the winter the Woods Hole ferry, requiring 45 minutes, runs to the Vineyard 15 times a day; in the summer it operates from 7:30 am to 10:30 p.m. and provides 26 runs. SSA summer fare for car (reservations required) and driver in 1999 was $47 and $5 one way. SSA and others offer passenger only service.

Growth management planning got off to a dramatic start in the early 1970s when Ted Kennedy feared that the island would be over developed, and proposed federal legislation entitled the Nantucket Sound Islands Trust Bill. After an interesting several years and the involvement of many notable politicians including Gary Studds, Barney Frank, and Governor Sargent, the state passed the Martha's Vineyard Land and Water Act in 1974. It established the Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC), a regional planning body (that replaced the Dukes County Planning Commission) and gave it a strong mandate: to protect the Vineyard from its own growing success. The act require the commission to review large-scale development ("developments of regional impacts" or DRIs) including subdivisions of 30 acres or more or the proposed construction of 10 or more dwellings. It also established review for "districts of critical planning concern" or DCPCs, criteria for which are also set out in the act. The commission will recommend a regulatory regime in these cases and the town can adopt or modify, with the commission's approval. If the municipality concerned does not act, the commission has the authority to issue its own regulation. Each town on the island has representation on the commission (there are 22 commissioners) and each town is assessed to support it. The MVC also has a planning staff which works with the towns.

Nonetheless, Martha's Vineyard/Duke County was the fastest growing county in Massachusetts in the 1980s. (The permanent population increased fully 50% from 1984 to 1999). In response to the growth in the 1980s the MVC undertook a comprehensive planning process and produced The Martha's Vineyard Commission Regional Island Plan in 1991. Its major discussions were, in order, economic development, government coordination, human needs (including housing), land and water use and growth management, and transportation. Other supporting documentation also provided at that time to support the plan as to each of the discussion areas. It was a useful, very comprehensive, and informative document for its time. Further supporting documents were prepared in 1994 (Economic Base Study and the Transportation Plan) and 1998 (Housing Action Plan). Unfortunately, it was more advisory than mandatory in its aspect, and needs updating.

Today the island finds itself burdened with the same issues discussed above. Complete buildout could occur in this decade. Briefly, most of the towns have residential building caps. The MVC recommended last year that an island wide total of 240 is appropriate. For 2000, the current total will be 143, but that does not include Tisbury which has never had a cap. (In conjunction with the MVC, the town had imposed a brief moratorium prior to voting no in May on a proposed cap of 40.) Generally, 1/12 of these are awarded monthly. Recently in Edgartown, 8 or 9 of its annual 94 were offered on a first come, first serve basis and property owners hired line sitters at $600/ day to wait for the permit office to open.

Currently, affordable housing is a key issue, with an island-wide meeting held in early May to try to address the situation. The Martha's Vineyard Times has recently done a multi-part series on the issue. One article notes that there were lots available two and a half years ago on the Vineyard for $30,000-35,000 and a house could be built for $90,000; now there are few lots for under $100,000 and houses cost approximately $150 per square foot. Starter homes are more than $200,000.

The problems come with the burgeoning second home market and with restrictive zoning, as many towns have 3-acre minimums. Some of the latter is changing. The MVC has a requirement that developers of subdivisions creating more than 10 lots must donate land or money for affordable housing. There is a Dukes County Regional Housing Authority (DCRHA) which owns 42 affordable units in four towns. Several towns have resident home site committees, which work to provide affordable lots. Several board members of the DCRHA, some businesspersons and some seasonal residents have formed a new group. The Island Affordable Housing Fund is committed to helping finance 200 new units of affordable housing by 2005. It is estimated that $50,000-$85,000 in subsidy would be necessary to allow a median-income family to afford housing.

Several towns are about to alter their zoning to help create affordable housing. One, West Tisbury, will vote on a by-law on May 24 to change its 1972 code. Currently there is 3-acre minimum lot size throughout the town, although an accessory apartment within a single-family home is allowed by special permit. The proposed changes will allow existing non-conforming lots to be available for permanently restricted, affordable housing. (The lot must provide 10,000 square feet per bedroom). The village residential district will be up-zoned to a 1.5-acre minimum. Accessory apartments within barns and garages will be available by special permit. Apartments will be encouraged above businesses, with owners being offered a square footage bonus in return. Seasonal employee dormitories could be established in single-family, two family or mixed use buildings by special permit. A new affordable housing committee would be established to set up and monitor guidelines for enforcement. The town will also require that any development of three or more lots must devote 20% of its acreage to affordable or year-round housing.

Finally, the town of Aquinnah has asked and been recognized as a DCPC and regulations are being developed by the MVC and will be voted on by the town on May 23. They include, among other things, a graduated set of building permit impact fees, ranging from $100 for a house up to 2,000 square feet to $25,000 for a house of over 5,000 square feet. Monies will be used by the town's resident homesite committee. There is no affordable housing in Aquinnah now -- and this summer 12 people with no place to go will have to move out of town.

V. Block Island, Rhode Island

A small island of 12 square miles, this lovely spot was left behind by glaciers 10,000 years ago. It is 12 miles from both Montauk, Long Island and Narragansett, Rhode Island. It has a village at Old Harbor and a number of late 19th century hotels. It was originally occupied by Manisses Indians. Dutch Navigator Adrian Block discovered it in 1614 and it was settled by Englishmen for the mainland in 1661. The town of New Shoreham encompasses the entire island and is part of Washington County, which includes other municipalities on the mainland. The island now supports 800-850 full-time residents and a summer population which swells to over 10,000. Over one-third of the island is preserved due to the action of public and non-profit conservation efforts. A 3% tax on real estate sales supports an active land bank.

A land use and growth management section of the 1991 New Shoreham Comprehensive Plan spoke to growth pacing through the use of an annual percent cap, but nothing has been done in this regard to date. Approximately three quarters of the island is zoned 3-acre minimum and buildout is anticipated to occur in 5 to 10 years.

It has the same problems (or potential problems) discussed earlier with other resorts; traffic congestion, lack of affordable housing, loss of open space among others, but all at a much reduced level, for now-- though residents do move to their boats to rent their homes for the summer season and workers often move to their cars. The island's airport does not accommodate jets and a recent proposal to build the first golf course failed. Car and passenger ferries run form three locations in season -- from Long Island, it takes one hour and forty-five minutes; from Point Judith, Narragansett, RI, it takes two hours. The latter ferry (the only one operating in the off season) makes one to three trips in the winter and eight in the season. A car and passenger fare is almost $30. It is currently thought to be "twenty years behind," which means it still has a lot of its unique charm; but it also means that although the Nature Conservancy, in 1991, deemed it "one of the 12 last great places in the western hemisphere," the third of the island not protected, and not already developed, is up for grabs. What happens in the next few years will be crucial to Block Island's long-term future.

VI. Conclusion

While there are a number of lessons which might be gleaned from this investigation, and indeed from a more detailed analysis of these communities and their growth issues and response, the most telling would seem to be that the earlier the problems are confronted and consensus developed, the better. That is, action in advance of a crisis will assure that more of the character and natural environment will be saved and that the controls to do this may be easier to install. Other more specific control mechanisms that seem to be generally recognized include:

1.) Reduce the rate of development through a point-scored cap or another similar growth rate reduction system.

2.) Decrease the level of capacity at which buildout is reached.

3.) Create a vital, affordable housing market for long-term, permanent residents with perpetual deed restrictions; and do the same for seasonal workers.

4.) Diversify the economic base beyond tourism and construction using multiple strategies including marketing made-in-the-community products.

5.) Use the slower rate of growth to increase the rate of acquisition of key parcels, through the development and implementation of a unified greenspace/open space plan. Use this in conjunction with TDR's and infill mechanisms to focus growth away from the countryside and concentrate it within urban growth boundaries.

6.) Establish a peak carrying capacity for the area using both objective and subjective criteria.

There are a number of ways to accomplish these tasks. What is important is that no matter how they are done, we believe they must be done if these types of communities are to remain vibrant and retain a significant amount of what made them desirable in the first place. The sooner they are done, the better.

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Appendix

List of Materials Included

A. Tables comparing Aspen/Pitkin County, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard with San Juan County, compiled by San Juan County Planning Department.

B. Maps of Aspen and outlying areas, Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard and Block Island.

C. (bound separately) *Affordable Housing Program Alternatives and Model Ordinances*, Section III from "Regional Affordable Housing Initiative," RRC Associate Team and Healthy Mountain Communities.

Appendix A.

Tables comparing Aspen/Pitkin County, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard with San Juan County, compared by San Juan County Planning Department.

1990 Census data for selected seasonal and resort communities

	U.S.	San Juan Co	Aspen	Pitkin Co	Martha's Vineyard	Nantucket
Population	248,709,873	10,035	5,049	12,661	11,639	6,012
Housing Units						
Occupied						
Owner	59,024,811	3,158	1,117	3,082	3,569	1,628
% Owner Occupied	64.2%	**71.9%**	*43.8%*	52.4%	71.3%	62.7%
Renter	32,922,599	1,234	1,434	2,795	1,434	969
Total Occupied	91,947,410	4,392	2,551	5,877	5,003	2,597
% Occupied	89.9%	62.6%	**63.7%**	59.7%	43.1%	*42.7%*
Total Vacant	10,316,268	2,629	1,453	3,960	6,601	3,478
Seasonal Occupancy	3,081,923	1,239	939	3,065	5,390	3,568
% Seasonal	3.0%	*17.6%*	23.5%	31.2%	46.4%	**58.7%**
Total Units	102,263,678	7,021	4,004	9,837	11,604	6,075
Persons/Occupied Unit	2.63	2.25	*1.94*	2.13	**2.31**	2.29
Lower quartile value	$49,500	*$107,700*	**$344,800**	$218,500	$147,900	$223,700
Median value	$79,100	*$166,400*	**$500,001** (off scale)	$452,800	$195,800	$299,400
Lower quartile rent	$252	*$291*	$485	$448	$387	**$501**
Median rent	$374	*$384*	**$717**	$663	$521	$670
Upper quartile rent	$527	*$502*	**$1,001**	$953	$674	$903

Italic Lowest value of areas compared
Bold Highest value of areas compared

[Appendix A maps are available at the Planning Dept.]

Appendix B.

Maps of Aspen and outlying areas, Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard and Block Island.

[Appendix B maps are available at the Planning Dept.]

Appendix C.

***Affordable Housing Program Alternatives and Model Ordinances*, Section III from "Regional Affordable Housing Initiative" RRC Associate Team and Healthy Mountain Communities.**

[report is available at the Planning Dept.]