

# Reinforcing Nantucket Customs



By

Owen Aguirre

Nicholas Franzini

Samuel Hopkins

# **Reinforcing Nantucket Customs**

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by  
Owen Aguirre  
Nicholas Franzini  
Samuel Hopkins

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Report submitted to

Janet Schulte  
Nantucket Department of Culture and Tourism  
Gregg Tivnan  
Town of Nantucket

Professor Dominic Golding  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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## Abstract

Nantucket has evolved a set of customs and bylaws to protect the island's beaches, open spaces, sense of community, and historic character. During COVID, enforcement of some bylaws was relaxed to allow dining, art, advertising, and vending on the streets and sidewalks. Town officials worry that reestablishing the Nantucket norms after the pandemic may be difficult. The goals of this study were to define what makes Nantucket culture special, evaluate stakeholder concerns, and develop educational materials. We found that islanders want to preserve most customs but are also in favor of expanding outdoor dining options. We created radio PSAs, posters, and a list of recommendations to reinforce adherence to island bylaws, customs, and conventions.

## Acknowledgements

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## Executive Summary

Many communities in the United States and elsewhere have turned to tourism as a source of income. These communities rely on their historic sites, scenic vistas, and other unique local assets to draw visitors. Unfortunately, economic development resulting from an influx of tourism can threaten the very resources that attract tourists in the first place. Tourist destinations must balance the preservation of their local resources while continuing to develop commerce. The aim of this project is to assist the Town of Nantucket in keeping this balance.

Nantucket is a small island with a big reputation off the coast of Massachusetts. The island maintains a small-town charm that attracts visitors and “washashores” alike for its beautiful scenery, historic character, and tight-knit community. These assets are protected and promoted by many local customs and conventions, some of which are enshrined in Nantucket’s bylaws. Many Town officials, businesspeople, and residents are concerned that an increasing lack of awareness of and compliance with some customs and conventions have been changing on the island in ways that jeopardizes the long-term survival of Nantucket’s unique culture. The objectives of this project were to define what makes Nantucket culture special, evaluate stakeholders’ concerns of cultural degradation, and develop outreach strategies and educational materials to reinforce adherence to island bylaws, customs and conventions.

We conducted a series of interviews and surveys for key stakeholders on Nantucket to gather community perspectives on Nantucket’s culture and how it changed over time. We interviewed 26 members of the Nantucket community, including Town officials, businesspeople, representatives from non-profit organizations, and other key stakeholders. We developed our initial list of interviewees using recommendations from the Department of Culture and Tourism and expanded it through recommendations from interviewees themselves. We created two surveys for residents and business owners, which the Nantucket Civic League, Town Administration, and Chamber of Commerce graciously distributed on the island. We received 194 responses for our residents’ survey, and 6 responses from our survey of business owners. From our interview and survey responses, we developed a clear picture of Nantucket’s cultural identity and identified community concerns regarding how Nantucket’s culture may have changed in recent years and especially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ‘identity’ of Nantucket carries different meanings to different people based on their experiences of visiting and living on the island. A significant majority of the interviewees and survey respondents indicated they were not born on Nantucket, and otherwise “washed ashore” from the mainland, emphasizing the island’s strong allure. Interviewees frequently mentioned visiting the island in their earlier years, in some cases were introduced to island culture by friends, family or significant others, and never wanting to leave. When asked about the yearning to live on Nantucket, interviewees spoke fondly about Nantucket’s rich whaling history, its meticulously preserved architecture, its beautiful beaches and scenery, relaxing ambiance, and the tight-knit community where everybody knows everybody. Many noted that ‘Grey Lady’ is a tough place to live in, being isolated by 30 miles of sea and economically challenging to afford, but the challenges are worth it all. Some mentioned that regulations in place to protect Nantucket’s history and culture may be at times rigid and tough, but they recognized that many are necessary to keep the island the way residents love it. However, Nantucket’s regulations and resources are strained by the island’s growing popularity.

Nantucket continues to experience the growth pains from its own success as the island copes with increasing attention from off-island. Overtourism was often used as a word to describe Nantucket’s challenges in handling more tourists, but we found that tourists were not the only concern. Several interviewees expressed concern that the community is moving away from the shared values and respect of times past. There is a new generation of newcomers who are drawn to Nantucket to get “the perfect Instagram photo” or “bragging rights” of owning a property on Nantucket. These newcomers do not integrate into the community like previous generations of Nantucketers have because they do not respect local culture, but merely use it as an emblem of social status. On another front, Nantucket’s community identity is degraded by off-island businesses and investors looking to profit off Nantucket’s lodging industry to the detriment of the local community. Off-island businesses and investors represent the 80% of the short-term rental properties on the island according to ACKNow, and the number of properties they hold is growing (ACKNow, 2020). Long-time Nantucketers are being squeezed out of local communities that are being transformed by the proliferation of short-term rental properties with constant turnover of visitors and unfamiliar faces. Visitors do not contribute to the community in the same way a Nantucketer might, for they are not the ones who teach at local schools, fix your plumbing, or attend Town Meetings. In addition to short term renting, middle and lower income

Nantucketers face growing competition over space with millionaires and conservation efforts. As a result, the Nantucket community is heading towards a time when its “washashores” will become its “wash-aways.”

Just as the community may be changing, some of Nantucket’s customs and conventions no longer maintain the same glory they once held. Nantucket has a significant event culture, as events are an economic driver for the business community. However, interviewees and residents shared the perspective that Nantucket’s event culture is becoming too big. COVID may have molded this perspective, by pausing many events and creating worry over attending social gatherings. Nevertheless, some interviewees mentioned that the hold placed on events this year demonstrated a renewed sense of Nantucket’s olden days as a quiet vacation destination where one could go to get away to relax, take things slow, and explore the island at their own pace. Members of the business community noted that tourists are staying for shorter periods of time and that stays in AirBnBs are on the rise, bolstering claims that visitors are only coming to Nantucket to experience its events. While this may be a national trend, it still means that visitors are taking less time to get to know Nantucket like they used to. Many interviewees indicated concern over what happens at the events too, believing Nantucket’s traditional events are being drowned in alcohol consumption and partying. Figawi, the Stroll, Wine Festival, and Daffodil Festival are all major events on Nantucket interviewees felt have become saturated with alcohol and drinking to the point it distracts from the cultural significance of the events themselves. It is undeniable that alcohol is a major source of revenue for businesses and nonprofits alike during events, but many believe it is propagating Nantucket’s reputation as a place to drink and party. Emphasis should instead be placed on Nantucket as a family-friendly destination, not as a weekend block party.

The COVID pandemic has stopped many island events but raised several other concerns as the island has adapted its customs and conventions to stay afloat. In order to spur the economy in dire times, the Town of Nantucket has relaxed regulations or turned a blind eye to others to enable businesses to attract more patrons. One major new development is outdoor dining in public spaces, the regulations for which the Select Board suspended this year. In some cases, streets were closed to provide a protected venue for diners. Perhaps surprisingly, many long-time Nantucketers favored the change, feeling that it brought new vibrancy Downtown, while others expressed worry over that this may exacerbate the problems of parking and congestion or may

encourage more drinking in the streets. However, the majority of interviewees and survey respondents would like to see this outdoor dining continue in the future, so long as the Town can determine an appropriate process to address citizen concerns and treat all dining establishments fairly. Additionally, during the pandemic, businesses have put out unapproved signs and merchandise displays as ways to attract more customers. Nantucket maintains regulations for these signs for good reason, as signs and displays obstruct sidewalks and detract from Downtown's historic character. In contrast with their views about outdoor dining, many interviewees and survey respondents did *not* want to see the added signage and displays continue after the pandemic. Some business owners shared the feeling, agreeing that the practice was not a part of and did not contribute to Nantucket's character. Signage and merchandise displays are not an issue limited to COVID though, as islanders noted that it has encroached into Downtown in previous years. This highlights that enforcement of bylaws, rules and regulations need to be strengthened regardless of the pandemic.

Although many chafe at the existing slate of rules and regulations, it is clear that the Town needs to devote more resources to protect Nantucket's culture and customs in the future. We found that it is difficult for enforcement agencies to appropriately manage the multitude of possible violations because Nantucket's bylaws, rules, and regulations are incredibly detailed and simultaneously vast. Not all people are aware of all the bylaws in place, so violations occur easily and frequently, such as putting out an unapproved sign or riding a bicycle the wrong way down a one way street. Enforcement agencies do not have the time and personnel to enforce every instance of wrongdoing. Recommitting some violations can be as simple as putting an unapproved sign back out when no one is looking.

In sum, Nantucket's expanding attention has brought not only financial success, but changes to Nantucket's culture in recent years. As the island faces threats from overtourism and increasing commercialization, the Town must learn to balance what is good for its economy and what is good for its culture. Long-term middle- and low-income residents are being displaced in many parts of the island as housing units are converted into short term rentals and rising housing prices make it difficult to afford a home on Nantucket. New residents and tourists who show little attachment and respect for the community and culture fill the place of the displaced long-time Nantucketers. Furthermore, the island is developing a reputation as a place to party and instead of being a charming vacation getaway as it is normally known. Reinforcing customs



and culture will require bolstering the support of enforcement agencies who protect Nantucket's vital resources. At the same time, Nantucket must reevaluate the culture the community wants to promote, as in the case of outdoor dining, to ensure that regulations in place adequately reflect the desires of community members. We recommend the Town make appropriate plans now to try to address the multifarious ways in which Nantucket's customs and cultures are under siege currently and will continue to be in the future. We recommend that the Town

1. Encourage and emphasize the family-friendly nature of the island via messaging and advertising campaigns;
2. Develop a community integration program for new and prospective homeowners to facilitate transitioning the Nantucket community;
3. Continue expanding affordable housing programs while considering limiting the impact of off-island investors and businesses in short-term renting;
4. Consider limiting the number of new events and alcohol permits, while deemphasizing the need for alcohol at culturally significant events and enforce alcohol regulations more strongly at them;
5. Continue communicating and cooperating with the Chamber of Commerce as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure flexibility and opportunities exist for local businesses and artists;
6. Promote beach etiquette, such as cleaning up litter, avoiding dunes, and leashing dogs with summer education materials;
7. Pursue further research on methods to alleviate parking concerns Downtown. Identify solutions that do not generate barriers for visiting Downtown;
8. Adjust bylaws to allow outdoor dining in public spaces during summer months on a more regular basis; Identify means for the utilization of public space in an equitable manner for businesses without attractive locations for outdoor dining; Develop appropriate regulations to control public drinking, litter, capacity, etc. while ensuring uniformity in outdoor dining design;
9. Clearly and definitively, phase-out outdoor signage and merchandise displays for businesses when no longer deemed necessary by the Economic Recovery Task Force after the COVID pandemic has ended;

10. Consider adopting a temporary program for outdoor retail markets in select locations at specific times to enable additional commerce for the retail industry; Collect public feedback to determine whether or not the program should continue until the COVID pandemic ends;
11. Develop permitting process for art installations in designated public locations on a rotating basis; Create a review board to approve appropriate art and issue permits through in an equitable manner;
12. Continue gathering public opinion on what the culture the community wants to foster after the pandemic ends, relevant to reestablishing events and normal business operations, renewing Nantucket traditions, and strengthening community ties;
13. Provide more resources to enforcement agencies and strengthen deterrence capabilities;
14. Routinely distribute educational materials to various groups to improve bylaw awareness and adherence, and;
15. Use the timeline provided in Appendix L to distribute our educational materials in an effort to achieve our project goals.

We have also updated previous educational materials, and created new ones, to facilitate an education campaign for business owners and residents. We suggested revisions and amendments to the “Welcome to Nantucket: An Island Guide” for new Nantucketers, we created two updated Quick Reference Guides for Businesses, one for use during COVID and one for the “back-to-normal” transition period, and we created samples of Public Services Announcements the Department of Culture and Tourism can use as part of a radio campaign.

## Authorship

Section	Primary Author	Secondary Author
<b>Abstract</b>	Nick	Sam
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	Sam	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	Sam	
<b>Introduction</b>	All	
<b>Literature Review</b>		
<b>Nantucket: More than an Elbow of Sand</b>	Nick	Sam
<b>Preserving Nantucket in Time</b>	Nick	
<b>Tourism Trends</b>	Owen	
<b>Case Studies: In Cultural Change</b>	Nick	Owen
<b>Opinions of Tourism Development</b>	Nick	
<b>A Changing Nantucket</b>	Sam	
<b>Making the Old Feel New Again</b>	Sam	
<b>Not Business as Usual</b>	Sam	
<b>Trouble in Paradise</b>	Sam	
<b>Methodology</b>		
<b>Objectives 1 and 2</b>	Nick	
<b>Background Research</b>	Owen	
<b>Interviews</b>	Nick	
<b>Surveys</b>	Nick	

<b>Objective 3</b>	Sam	
<b>Findings</b>		
<b>Identifying Cultural and Community Identity</b>	Nick	
<b>Cultural Identity</b>	Sam	Nick
<b>Overtourism</b>	Sam	Nick
<b>COVID</b>	Sam	
<b>Enforcement</b>	Sam	Nick
<b>Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	Sam	Nick
<b>Appendix A Sponsor Description</b>	Nick, Sam	
<b>Appendix B Interview Preamble</b>	Sam	
<b>Appendix C Initial Town Official Questions</b>	All	
<b>Appendix D Initial Business and Other Stakeholder Interview Questions</b>	All	
<b>Appendix E Residents Survey</b>	All	
<b>Appendix F Business Survey</b>	All	
<b>Appendix G Radio Public Service Announcements</b>	Nick	
<b>Appendix H COVID-19 Business Guide</b>	Nick	
<b>Appendix I “Back-to-normal” Business Guide</b>	Nick	
<b>Appendix J Island Guide Revisions</b>	Nick	Owen
<b>Appendix K Informational Poster</b>	Owen	
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## Introduction

Many communities in the United States and elsewhere have turned to tourism as a source of income. These communities rely on their historic sites, scenic vistas, and other unique local assets to draw in visitors. Unfortunately, economic development resulting from an influx of tourism can threaten the very resources that attract tourists in the first place. Tourist destinations must balance the preservation of their local resources while continuing to develop commerce. The aim of this project is to assist the Town of Nantucket in keeping this balance.

To protect the resources that make the island an attractive tourist destination --including its beaches, open spaces, and historic character-- the Town has passed numerous bylaws that regulate various aspects of life. Bylaws on the island regulate signage, light and noise levels, architecture and much more to maintain its unique character and culture. Nantucket residents and officials have become increasingly concerned in recent years about the failure of many visitors, businesses, and even some long-term residents to adhere to the customs and conventions that they believe make Nantucket distinct.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, many businesses are struggling for survival on Nantucket. Businesses are trying all manner of ways to attract customers such as; increased signage; putting furniture, art, and retail items on the sidewalks; and extending dining areas into the public right of way. Town officials have suspended or relaxed enforcement of some rules like those for outdoor dining. This is in part because the Town does not have the resources to enforce the bylaws prohibiting them, but primarily because the officials understand the pressures businesses face during a pandemic. The Town is concerned, however, that it could be difficult to reinstate adherence to bylaws after the pandemic is over.

To encourage adherence to the Town's customs and bylaws, the Nantucket government had previously developed outreach materials to remind visitors, residents, and especially businesses about these laws, conventions and customs. These materials may help but achieving compliance remains a constant ongoing battle. The goal of this project is to identify the cultural conventions that maintain Nantucket's identity and develop educational and outreach strategies to more effectively reinforce adherence to these conventions and regulations, especially after the pandemic subsides. To achieve this aim, we have identified three objectives.

1. Identify the customs and conventions that residents, business owners, Town officials and other stakeholders believe make Nantucket unique. These will be identified through interviews with Town officials and businesses, as well as surveys of business owners and Nantucket residents.
2. Evaluate stakeholder concerns regarding the erosion of Nantucket customs and conventions.
3. Develop educational materials and outreach strategies the town may use to reinforce adherence to bylaws, customs, and conventions necessary to maintain Nantucket's distinct cultural identity.

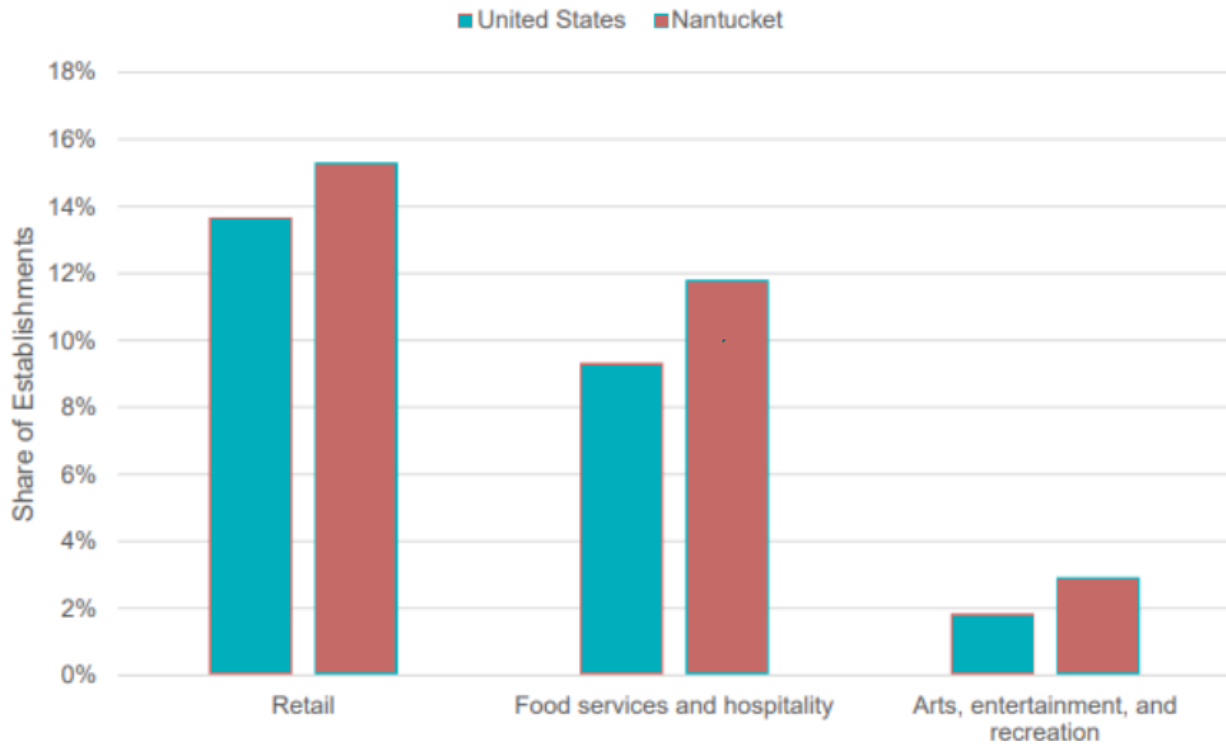
## Literature Review

### Nantucket: More than an Elbow of Sand

Nantucket is a small island 30 miles off the coast of Massachusetts, home to around 17,000 permanent residents (*General FAQs, n.d.*). In the summer months, the island hosts upwards of 50,000 people including tourists and seasonal residents (*Effective Population, n.d.*). Nantucket is a popular summer resort island, famous for both its luxurious access to the sea and for its rich whaling history. Elizabeth Oldham (2000) sums up the history that makes Nantucket so unique. The island was first home to members of the Wampanoag Tribe, but was later claimed by Great Britain in 1641. By 1659, the island was sold to several families, who later established Nantucket as a town. At first, the island's main industry was farming, but gradually it became reliant on whaling after first capitalizing on the oil of beached whales. By 1715, Nantucket was the whaling capital of the world with a growing fleet of ships that ventured further and further into the ocean, and inspired famous tales like *Moby Dick*. The island prospered so long as there were whales to hunt, but by the 1830s, the decline of whale populations throughout the world made it difficult for whaling to remain a lucrative industry. The Great Fire of 1846 destroyed much of the town's commercial infrastructure (Seegers & Giordano, 2015). The discovery of petroleum in Pennsylvania encouraged the substitution of kerosene for whale oil and the California gold rush pulled whalers off-island to seek a living elsewhere. As the final straw, the Civil War took almost 400 men from the island, limiting Nantucket's work force and drive for

commerce. By the start of 1870, the Nantucket population had dwindled to a little over 4000. (Oldham, 2000). The future of the island looked dim, until a new industry caught hold: tourism.

In 1870, the island reinvented itself as a resort, to attract artists and wealthy mainlanders who adored the island setting and local cuisine. Newspapers and magazines on the mainland started featuring articles and advertisements for Nantucket, and tourists and day visitors brought in commerce Nantucket had been sorely missing for the past 30 years. Throughout the 20th century, the island's tourism market grew and grew. Tourism gave Nantucket a much-needed boost to various economic sectors including its housing market, retail shops, food services and others. The Nantucket economy was dramatically reshaped by tourism, but residents' attitudes toward tourists were not always favorable. By the 1950s, day visitors were described by many people on the island as "cheap" or "dirty." Unlike other visitors who rented houses for extended periods of time, many felt the day tourists did not really contribute to the island's economy (Seegers & Giordano, 2015). The number of these visitors continued to rise as more and more mainlanders discovered the island. As locals began to worry, entrepreneur and Nantucket philanthropist Walter Beinecke Jr. sought to attract more affluent tourists and seasonal residents. Beinecke wanted to shape the budding tourism industry and make Nantucket a high-end resort destination that would attract wealthy visitors, instead of the common day-trippers. Beinecke was famously quoted in Time magazine, saying "Instead of selling six postcards and two hot dogs, you have to sell a hotel room and a couple of sports coats," (Development: Trading Up Nantucket, 1968). Beinecke bought up nearly 80 percent of the commercial real estate in town and increased the rent, squeezing out many of the mom-and-pop shops and replacing them with higher-class storefronts (Walter's World, 2016). Beinecke also rebuilt the docks to be more attractive to yacht owners and pressured ferries to raise their rates and restrict the number of passengers. Nantucket became more exclusive -- a popular destination for the wealthy rather than the average middle-income visitor. Beinecke succeeded, and to this day Nantucket's economy is dominated by up-market tourism. Figure 1 shows that tourism contributes disproportionately to the Nantucket economy compared with the average in the United States.



*Figure 1. Share of Business Establishments in Tourism-serving Industries.*

*Blair, A. (2020).*

## Preserving Nantucket in Time

As Nantucket's tourism market expanded, residents began to worry that the island's historic charm would be lost. If preservation measures were not taken, residents thought the island could easily turn into a tourist trap and lose what makes Nantucket special. In 1955, the town of Nantucket was designated as a historic district by the National Register of Historic Places, and in 1961 the Nantucket Historical Trust started acquiring land and property to be preserved. Walter Beinecke Jr. led this preservation effort as an integral part of his scheme to shape the Nantucket 'brand' and economy. He encouraged the Historic Trust to purchase and restore many pre-Civil War buildings in the Downtown area. Beinecke also acquired a large percentage of the Nantucket waterfront properties and renovated them to create a consistent 18th-century architectural design (McGonigle 2009). While some residents were not fans of Beinecke's aggressive conservation tactics, his vision grew to be shared by many other islanders and officials (Walter's World 2016). In 1965, the Nantucket Conservation Foundation and later

the Nantucket Land Bank were created in the trust's image to protect the island's natural resources, as well as its historic and architectural assets. Today, the Nantucket Historic District Commission (HDC), the Planning and Land Use Services (PLUS), and the Nantucket Preservation Trust (NPT) among other organizations all work to preserve the history and culture of the old Nantucket while still promoting its tourism. The Preservation Trust and the HDC guide many aspects of the Town to preserve its historic feel. Many of the buildings have been renovated or restored to appear similar to when they were built, including the weathered, gray shingles, iron window grates, and brick chimneys (Historic properties, n.d.). Nantucket's unique culture also preserves many revered customs and conventions. These conventions range from unspoken rules about appropriate behavior --*Nanetiquette*-- to bylaws that control outdoor lighting, noise, signs, exterior advertisements, and more. Low lighting levels and noise restrictions maintain the old-world charm, while the absence of traffic lights and parking meters keeps elements of modernism at bay. Cobblestone roads and brick sidewalks are preserved, even though some consider them a safety hazard and they make snow clearing difficult. Rules and town bylaws guide businesses and residents about matters like signage, occupancy rates, waste collection and recycling, alcohol consumption, and so forth that are intended to preserve the old-fashioned feel of the island (Quick Reference Guide for Businesses 2019). Some other conventions on the island include tossing pennies into the harbor for safe passage, drive-on beaches, and biking in place of driving. While some people may view some of the regulations as overbearing, town bylaws, customs and island conventions are all part of what makes and keeps Nantucket unique.

## Tourism Trends

There are many cases where a town's industry will fail, and the town must look to tourism for economic stability. As a result, the town will face many economic benefits and cultural changes. When a town shifts its main economic industry to tourism, there are a few common trends that pop up. For the study of our project, we will highlight trends in the viewpoints of residents, businesses, and the town as a whole.

Residents have shown to dislike the culture that tourists bring while being generally more amicable to the conveniences that come with tourism development with the exception of developments to the natural landscape (Williams, McDonald, Ridden, & Uysal, 1995). In the

case of Southwest Virginia, it was suggested that planners allocate beloved landmarks and landscapes as not to be developed (Williams et al. 1995). Kathleen L. Andereck and Christine A. Vogt reported that across several communities, the most accepted tourist developments have been ones that maintain the landscape and history-- such as parks and museums respectively. Services such as shops and restaurants were less accepted but still “quite acceptable”. Services that catered specifically to tourists such as camping areas, bed and breakfasts, and tour services were the least accepted (Andereck, 2000). Simson, therefore, warns that towns should develop initiatives for residents first and foremost and tourists second (Simson, 2007).

Tourism is undoubtedly beneficial to the economy of a town. Businesses have understood this economically, but they have shown to not fully understand their position in tourism development. Such as in the case of Blackstone Valley, Rhode Island, small businesses were confused when tourism initiatives did not directly benefit them (Mendlinger, 2009). This was largely due to a lack of communication between the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council and small businesses in their attempt to assist them.

When one culture is in contact with another, there is a change. In a study done in 1956, it was found that “change in any segment of culture, whether learned early or late, will not occur unless there is a reason for it to change” (Bruner, 1956). Generally, a town’s shift in tourism means that they will struggle to identify themselves. We see that in many communities (such as Hawaii, Southwest Virginia, and Rhode Island), the influx of tourists requires the town to reassess what makes them unique and therefore what should or should not be permitted in order to keep that uniqueness. Many tourists will want similar or better services and facilities to the ones they have back home. One study showed that some things that tourists value are cleanliness, transportation, and diversity of attractions (Syahiddin, 2018). It is therefore ever more important that a community balance how to meet the needs and expectations of tourists while maintaining the community culture and identity.

## Case Studies in Cultural Change

Like Nantucket, many places have undergone major changes to their economic and social framework as a result of tourism development. A community, town, or state that embraces tourism must deal with a variety of challenges to their structure and way of life. Some of these challenges include overcrowding, conflicting opinions among residents about current and future

development, and a loss of local culture and customs. Donald Macleod (2004) describes tourism as “part of the globalisation process”, where homogenization across cultures can result in the loss of individual customs. In this way, a community must often fight to protect what makes it unique, be it natural resources, location traditions, or history. Below, we examine three cases of tourist development in Hawaii, Peterborough, and Newport.

## Hawaii

Hawaii is an example of an island culture under threat by tourism. In Hawaii and other island communities, the issue has been noticeable for some time. Hanalei, a small community on the island of Kauai, attracted growing interest in its scenic beauty and historical significance about 35 years ago (Melnik 1987). Although there were benefits, the increased tourism created several difficulties for the community. With the building of a large resort hotel a few miles from the village, the community started feeling the same developmental pressures as many other places on the island. As more tourists visited the area, sometimes in greater numbers than the year-round population, the pressure grew to update town infrastructure. Several single-lane bridges were under threat of destruction and modernization due to the increased traffic in the area. Residents would occasionally look out their window and be met with the sight of visitors with cameras staring back at them. An increased number of tourist helicopters flying over the valley became both intrusive and disturbing, and waterskiing in the Hanalei Wildlife Refuge was damaging to the local ecosystem (Melnik 1987). Physical landmarks like the Wildlife Refuge and bridges were under threat, as well as the culture and character of Hanalei, upsetting both residents and local officials. In response, a group of citizens formed 1000 Friends of Kauai, which organized public opinion on tourism issues and assisted in local planning to manage it. The Hanalei Project was created by this group as a long-term planning effort to manage the community’s tourism and preserve its cultural and historic resources. The group created a log of various landmarks and historical sites citizens thought should be preserved, through questionnaires, surveys and interviews. The 1000 Friends of Kauai also worked with its local government on zoning and development plans for the community. Some more immediate suggestions for its tourism problems were drafted, including increasing recreational opportunities that do not damage ecosystems, establishing one or more historic districts, and educating both residents and visitors about the fragile nature of the land. To this end, The Hanalei Project has



continued to coordinate with the local government and speak to local groups, meet with businesses and officials, and prepare educational materials and information brochures for tourists and visitors, and has met success (Melnik 1987). Today, other parts of the island have employed creative solutions to ease problems with over-tourism including a daily visitor cap for the Haena State Park and new public transportation offered on the North Shore (McGough 2019, Lyte 2019). The challenges faced on the island of Nantucket are not unlike the challenges on Kauai, and a takeaway is that there are solutions to over tourism. Solutions for Nantucket will surely involve thinking creatively, gathering a multitude of opinions, and most importantly, rely on the participation of its citizens.

### Peterborough, New Hampshire

In the rural town of Peterborough, New Hampshire, residents are beginning to recognize the positive and negative effects of tourism on a smaller scale. The small town is home to several outdoor attractions including Miller State Park, Mount Monadnock and the Casalis State Forest. The downtown area is the quintessential classical “New England town”, with quaint downtown shops and restaurants as well as a local theater (Tsundoda & Mendlinger 2009). Day visitors have been steadily increasing in the Hillsborough county town, but there are different assessments of the costs and benefits. Tsundoda and Mendlinger (2009) conducted in-depth interviews with town residents and business owners and found both positive and negative opinions about the impacts of tourism. Most interviewees perceived positive economic effects of tourism, including income for local shops and restaurants, job creation, and real estate sales. Some residents who had negative opinions about Peterborough tourists cited them as being rude, obnoxious, or threatening to their small-town environment (Tsundoda & Mendlinger 2009). Several stated they were unhappy about the increased prices of downtown shops, restaurants and local real estate. A few interviewees emphasized that while tourism benefits the town economically, it creates jobs that are not sustainable and do not provide a salary sufficient to afford raising a family. A common fear among interviewees was that the influx of tourists threatens the town’s individuality and uniqueness (Tsundoda & Mendlinger 2009). Although this fear was shared by many in the study, others were less concerned because the extent of tourism is inhibited by several factors. For example, only two bed & breakfast (B&B) establishments exist in the town, and no public transportation is offered locally. The Peterborough town government,

like that of Nantucket, seeks to preserve the classical feel of the area, and regulates the number of chain stores and restaurants downtown. Reducing the number of places to stay overnight in Peterborough limits the tourist traffic to mostly day visitors, who may leave a smaller footprint. Strategically limiting the infrastructure offered to visitors is one way tourism can be controlled, and can act as a model for other communities facing similar issues.

## Newport, Rhode Island

The town of Newport, Rhode Island contains a wealth of cultural, historical, and architectural landmarks but preservation has been and remains a challenge. Town residents and officials became concerned that increased tourism and economic development could endanger important landmarks. In 1965, the Newport Historic District Commission was created to oversee the regulation and enforcement of local bylaws that preserve the town's historic and architectural assets. The Newport Historic District Commission sectioned off areas of the town from development to preserve places that were considered "architecturally important" and zoned its first historic district in 1965 (Anderheggen, 2010). The commissioners were appointed by a political process, but early appointees were inexperienced in preservation work and created weak bylaws and a poor preservation strategy. Anderheggen notes that the commission was criticized for wanting to preserve aesthetically appealing landmarks to promote tourism rather than trying to protect the most historically significant landmarks. Another problem arose when property owners tried to develop their own buildings. Property owners could not understand the bylaws created by the Commission and the commissioners were unable to clearly interpret and effectively enforce them. Like Nantucket, Newport shares a strong interest in preserving its cultural heritage but struggles to balance preservation with economic development.

## Opinions of Tourism Development

As communities experience the changes that come with tourism, a multitude of different opinions come to light. Some residents are happy to experience economic boosts to their businesses and increased local commerce. Others, however, find that the downsides of tourism outweigh its economic benefits. A study done in Southwest Virginia sought to catalog these different opinions in light of developing tourism in a nearby recreational area. Citizens from five counties bordering the park were asked how much each of 12 items (ex. crime, environment,

commerce) would improve or worsen with developing tourism. Respondents were also asked to rate the level of attachment they felt to their community, region, and state, and were asked about their length of residency. The study found newer residents viewed tourism more favorably than longtime residents (Williams, McDonald, Ridden, & Uysal, 1995). Ironically, newer residents also expressed more ‘attachment’ although these findings seem to confirm McCool and Martin’s (1994) suggestion that residents who identify as more attached are more attached to the location than to the community (Williams, McDonald, Ridden, & Uysal, 1995). It appears that newer residents, lacking deeper ties with members of their community, are generally more connected to the landscape, and tend to be more favorable to tourism. Long-time residents who are more accustomed to their setting are more concerned about the impacts of tourism on their community.

## A Changing Nantucket

As time passes, Nantucket, like all other towns, has faced pressure to accommodate the new generations of inhabitants and visitors. However, Nantucket’s unique culture gives it an equally unique challenge. Tourists come to Nantucket to take a step back in time and to venture through a town closely preserved to its 19<sup>th</sup> century whaling roots. More than 800 buildings in the Downtown were constructed before the Civil War (Lang & Stout 1995). Beyond its rich history, Nantucket is a scenic place to enjoy strolls along the cobblestone roads, red-brick sidewalks, or pristine beaches. Other activities include riding through bike paths surrounded by natural preserve, enjoying fresh seafood at fine restaurants, and shopping in the historic downtown. Since history is the heart of the economy, the town must resist or adapt to cultural change without significantly altering the architecture, wildlife, scenery and all that makes the town and island distinct. It can be difficult to balance cultural and historic preservation while maintaining economic growth and development. Newcomers to the island can create cultural pressures by bringing unwanted opinions and ideas that do not match the character of Nantucket. New residents from the mainland, fondly called “washashores”, often try to bring contemporary design styles with them, while new businesses attempt to bring mainland practices and marketing strategies. Tourists, by nature, do not know the local customs and conventions. Nantucket is pushed to accommodate growth in various sectors, all of which possess the possibility to erode Nantucket’s culture and customs. The Town, administration and residents alike, have tried to resist these changes by setting examples, by enacting bylaws and regulations, and by conducting

outreach and education. Maintaining compliance is an ongoing battle, however, and the Town lacks the resources to constantly and consistently enforce the rules and inform businesses and residents. To make matters worse, the novel coronavirus has caused significant changes to the community and economy by requiring the Town to relax many restrictions just so the island can stay afloat. Town administrators worry that it may be impossible to reverse course and after the pandemic and return to the previous ways of doing business. Understanding how the Town approached cultural changes in the past, gives insight to what the Town values and how to potentially approach change in this project.

## Making the New Feel Old Again

In response to concerns about the impacts of development on Nantucket, the Historic District Commission published a book called *Building with Nantucket in Mind: Guidelines for Protecting the Historic Architecture and Landscape of Nantucket Island* in 1995. Many in town were concerned that the new architecture was “threatening to obliterate both the physical presence of its historic past and natural beauty” (Lang and Stout, 1995, p. 7-8). New construction within historic areas did not conform with the existing architecture and was perceived as a blight on the landscape in outlying areas. The book emphasizes that Nantucket has a ‘sense of place’ and ‘of time’, for it is an iconic island with a proud history. Anything that does not represent and reinforce this identity is considered a distraction. The book identifies architectural styles that exemplify Nantucket and provides guides for constructing and renovating properties in the historic core and outlying districts of the island. It serves as the go-to reference for historic preservation, restoration, reconstruction, and rehabilitation. The Historic District Commission has continued to publish additional guidelines, covering various home improvements like shingle colors, house colors, solar panel placement, signage and more (Historic District Commission, 2020). Its purview extends to businesses too, such as dictating how signage and store front windows must be maintained to preserve their historic authenticity and appeal in commercial areas. A prime example is the fact that signs must be only made of wood, a common sight to see in the 1800s (Nantucket Historic District Commission, n.d.). This regulation is one-way Nantucket keeps a historic appeal and distinguishes itself from other towns and destinations. The HDC is also responsible for enforcement of its various regulations and guidelines. While

controlling house colors or sign material may seem quaint or even overbearing to mainlanders, it is just how Nantucket seeks to maintain the authenticity of its heritage.

## Not Business as Usual

As with homeowners, the creativity and the entrepreneurial spirit of businesses can challenge Nantucket's efforts to create and maintain its historic charm and ambiance. As a well-known, highly profitable location, Nantucket is attractive to off-island businesses who may be unaware of the constraints and expectations associated with conducting business on Nantucket. New businesses may try commercial practices that may seem acceptable anywhere else, such as plastic sandwich boards, flashing displays, name brands or logos, but they soon learn that these practices are frowned upon in Nantucket. In some cases, the community has fought back to tell businesses squarely that Nantucket is not a place for them.

In an unusual effort to protect the look and feel of Nantucket, the Town passed a bylaw that prevents large chain businesses from setting up shop in the 'business exclusion zone' (*Code of the Town of Nantucket*, 2019). At first it may seem odd for Nantucket to ban lucrative and popular chain businesses, but it comes back to the definition of the island's cultural identity. The ban started after a Ralph Lauren store moved into Downtown, and a local bookstore owner proposed an amendment to town bylaws banning chain stores (*Nantucket bans chain stores from downtown*, 2006). The amendment was passed by town residents, without discussion in the meeting indicating it was strongly favored (Sutters, 2010). Residents claimed that chain businesses detract from the historical character of the island, ultimately hurting businesses --local businesses especially -- in the long run (*Code of the Town of Nantucket*, 2019).

Beyond the composition of businesses, Nantucket regulates many other business activities that may degrade the cultural identity of the island. Businesses cannot have things that may seem normal off-island like flashing lights, cigarette disposal containers, TVs in store windows, helium balloons, or merchandise outside their storefront (Quick reference guide for businesses, 2019). These clash with the culture of the town, distracting from the town's aesthetic and historic appeal. It is easy for a business to unknowingly violate these bylaws since doing so is as simple as moving merchandise outside or hanging up an unapproved sign, and many businesses operate in other locations where such restrictions do not apply. The Town wants to encourage commerce while also staying vigilant in protecting Nantucket values. Little infractions

can accumulate to the point that they affect the culture of the town. Such infractions are frowned upon by many long-time residents including those that own and operate businesses on the island. For example, Figure 2 shows a bright green sign duct taped to a red brick building, which may pass unnoticed in other Massachusetts towns but is a cultural ‘no-no’ in Nantucket. While Nantucket embraces the unique style its local artists have, new installments on public property, like Figure 3, may obstruct sidewalks and the public way during the busy summer months. Figure 4 shows a merchandise rack outside a storefront that might be commonplace elsewhere but is considered gauche in Nantucket. Not only does it pose a safety hazard on Nantucket’s narrow brick sidewalks, but it violates both town bylaws and Nantucket sensibilities.



*Figure 2. Illegal Signage. (Town of Nantucket, 2020)*



*Figure 3. Illegal Artwork. (Town of Nantucket, 2020)*





*Figure 4. Illegal Outdoor Display (Town of Nantucket, 2020)*

## Here One Day, Gone the Next

For long-time residents of the island, practices discussed above obviously seem out of place, but tourists may be unaware of community concerns because such practices are allowed in most other places. It can be challenging for businesses to cater to audiences with such off-island expectations, while also maintaining the character that makes Nantucket attractive in the first place. The same applies to the Town administration, which often grapples with tourists who have different standards of behavior than expected on the island. Visitors to the island, including short term renters and day trippers, do not possess the intrinsic understanding of what makes Nantucket “Nantucket”, and lack the knowledge of the local customs, conventions, and bylaws that keep it that way.

Attitudes to dogs and the behaviors of owners are a case in point. Nantucket has a long history of being dog-friendly and is even marketed as such in the *Welcome to Nantucket: an Island Guide* brochure. (Town of Nantucket Visitor Services Office of Culture and Tourism, 2016). However, dogs must remain on leashes especially on beaches. Nantucket prides itself on being home to an endangered species of bird called piping plovers, but loose dogs on beaches can easily disturb nesting pairs or even kill them. The leash law is there to protect an icon of

Nantucket, but tourists do not possess the understanding of local culture and bylaws to make the connection between the two. Careless tourists and even many residents may unleash their dogs without understanding the repercussions for the local ecosystem.

The same is true about many other bylaws, such as not biking on sidewalks or not smoking on public property, that over time or repetitive disregard could potentially harm Nantucket's culture in the future. With the precious resources on Nantucket, like the piping plovers, some customs and conventions may disappear for good if people do not take care of them. If residents, visitors, and business owners fail to adhere to local bylaws, the result is the inevitable loss of Nantucket's cultural identity.

## Trouble in Paradise

Unfortunately, people on Nantucket already feel that Nantucket has lost part of itself to tourism. As a community that prides itself on its heritage, for some people it is troubling to see unapproved signage (Figure 2), art (Figure 3), or jacket displays and sandwich boards blocking the sidewalk (Figure 4.) No sailor from the 1880s would see such things. The increasing commercialization of the island is viewed by many residents and visitors as both a blessing and a bane. The Town relies on tourists to support their economy, but the booming industry threatens to degrade that which makes Nantucket special.

Issues and debates surrounding cultural change have existed long before the 2020 pandemic. In 2012, ReMain Nantucket funded and formed ACKtown to develop a sustainable management plan for Nantucket's Downtown and to improve vitality year-round (ACKtown, 2013). ACKtown recommended the Town develop strategies to attract more businesses, residents, and tourists to the Downtown area. The report claimed that Nantucket was at serious risk of losing its uniqueness as a destination (ACKtown, 2013). ACKtown recommended greater coordination and consultation between the Town government and business owners. However, the Town's efforts at outreach to the business community, such as with the development and distribution of the *Quick Reference Guide for Businesses*, came across as bureaucratic and unwelcoming (Gregg Tivnan, Assistant Town Manager, Town of Nantucket, Personal Communications, 09 September 2020).

The Department of Culture and Tourism published several guides for people and businesses on the island in recent years. In 2014, they circulated a pamphlet to inform tourists



and residents of general island information including the rules and regulations ranging from leash laws, biking, water usage, to applying for various beach permits and more. In 2016, the Department replaced the old pamphlet with an expanded version (Town of Nantucket Visitor Services Office of Culture and Tourism, 2016). It lays out what the Department of Culture and Tourism calls ‘Nanetiquette’, or the expected behavior on the island, to shore up public knowledge of town bylaws. In 2014 Town Administration also prepared a similar guide for businesses that explains the bylaws businesses need to follow from street art, alcohol licenses, lighting, outdoor furniture and so on (Town of Nantucket, 2014). While it was useful to businesses, it had the perception of being heavy-handed and impersonal, especially in comparison to the light-hearted, colorful island guide. Unfortunately, such outreach and informational campaigns must be conducted consistently and constantly to be effective, and the Town lacks the resources to do so. As part of our project, we will build on the materials the Town has already created to develop an education campaign to encourage adherence from residents and businesses to Nantucket’s bylaws and customs.

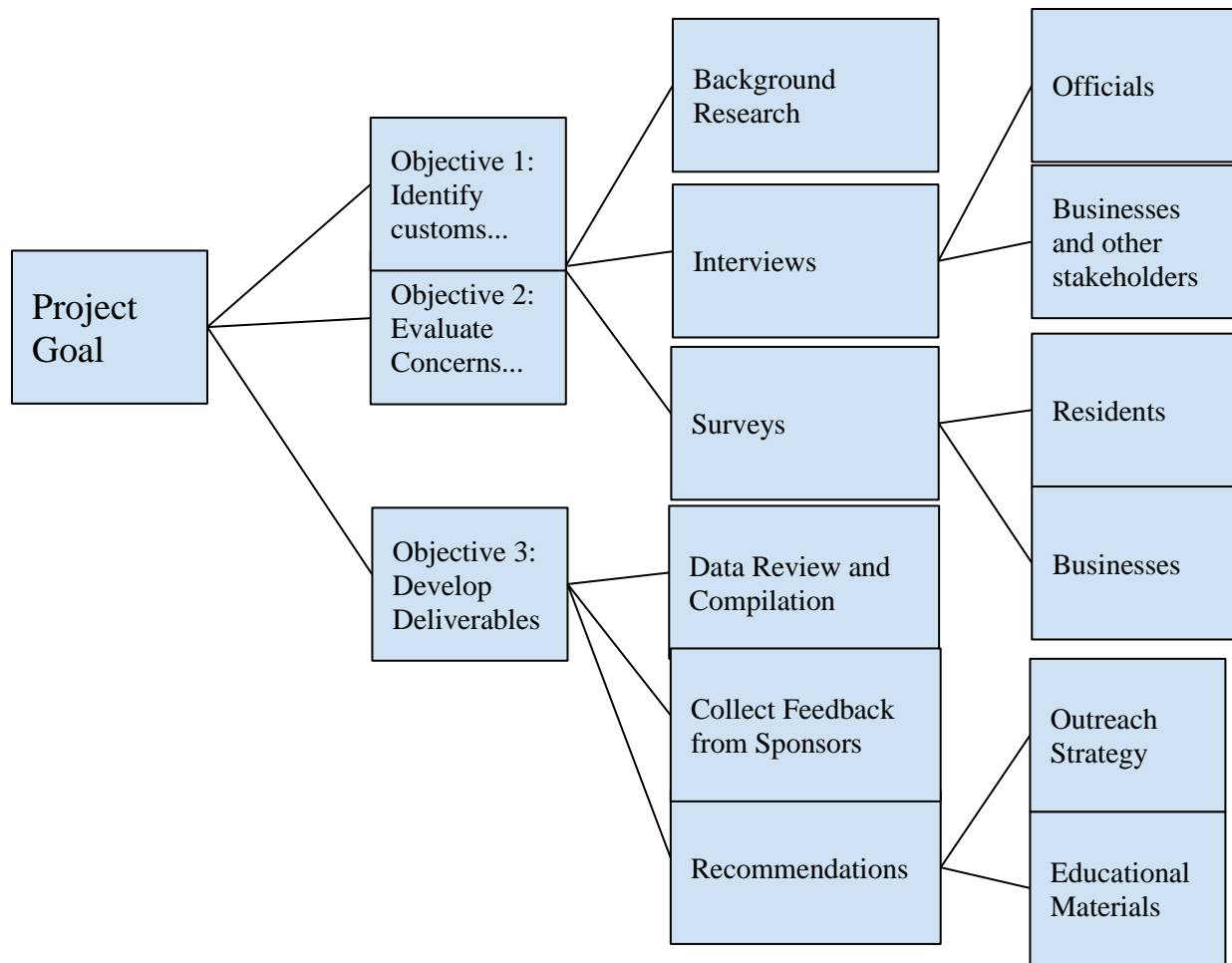
Not only has Nantucket faced problems of cultural change in recent years, the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, has brought additional challenges. Town Administrators had no choice but to allow some commercial practices not normally accepted just so businesses can stay open (Town of Nantucket, 2020). A major new development was the Select Board’s decision to temporarily allow outdoor dining in public spaces, such as on sidewalks, by suspending current bylaws prohibiting them based on the recommendations from the Economic Recovery Task Force with support from the Planning and Land Use Services and the Licensing Administrator (Janet Schulte, Director of Culture and Tourism, Nantucket Department of Culture and Tourism, Personal Communications, 02 December 2020). Some Town officials, residents, and even business owners say that permitting such activities risks damaging Nantucket’s historical identity, while others say the change has been both beneficial to the economy and created a new, convivial atmosphere Downtown that many visitors and residents enjoy. As the world looks to rebuild after the pandemic, Nantucket is at a crossroads between what its future should look like. In this project, the team collected information from administrators, business owners, residents, and other key stakeholders on public opinion about what changes they would like to see stay and what must return to normal.

## Methodology

The goal of this project was to identify the cultural conventions that maintain Nantucket's identity and develop educational and outreach strategies to reinforce adherence to these conventions and the regulations that embody them. To achieve this aim, we identified three objectives.

1. Identify the customs and conventions that residents, business owners, Town officials and other stakeholders believe make Nantucket unique.
2. Evaluate stakeholder concerns regarding the erosion of Nantucket customs and conventions.
3. Develop educational materials and outreach strategies the Town may use to reinforce adherence to bylaws, cultural customs, and conventions necessary to maintain Nantucket's distinct cultural identity.

Our project was centered around analyzing culture and human behavior. As a result, we required information from residents, business owners, government officials, and other stakeholders in the community to evaluate perspectives on the perceived problems and possible solutions. We conducted background research, surveys, and interviews with different sets of stakeholders to understand their differing perspectives on Nantucket culture. The surveys incorporated a mix of closed and open-ended questions. We began with interviews of Town officials to gather their opinions about the nature and extent of the problem and possible solutions. Subsequently, we surveyed residents and interviewed business owners and other stakeholders to solicit their perspective. Finally, we worked with the Nantucket Department of Culture and Tourism and Town Administration to develop educational materials, outreach strategies, and our final recommendations. Figure 5 illustrates a relationship between the project objectives and associated tasks.



*Figure 5. Project Task Breakdown*

## Objectives 1 and 2 - Identify Nantucket's Customs and Conventions and Evaluate Stakeholders Concerns

Our first two objectives were to identify the customs and conventions that comprise Nantucket's unique culture and to evaluate stakeholder concerns regarding their erosion. To accomplish these tasks, we completed three subtasks: background research, interviews, and surveys. We conducted our background research on Nantucket's customs and conventions to better understand the island's identity that many islanders seek to preserve. We interviewed businesses, Town officials and other stakeholders to expand the background research and identify particular areas of concern to different stakeholder groups. We used the findings from the interviews to construct a survey of a larger sample of residents as well as businesses. The

surveys were designed to public opinion on various issues, thoughts on possible bylaw changes, and perspectives on customs and conventions.

## Background Research

In order to conduct our research with a deeper level of understanding, we built on the background presented above through additional archival research. Our interviewees pointed us to documents that we did not already identify, such as internal memos, draft bylaws, and policy documents. We received several informational brochures from Julia Lindner, the Executive Director of AckNow (Julia Lindner, Executive Director, ACKNow, Email, 17 November 2020) . We also read articles written by Peter Morrison, the Co-President of the Nantucket Civic League (Peter Morrison, Co-President, Nantucket Civic League, Personal Communications, 11 November 2020). Lastly, we conducted secondary research on materials prepared by Nantucket agencies and nonprofits. The background knowledge we gathered helped inform the questions we asked in surveys and interviews.

## Interviews

Our team conducted interviews with various entities to 1) identify customs that Town officials and businesses believe make Nantucket unique, 2) evaluate concerns regarding the erosion of these customs, and 3) seek possible solutions to address the problems identified. We made initial contact with the interviewee by email to schedule a meeting time. Our team then conducted these interviews online via Zoom email correspondence, depending on interviewee preference. All three members of our team were present, with one acting as the primary interviewer and the other two as scribes. The scribes created a selective transcript of the interview in their notes. Before our meeting, we solicited verbal consent to conduct the interview, and we asked the interviewee permission to record it. We gave each interviewee the opportunity to review any materials or quotations used from these interviews prior to publication. Our interview preamble is located in Appendix A. The questions and structure of the interview differed depending on whether the subject is a member of Town government or a representative from a local business or other stakeholder group. In general, interviews with Town officials sought to identify the most common violations of bylaws, gauge opinions on bylaw change, and

identify customs integral to Nantucket's culture. A sample list of interview questions for Town officials can be found in Appendix B. Table 1 provides a list of Town officials we interviewee. We interviewed two people who wished to remain anonymous. We ended each interview by asking who else we should interview, thereby developing a referral or snowball sample of interviewees. Besides thanking our interviewees for taking the time to chat, we asked them if there are other documents we should review in order to extend our background research.

Our interviews with Nantucket business representatives and other stakeholders, in general, sought to identify the subject's 1) knowledge of town bylaws, 2) opinion on shifting culture, possible bylaw changes, and 3) thoughts on what makes Nantucket unique. A sample list of interview questions for these groups can be found in Appendix C. See Table 1 for a list of potential interviewees, which expanded as we identified more contacts through our interviews and meetings with our sponsor. These interviews were supplemented with weekly meetings with our sponsors: Janet Schulte, Director of the Nantucket Department of Culture and Tourism, and Gregg Tivnan, an Assistant Town Manager. Data collected from interviews assisted us in generating questions and methods used in the subsequent surveys.

*Table 1. A List of Interviewees*

Town Official	Business Owners or Managers	Other Stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Libby Gibson, Town Manager, Town of Nantucket</li> <li>● Leslie Snell, Deputy Director, PLUS</li> <li>● Amy Baxter, Licensing Administrator, Town of Nantucket</li> <li>● David Sharpe, Coordinator, Visitor Services</li> <li>● Dawn Hill Holdgate, Chair, Select Board</li> <li>● Jason Bridges, Vice Chair, Select Board</li> <li>● Matt Fee, Member, Select Board</li> <li>● Melissa Murphy, Member, Select Board</li> <li>● Kristie Ferrantella, Member, Select Board</li> <li>● Raymond “Ray” Pohl, current Chair, Historic District Commission</li> <li>● Kevin Kuester, former chair, Historic District Commission</li> <li>● Holly Backus, Preservation Planner</li> <li>● William “Bill” Pittman, Chief, Nantucket Police Department</li> <li>● Hillary Hedges Rayport, Chair, Nantucket Historical Commission</li> <li>● Anonymous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Jamie Holmes, General Manager, Nantucket Hotel and Resort</li> <li>● Harvey Young, Young’s Bike Shop</li> <li>● Dave Iverson, Indian Summer Surf Shop</li> <li>● Grant Sanders, Strategy, Art, Narrative, Design for Transportation Organizations (SAND)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Karen Macumber, Nantucket Island Center for Entrepreneurship</li> <li>● Cecil Barron Jensen, Executive Director, ReMain Nantucket</li> <li>● Julia Lindner, Executive Director, ACKNow</li> <li>● Ken Beaugrand, Chair, Nantucket Preservation Trust Board of Directors</li> <li>● Peter Morrison, Co-President, Nantucket Civic League</li> <li>● Charles Stott, Co-President, Nantucket Civic League</li> <li>● Anonymous</li> </ul>

## Surveys

Using information from the interviews, meetings with our sponsors and our background research, we developed surveys for both businesses and residents that gave us additional quantitative and qualitative data. These surveys were structured differently and included separate questions for residents and businesses. They included a combination of close-ended, yes or no, and opened responses. See Appendix D for survey questions for residents and business owners. Like our interviews, these surveys also sought to identify the customs and conventions respondents admire and gather opinions on their change. We used Google Forms as the survey delivery platform as we had familiarity with it and past Nantucket projects have used the software successfully. The forms were to be sent out using a link embedded digitally in an email or social media post. Since we could not visit the island ourselves, we solicited the assistance of the Co-Presidents of the Nantucket Civic League, Peter Morrison and Charlie Stott, to distribute the resident surveys to homeowners. Additionally, the Town Manager, Libby Gibson sent out the survey through email and on the Town's Instagram and Facebook pages. We received 196 responses in total. We also solicited the assistance from the Nantucket Chamber of Commerce to distribute business surveys via a mailing list from the chamber. Janet Schulte also requested members of the Economic Recovery Task Force to complete the survey and distribute it to members in their sector. We received 6 responses in total. The business surveys linked to a second survey with a write-in section where the respondent can elect to participate in a more in-depth follow-up interview. To keep the survey responses anonymous, the contact information was collected separately from the survey questions. Unfortunately, we did not have time in the term to interview businesses from the list generated in our surveys.

## Objective 3 - Analysis and Recommendations

Based on the findings from the research, the team developed a set of deliverables and recommendations as to how the Town might manage the problems identified. We worked with our sponsors to create educational and outreach materials and strategies to promote adherence to Nantucket's bylaws, customs, and conventions. The educational and outreach materials included an informational poster, two updated Quick Reference Guides for businesses, and several radio

public services announcements (PSAs). Additionally, we formulated strategies to distribute education content to the key stakeholders on the island, namely residents and business owners. We have also proposed recommendations for the Town to reconsider certain bylaws that may need adjustments to fit the needs and constraints of the community.



## Findings

Nantucket possesses a deep allure, attracting tourists and washashores alike. Several interviewees told us stories of their first visits to the island, and never wanting to leave for its unique culture was unlike anything they have seen before. It may be tough living 30 miles out to sea, but Nantucketers know it is worth it to live on the island. Throughout this project, we developed a clear picture of Nantucket's cultural identity and identified community concerns regarding how Nantucket's culture may have changed in recent years and especially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Interviewees mentioned shifts in the community as long-time Nantucketers struggle to manage housing costs, with some inevitably leaving all together, while some new residents consider Nantucket an emblem of their social status as opposed to their home. Overtourism also threatens Nantucket's cultural identity as crowding, traffic, litter, and more disturb the small-town charm and natural beauty. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the island's culture significantly, as the island has relaxed or suspended many restrictions in place that preserve the island's culture and history. Additionally, some bylaws, rules, and regulations on the island are difficult to enforce for a variety of reasons, such as their depth and complexity and insufficient resources to enforce them. As we have heard in our interviews, several Nantucketers are considering that some customs and conventions may need to change, as in the case of outdoor dining, while others would like to see them return to the way they were.

### Identifying Cultural and Community Identity on Nantucket

Throughout this project, Nantucket's "Cultural Identity" was always something that was hard to define. In every interview, we asked "What makes Nantucket, Nantucket." Different respondents emphasized different aspects, such as Nantucket's stunning natural beauty, its expansive, sandy beaches, its rich whaling history, or its tight-knit social and communal fabric. Through our interviews, we developed a larger picture of Nantucket's character and we try to summarize the customs and conventions residents, businesspeople, officials and visitors believe make Nantucket unique.

## Cultural Identity

In the mid-1900s, there was a push to preserve aspects of 19th century Nantucket, and influences from this era are seen today. Walter Beinecke Jr. led efforts to place many old buildings, homes and open space into preservation through the Nantucket Historical Trust (Oldham, 2000). In an effort to sell the Nantucket “brand” to potential visitors, an emphasis was placed on the uniformity and consistency of its visual atmosphere. Many interviewees have cited this uniformity in design as one thing that makes Nantucket unique and special. This consistency can be observed in all aspects of life on Nantucket including the design of public benches, the types of streetlights, and even the choice of paint colors permitted for houses. Several interviewees expressed chagrin, however, that Nantucket’s visual uniformity has been eroding. For example, Libby Gibson, Town Manager, (Personal Interview, 10 October 2020) cited citizen concerns about light posts, garbage cans, and town benches. Gibson noted the Department of Public Works put out a series of “classic” green benches around the island that Nantucketers have grown to enjoy. Unfortunately, residents, businesses or others built their own benches to different designs and put them on Town property, which is not allowed. Nevertheless, in our survey we found the majority of respondents (75%) did not consider visually inconsistent benches to be a problem at all. Gibson also pointed out that many citizens were concerned that updating the streetlights downtown might disturb the old-world ambiance. No one so far complained about the partial replacement of incandescent bulbs with LEDS. This may indicate, however, that the choice of color spectrum for the LEDS closely matched that of the original incandescent bulbs.

Historic aspects such as cobblestone streets, preserved architecture, and communal traditions were emphasized by many interviewees as key attributes of Nantucket’s ‘cultural identity’. Traditions like tossing a penny into the harbor to ensure a safe voyage are maintained by the community, and even recorded by the Town in the Nantucket Island Guide. The Historic District Commission regulates many aspects of Nantucket architecture to preserve an “old feel”, such as the type of shingles on buildings, choice of windows, and design of building additions. Architecture on the island is meant to model that of a 19th century whaling village, paying tribute to the island’s early days and settlers. Organizations like the Nantucket Historic Commission, the Community Preservation Committee, and the Nantucket Historical Association assist preservation efforts in buying, protecting and preserving historic properties around the

island. In the spirit of its colonial days, Nantucket's cobblestone streets are preserved and stand as a prominent feature of the Downtown landscape. Many of the customs and traditions on the island stem from its historic foundation. Nantucket takes pride in its efforts to keep commercialism and modernism seen in other vacation communities under control. This is shown in Nantucket's Downtown, which has but one chain store, minimal signage and advertisements, and a long list of bylaws and policies regulating the activity of businesses. The Sign Advisory Council, a subset of the Historic District Commission, is one example of how historic preservation is integrated into Nantucket infrastructure. The council approves only signs that meet its criteria for color, shape, size, and materials in order to maintain the historic character of the island. Business owners indicated that it can be hard to attract customers while still obeying sign regulations, and it is often difficult for new businesses to learn about the all bylaws that apply to them. Long-time business owners, however, indicated they have gotten used to the rules and regulations which are just a part of doing business on the island.

Nantucket's natural beauty was mentioned frequently in interviews as one thing that makes the island special. The Historic District Commission, Community Preservation Committee, Nantucket Historical Commission, Nantucket Preservation Trust and other groups protect Nantucket architecture, while groups like the Conservation Commission, Nantucket Land Bank and the Nantucket Conservation Foundation work to preserve the island's natural resources. As of today, almost 50% of Nantucket's total area is conserved (*Nantucket: The largest Land Owner on Island*, 2017). Most interviewees cited the beautiful scenery of Nantucket as something they love about the island or that drew them to live there. Some of these efforts by conservation groups draw directly from the vision of Walter Beinecke Jr. who helped establish the Nantucket Historical Trust and donated several hundred acres of land to the Conservation Foundation (Walter's World, 2016). Walter Beinecke was also mentioned in several of our interviews as a driving force behind the Nantucket, and many still share his vision of a historic Nantucket.

## Community Identity

Many interviewees emphasized the sense of community derived from the island's remote location as a key part of Nantucket's cultural identity. Nantucket's hardy residents are creative, gritty, and possess a unique drive to make a living on this "elbow of sand" to quote Herman

Melville in *Moby Dick*. This shared purpose forms a grounded community where everyone knows everyone. Nantucket's culture was also described as "living in the 1950s." One local nonprofit representative noted that although preservation efforts seek to highlight artifacts and aspects of Nantucket's 19th-century whaling history, it is only through the lens of 1950s preservationists. They noted that other cultures, communities, and stories should be highlighted in addition to the classic whaling narrative praised by early preservationists. Jamie Holmes, General Manager of the Nantucket Hotel and Resort, described Nantucket as a "Norman Rockwell painting come to life" - quirky, expressive, and with lots of story to tell (Holmes, Personal Interview, 28 October 2020). Nantucket is a place to slow down, "take a load off", and enjoy some of the dining and community atmosphere. Although interviewees cited Nantucket's population to be getting ever-wealthier, several noted that affluent citizens are often not "flashy" with their wealth. Holmes noted you would seldom see any Lamborghinis Downtown, or other obvious displays of wealth. One local Nantucketer noted how you could walk down the street and pass two hedge fund managers and a pro-sports player and not even know it. Although not often overt, the wealth of the island was found to have several side effects on the community and the island at large ranging from pushing local businesses and artists off-island to limiting housing options for middle to lower income tradesmen and workers that are essential for island operations. In time, Nantucket's community identity has been challenged by its tourism industry because of the attention it brings from outside influences like new financially fortunate residents, competition for housing and rent, and disruptive party goers.

We asked interviewees who raised these concerns why they thought the visitor population was changing this way. Some respondents noted this culture shift is happening everywhere; Nantucket is not the only resort community to face these issues. One common answer was the way Nantucket is marketed and advertised to off-islanders. These interviewees averred that marketing does not place enough emphasis on the history, culture and community of Nantucket and emphasizes instead the island's "resort appeal" - a place to get away, party, and bolster one's status. Some interviewees painted the picture of the tourist who flies to the island in their private plane, hosts a party on the beach, and advertises it all on Instagram. Interviewees were concerned about such marketing because it attracts a crowd that cares more about its clout than the community. Grant Sanders, (owner, Strategy, Art, Narrative, Design for Transportation Organizations (SAND), Personal Interview, 17 November 2020) says, "We are a resort

community, but we are becoming more resort than community.” At the same time, it was noted how the island often turns into a party scene during Memorial Day Weekend, 4th of July, Wine Fest and more. This image, not encouraged by the town but possibly spread as a result of word-of-mouth and social media, has attracted a disruptive crowd that can disturb the island’s peaceful atmosphere. Although they can be disruptive, visitors and tourists of course support a large part of Nantucket’s economy, so placing limits on tourism can harm island commerce. It is extremely difficult to manage what “kinds” of visitors should come to the island, but with a marketing campaign that emphasizes respect for the community and an appreciation of the island’s culture, nature and history, Nantucket could attract a less disruptive audience that is more healthy for the future of the community. Several interviewees suggested Nantucket should try to appeal more towards families as well as people who appreciate the natural beauty and community of Nantucket. “Emphasis should be placed on advertising to tourists that they are visiting someone’s home, not just somewhere to have a good time and kick up their heels.” (Cecil Barron Jensen, Executive Director, ReMain Nantucket, Personal Interview, 6 November 2020).

## New Generation

Some interviewees claimed that Nantucket is a victim of its own success, becoming so popular in the mainstream culture and social media that it is struggling to cope with the influx of new, financially endowed residents. Nantucket has a long history welcoming “washashores”, and that remains true today. Unfortunately, there seems to be a trend in the eyes of locals where a subset of new residents possess disregard for Nantucket’s history and culture.

Several interviewees perceived a change in attitudes of new residents in recent years. Grant Sanders (Personal Interview, 17 November 2020) characterized two generations of summer residents with very different approaches to the Nantucket community.<sup>1</sup> The older generation of summer residents became integrated into the community over time. They ate at the same restaurants as locals, stood behind them at the cafe, or otherwise behaved like locals. In fact, many of them are well known and vocal advocates for the Nantucket community, such as Walter Beneicke Jr. who led the crusade to preserve Nantucket, or the Schidmt Family that

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<sup>1</sup> The term generations does not refer to personal age in this case, but to the cohort of new residents that settled on the island in the past compared to the cohort of new residents settling on the island currently.

established ReMain Nantucket, or the McCausland Family that founded ACKNow. Conversely, the new generation shows little to no regard for the Nantucket community, but rather come to Nantucket for social status according to Sanders. Other interviewees shared the sentiment, agreeing the ‘new generation’ visits Nantucket to get “the perfect Instagram photo” or claim the bragging rights of owning a home on the island. They do not integrate with the community, and sometimes bring their own staff to cater to them while they stay. While it is a personal choice to not engage in the community --and not every new resident has this attitude--- the effect withers a portion of the community away. Nantucketers make a commitment to surviving on a charming “elbow of sand” thirty miles out to sea, but others who make a commitment to social media or social status instead do not share the same community identity Nantucketers are bound to.

At the same time, some new residents can be disrespectful to Nantucket’s culture and history and have a “I can have whatever I want because I can pay for it” type of attitude. Long time Nantucketer Kevin Kuester (former chair, Historic District Commission, Personal Interview, 11 November 2020) also spoke of how he is the only person on his street who does his own yard work nowadays. Most everyone nearby hires one of the many landscaping and yard work companies operating on the island. Another interviewee told us of a story when a neighbor bought out a fellow neighbor’s house for millions just to put a second home on the plot. In other anecdotes, people will renovate by gutting a house, which although allowable, violates the spirit of the bylaws put in place to protect Nantucket’s historic buildings. The problem here is not an issue with bylaws, rules, or regulations, since none are usually being broken, but rather it is the disrespectful newcomers' attitudes that degrade or actively destroy Nantucket’s culture.

Interviewees expressed some forgiveness, and occasionally a hearty laugh, for the “culture shock” some newcomers experience as they learn how to live like a local. According to Dawn Hill Holdgate, Chair of the Nantucket Selectboard and local Real Estate Broker, this year was one of the best years for real estate in her experience (Dawn Hill Holdgate, Chair, Select Board, Sales and Vacation Rental Broker, Great Point Properties, Personal Interview, 24 October 2020). Unexpectedly, the COVID-19 pandemic was a boon to this industry because more people wanted to hide away in what they perceived as a quiet and safe Nantucket to work from home. Much of this activity was attributed to people who already had a strong connection to the island, but it gives credence to the idea that Nantucket is becoming more well known as some sales and longer-term rentals were to relative newcomers. In the face of a global pandemic, more people

than usual want to live on the island for greater lengths of time than ever before. That does not mean that newcomers know what it is like to live like a Nantucketer, it is something learned over time, as it is a place to like no other. Harvey Young (Owner, Young's Bike Shop, Personal Interview, 5 November 2020), described how his real estate agent friend gives tours of the community to their clients to help them appreciate the island and its finer details, and according to Holdgate, it is a common practice. Ray Pohl, local architect and Chair of the Historic District Commission, had a similar talk with newcomers to the island who had grandiose visions of paved driveways or masonry facades that are not part of the Nantucket identity (Ray Pohl, current chair, Historic District Commission, Personal Interview, 30 October 2020). In fact, the community would be up in arms over such a display because it runs counter to the shared values of the community, something about which people from off-island are not aware of. As Pohl says, “the reason you come to Nantucket is for the dirt roads, so you go *slow*... and that’s the way everyone likes it.” (Personal Interview, 30 October 2020). These customs and conventions are enshrined in the bylaws, rules and regulations that agencies like the Historic District Commission, Conservation Commission, and others enforce and uphold. It is not the fault of newcomers for not knowing this information ahead of time without having lived on Nantucket before. Giving them welcoming support could guide their entry into Nantucket's unique culture and integration as a respectful and appreciative member of the community. One interviewee facetiously suggested that potential homeowners must first survive a whole year on island, particularly the winter, and attend Town Meetings before being allowed to complete a purchase. A more realistic approach may be collaborating with realtors, potentially through training, to discuss with clients what it means to live on the island and distribute educational materials. The Town should take steps to foster respect in the new members of the community to ease their integration to Nantucket living, and we would encourage the Town to consider methods that are uniquely “Nantucket”.

## Affordable Housing

The lack of affordable housing is seen as a major threat to the island of Nantucket and its culture. This finding came as a shock to us, as we did not expect housing to be a recurring topic raised by interviewees. It is no secret that it is becoming more difficult to own or purchase a home on Nantucket due to rising costs; since 2013 the average price of a single-family home has

increased from \$1.86 million to \$2.89 million according to Fisher Real Estate (Allen, 2020). The real surprise was that this issue was directly impacting Nantucket's culture. Many interviewees felt strongly about the issue and noted concern that their neighborhoods are losing that sense of connection between long-time residents because 'ordinary' people cannot afford to live or buy houses on Nantucket. In fact, a name was given to a pattern of behavior called the "Nantucket Shuffle" where people move out of higher-costing residency during the summer and return during the off-season when prices are lower. Rising costs are a major problem, and stem from a limited supply of available housing and steep competition. The housing supply is limited because 50% of the area on the island is in conservation and much of the remaining area has been built out (*Nantucket: The largest Land Owner on Island*, 2017). Demand is enormous and, as prices rise, only the very wealthy or property investors can afford to buy.

Nantucket's strong conservation efforts are a major attraction for many visitors but create competition for land with potential homeowners. Land protection organizations like the Nantucket Land Bank and the Nantucket Conservation Foundation, hold more than 50% of the land area in conservation (*Nantucket: The largest Land Owner on Island*, 2017). The Land Bank receives 2% of the purchase price of all houses and uses the money to purchase land for conservation. According to its 2019 Annual Report, the Land Bank generated \$21 million from the levy, and \$23 million in 2018 (Paterson, 2019). Thus, the Land Bank has significant buying power.

At the same time, local residents face competition with millionaires and billionaires who can afford to pay inflated prices to secure a house. The average middle to low income worker on the island cannot compete. Some companies are also looking at houses on Nantucket as a form of investment, not as a home (Julia Lindner, Personal Interview, November 17, 2020).

As a result, "The general court finds that there is a housing crisis on Nantucket Island arising from the housing demand created by seasonal visitors purchasing or renting housing in competition with the demand created by seasonal employees, which competition then adversely affects the ability of current or prospective residents to obtain housing." (Town of Nantucket Code § A301-11 Affordable housing covenants. 2002.)

Nantucket has created a handful of programs in recent years to try and help the ongoing housing crisis, but the programs in place are not sufficient to meet demand, however. Additionally, residents showed concern about increasing housing density on Nantucket, since



that would force more people into a space not designed to accommodate a large population. In some areas, Nantucket residents are losing access to housing as long-term rentals are turning into short-term rentals as part of the gig economy. One interviewee even stated that “We cannot build our way out of this,” in regard to Nantucket’s housing problem, although recognizing that other solutions to this problem are by no means easy to find.

Some interviewees believe that the most significant cause of the housing crisis is short-term renting because it places residents in competition with off-island investors and decreases long term housing stock. According to Julia Lindner (Executive Director, ACKNow, Personal Interview, 17 November 2020) a subset of short-term renting is affecting Nantucket’s culture. Nantucket is being infiltrated by off-island investors and businesses who are essentially turning residences into small scale hotels. Until Massachusetts Governor Baker passed a bill expanding the lodging tax to include short-term rentals, these companies and investors avoided the taxes hotels faced, though they appeal to the same customer base. As these businesses expanded, long-term rental stock was converted into short-term rental properties, thus decreasing the options residents have for long-term renting. Additionally, revenue collected by off-island investors businesses does not stay in the Nantucket economy, compared to a Nantucketer-owned short-term rental. The economics of short-term renting are lucrative to the owners, but converting Nantucket’s housing to short term rentals changes the community identity.

Two things happen to the community when a property is converted into short term renting. First, the property is essentially taken away from a Nantucket resident, who would be a participating and contributing neighbor in the community. Instead, they must look for a property elsewhere, or potentially leave Nantucket all together. Ray Pohl mentioned he had artist friends who moved off Nantucket because they could no longer afford to live there (Ray Pohl, Personal Interview, 30 October 2020). He also stated this was not at all uncommon to hear from other artists, craftsmen, and tradesmen. Most people choose to live on Nantucket; for example, 81% of our survey respondents indicated they were not born on the island. The people who come are bound by a commitment to living on Nantucket, and rely on each other to get by. When long-term residents or their children can no longer afford to live in Nantucket, it erodes Nantucket’s community because it is the teachers, the fire fighters, grocery store workers, artists and other community-contributing members who are leaving. Instead, they are replaced with short-term renters who come to the island for a vacation or event and leave. They are not the people who

come to fix the plumbing, re-shingle the roof, or teach the children at school. They do not contribute to the community any more than buying food or paying for the house. In some instances, visitors can be disruptive to the community with parties, noise, littering, and more because they possess little regard for the neighbors who cannot just pack up and leave. Visitors do not form the same connection to Nantucket as a long-time resident might, and the identity of the island suffers because of it. Short-term renting may bring people who are not involved in the community, but the community is often involved in short term renting as a way to make ends meet.

Banning short-term rentals or overly regulating them is not an option because residents use it as a way to make extra money to even afford being on Nantucket in the first place. Residents will move out of their house or unit during the busy summer months when they can rent it for a moderate price, while they move into a lower cost unit. It is a necessary practice, and the difference here from the previous discussion on short-term renting is that properties are owned by islanders, not investors or businesses. Renting as a resident has long been a part of Nantucket's culture, because it was a way for them to afford living on the island (Lindner, Personal Interview, 17 November 2020). Investors and businesses take advantage of Nantucket properties and its culture at the expense of residents. Thus, Nantucket needs to limit off-island influences on short-term renting to give islanders space to rent without additional competition and be able to lease long-term rentals for themselves.

Additional research is needed on ways to resolve Nantucket's housing shortage as a whole, but it is clearer now that this shortage is affecting the island culture and community. The community is eroded away when residents have to move out because they can no longer afford the roof over their heads. Replacing them with tourists only further erodes the community and bond Nantucketers share. Nantucket needs to consider a multifaceted approach to housing, and carefully consider issues of density, quality of life, and outsider influence.

## Events

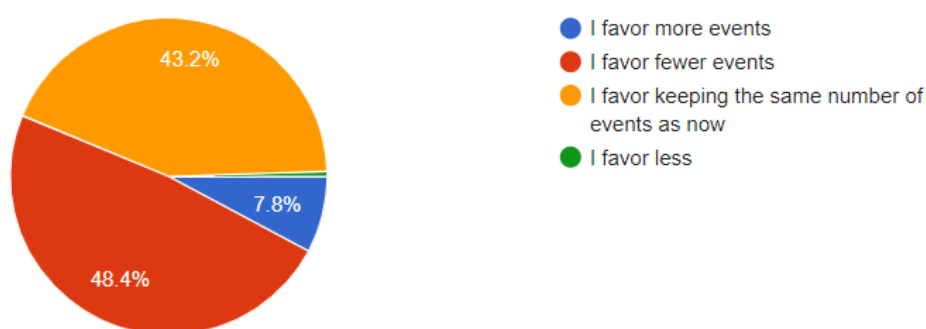
Many readers may fondly remember their experiences at the Figawi, the Stroll, the Daffodil Festival, Wine Festival, Cranberry Festival, Nantucket Film Festival, or the several other traditional events grown into Nantucket's culture as well as new events like Cobblestones and Cranberries, Nantucket Yoga Festival, or the Nantucket Book Festival. Events give people a

reason to come to Downtown, both for residents and visitors, and bring with them significant revenue for businesses and nonprofits. Unfortunately, too much of a good thing can have a negative effect; several interviewees averred that there are now too many events, and some involve too much alcohol.

COVID 19 has challenged the public perception of Nantucket's need for events by halting or delaying many events on the island. The Chamber of Commerce has 74 events listed for 2020 on its website and of those, 42 were cancelled, digitized, or postponed (Nantucket 2020 Events at a Glance, 2020).<sup>2</sup> This has given the community a little break to reflect on the event season. In our survey to residents, 48.4% said they would like to see fewer summer events, 43.2% said they would like to see the same number of summer events, and only 7.8% wanted more summer events (Figure 6). While this question asked about people's opinions once the pandemic ended, people may be hesitant to attend events after the pandemic which may affect the data. From our interviews though, we found that people had concerns about Nantucket's event culture already. Some people mentioned event fatigue, but several expressed concern that Nantucket's culture is favoring "festivals" and drinking as opposed to family vacationing.

Once the COVID-19 pandemic ends, how do you feel about the number of summer events on Nantucket?

192 responses



*Figure 6. Public Perspective on Event Frequency*

Nantucket's tourism industry uses events to bolster revenues since the summer season is short and visitor numbers drop off substantially in the spring and fall shoulder season. Certain events have been a part of Nantucket's identity for decades, but it was noted that the culture has

<sup>2</sup> With 365 days in a year, to have 74 events evenly spread out, Nantucket would be hosting an event every 5 days!

become focused on the idea of simply creating more events. In part, it has been intentional since that was a recommendation of the ACKTown report in 2013 that pushed to increase island entertainment to bring more people Downtown. Events are necessary for Nantucket's economy, and is a major source of revenue for the island's many non-profits, but the increasing amount is putting a strain on the community and its cultural values. At some point, there is a concern that there are so many events and things going on, that Nantucket is replacing its identity as a vacation getaway with a culture of "festivals" and things to do in a rapid succession. This is reflected in accommodations and business trends. Jamie Holmes, General Manager of the Nantucket Hotel and Resort, says that average hotel stays have gradually become shorter over the years (Jamie Holmes, General Manager, Nantucket Hotel and Resort, Personal Interview, 28 October 2020). Kristie Ferrantella, former Interim President of the Chamber of Commerce, mentioned that short term renting through AirBnBs and takeout dining have become more popular (Personal Interview, 26 October 2020). While this may be a national trend according to Holmes and Ferrantella, that still means visitors are coming to Nantucket, but they are not getting to know the island intimately like visitors used to. Kevin Kuester (Personal Interview, 11 November 2020), a local artist and craftsman, encourages new Nantucketers to take time and explore the island for themselves. Events only offer a slim view of Nantucket's culture, but have started to play an outsized role in Nantucket's reputation. Thus, some events not only give locals "festival fatigue" but they are shifting the drive of Nantucket's tourism away from the destination itself to the event experience, the spending, and the drinking.

Over the years, alcohol has bled into Nantucket's event culture and tainted some cultural center points like Figawi, the Stroll, and the Daffodil Festival. Figawi started as a sailing race between three longtime friends over a pint of ale and bragging rights, and gradually grew in time. The race still stands, but Figawi's reputation has been associated with heavy partying by off-island visitors coming for Memorial Day weekend. The Stroll was started in 1973 as a way to celebrate the holidays and encourage shopping at Downtown's local businesses. Now, interviewees tell us it is not uncommon to see people with open containers and occasionally drunk in the middle of Downtown (Hillary Hedges Rayport, Chair, Nantucket Historical Commission, Personal Interview, 29 October 2020). The same is true about the Daffodil festival, which celebrates the start of spring with antique car parades, daffodils, a tailgate picnic, and, again, some would say excessive public drinking. These events are Nantucket traditions, and

some are meant to involve alcohol. However, major events have become associated with excessive drinking according to interviewees making Downtown unpleasant for residents and distracting from the events themselves. Interviewees mentioned that there is significant revenue in the sale of alcohol, and it is heavily relied upon by nonprofits at fundraising events (Amy Baxter, Licensing Administrator, Town of Nantucket, Personal Interview, 23 October 2020). Amy Baxter, Licensing Administrator, mentioned that the sale of liquor licenses is one of the most sought after licenses the Town offers (Personal Interview, 23 October 2020). Alcohol sales are valuable for Nantucket's economy, but selling too much at once may be harming the culture of certain events. At the same time, visitors also bring their own liquor as we heard of visitors stepping off the ferry with cases of beers in tote. These stories could potentially be unrelated to the visitors attending Downtown events, but some people go to Nantucket to drink more than to enjoy Nantucket. Some claim excessive alcohol consumption is warping the traditional, family friendly, Nantucket events into disruptive and unpleasant parties, whether people bought it or brought it. Partying is part of Nantucket history and culture, but many indicated it should not dominate Nantucket's culturally significant events.

Nantucket has an opportunity to ask itself what kind of culture it wants to promote after the pandemic and must learn to balance its events culture with its "charming" culture as reasons to visit the island. According to residents, it feels like the island is tipping in favor of those who like to go to events and parties. Residents feel the island does not need more events, and 46% would like to see fewer of them. Additionally, some events need to shift away from a culture of drinking and realign with Nantucket's family friendly and local values. Figawi is a race for modern day sailors, but that does not mean tourists should come to Nantucket to get drunk like 19th century sailors. Drinking may be a major draw for tourists, but it turns away families and locals who may want to join Nantucket's festivities. Nantucket must learn to promote its events and alcohol enforcement in a way that does not jeopardize the charm of the island.

## Overtourism

The term "overtourism" has been used to describe many places around the world in which tourism has had negative effects on their community, three of which were described in our background section above. Claudio Milano, a tourism researcher from the University of Lleida, Spain defines overtourism as, "the excessive growth of visitors leading to overcrowding in areas

where residents suffer the consequences of temporary and seasonal tourism peaks, which have caused permanent changes to their lifestyles, denied access to amenities and damaged their general well-being” (Milano, Cheer & Novelli 2019). The effects of overtourism can be seen on Nantucket too, including rising prices, competition over space, expanded short term renting, proliferation of litter, and more. Through our research, we sought to identify the problems overtourism has created on Nantucket, and to develop strategies and solutions the island can use for mitigation.

### Effects of Overtourism

Throughout our interviews, effects of overdevelopment, commercialization and overtourism were prevalent topics of discussion. Impacts of these issues vary greatly in scope, ranging from housing availability, parties and gatherings, and parking, among others. It is with mixed feelings that Nantucket recognizes its dependence on tourism; however, it is universally accepted to be one of the largest forces driving economic activity.

Through background research and interviews, the seasonality of Nantucket was determined to be a big factor affecting the island’s tourism. In a regular year, the Nantucket population in the summer can soar to over 300% of its “anchor” population in the winter (Nantucket Data Platform, Effective Population). Accordingly, the majority of businesses seek to make their profit during the summer months, and close during the winter. It follows that feeling of Downtown in the summer stands at stark contrast with island life during the fall and winter. According to Kevin Kuester, a local artist and longtime Nantucketer (Personal Interview, 11 November 2020), residents who do not live in Town seldom visit the Downtown area during the summer months to avoid the tourist traffic. Several interviewees have reported Downtown shops, restaurants and boutique stores have gotten more expensive in recent years and are appealing to the wealthier tourist crowd.

Nantucket’s economy is struggling from its own success as local businesses are pushed off the island. Rising rents have forced smaller ‘Mom and Pop’ shops out of the Downtown area and into the “Mid-Island” or out of Nantucket completely. Hillary Hedges Rayport (Personal Interview, 29 October 2020), spoke of the long history Nantucket has with artists, craftsmen and inventors, but as indicated in other interviewees this creative community is dwindling, as it is increasingly difficult find housing. Seasonal workers compete with islanders for housing as well,

making it difficult for both groups to find places to stay. Seasonal workers and year-round community members make up the ordinary workforce, and without them local businesses cannot function. Citizens worry that Nantucket will lose part of its culture if it loses the local businesses that make its Downtown attractive and charming.

## Food Trucks

Initially, we thought that food trucks might be a recent phenomenon that many considered a threat to Nantucket's image as a historic town, but as we dug deeper, we found this was a case. Apparently, there are very few legal issues with traveling food vendors, for they largely abide by the bylaws and received appropriate permitting. The main issue interviewees raised was that they are not "historic" businesses. Several interviewees emphasized that people seemed to like them, especially the ice cream truck. Most of our survey respondents, 69 of 101, felt that food trucks were not a problem. Only 31 of 101 people felt they were a minor problem. There are few food establishments at the beaches, where they mostly reside, so food trucks fill an evident need. Nevertheless, Nantucket may want to be wary of letting too many food trucks operate on the island.

## Beaches

Like other resorts, Nantucket has a long history of partying on the beaches and partying has generally been considered acceptable, when in moderation and under control. Interviewees indicated that the town is increasingly concerned about the number and nature of beach parties and the damage caused to the beaches and to the family friendly culture of the island. Approximately 69% of survey respondents indicated that beach parties were a problem. The majority of respondents also felt that overcrowding, littering, dogs not on leashes and trampling dunes were also problems.

## Parking

Parking in the Downtown area in the peak season has always been a challenge for Nantucketers. Parking troubles do not have a direct effect on culture, as demolishing a historic building might, but rather it discourages participation in Nantucket's cultural centerpiece. The island is frequently cited as a place to enjoy the outdoors, and the parking and traffic issues

created by driving into town conflicts with this image. The Town encourages Nantucketers to walk or bike into town whenever possible or use public transportation. Most interviewees who talk about parking mention how difficult it is to access Downtown because of the lack of parking. At the same time, people drive endlessly looking for parking spaces, increasing congestion. Both these effects make Downtown feel crowded, which it is, and undesirable for residents to visit. Parking is only a major problem during the peak season, and it is a tough problem to solve. Nantucket has little space to increase parking and making more space through construction or destruction does not blend with Nantucket's unity in design and appearance. Various solutions have been proposed to resolve parking problems by managing the flow of visitors.

The Select Board is considering implementing paid parking to encourage turnover and net an amount of financial benefit. While useful, it could potentially add a financial barrier since the price of parking increases the longer a person has parked there. 'The more you can pay, the longer you can stay' program gives an advantage to wealthy visitors on the island since they can pay for parking with ease, while limiting access to those who are unable to afford the costs. Filtering by fortune, as demonstrated with the housing industry, has already changed the local culture and can make it more difficult for Nantucketers and visitors alike to enjoy the island.

Satellite parking spaces are another proposed solution. It essentially moves the crowd somewhere else so as not to distract from Downtown, while shuttles move people between the town and parking. While it may be difficult to find currently, it is a possibility if the Town was able to find suitable locations.

Public transportation is already in place; however, Nantucket's public transportation could be expanded to meet current and future demands. Grant Sanders (Personal Interview, 17 November 2020) currently works as a marketing consultant for on-island and off-island transportation services. He would like to see Nantucket's diesel bus fleet be replaced with electric buses that are smaller, quieter, and pollute less. They should be smaller to be more navigable on Nantucket's narrow streets. Being quiet means, they would disrupt the peace and charm of Downtown less. Electric power would help promote Nantucket's concept of sustainability and conservation. Additionally, expanding the fleet would ensure more opportunities for stops and people to catch a ride. In the end, there are a multitude of solutions



for parking the Town could develop, and as such more research is needed to determine the best path forward.

## COVID

COVID, as we all recognize, has challenged all industries, private and public, to think differently about how to conduct ordinary activity. It has affected all walks of life, leaving people anxious about the “new normal.” While some hope we can go back to the regular “normal”, there is a collective feeling that we are in a different world than a year ago, and it will never be the same. Nantucket, business owners, and residents would all like to return to usual activities but realize it is difficult to make long term plans for the benefit of the community when COVID, or the associated economic fallout, could still potentially be an issue for months if not the next few years. The community has had to think on its feet in recent months and challenged itself to adapt, rather abruptly, to a different way of living.

From our interviews, the response by the Town has been seen as a positive (Holmes, Personal Interview, October 28, 2020;). While some thought the Town moved too slowly, most appreciated how the administration had carefully considered how best to serve the community. According to Jamie Holmes (Personal Interview, October 28, 2020), the town was more than accommodating for businesses. From the start, the Town communicated with business owners and the Chamber of Commerce to develop ways to enable commerce on the island while following safe COVID practices. Thus, the Economic Recovery Task Force was designed to reflect all aspects of the economy and included including building, non-profit, entertainment, lodging, restaurant, and real estate sectors (*Economic Recovery Task Force / Nantucket, ma—Official website*. n.d.). The Chamber of Commerce also partnered with ReMain Nantucket to establish a grant for local small businesses to alleviate the strains of COVID-19 (*Rock solid grant—Nantucket Island Chamber of Commerce, ma*. n.d.). The Town managed its legal resources by relaxing some enforcement of town signage laws to facilitate visual promotion of business --so the public knew they were still open-- as well as considering lowering taxes and other financial means to help those in need. The Town even closed some streets to allow restaurants to move seating outdoors. While businesses are still struggling due to a significant loss of income, the Town and Chamber of Commerce have been more than willing to cooperate with businesses to keep them afloat. For example, the Town relaxed enforcement of some bylaws

regarding outdoor signage and commercial activities in public spaces to promote the economy. The Town also installed numerous signs, including traffic messaging boards to promote public safety even though some of these might contravene existing bylaws.

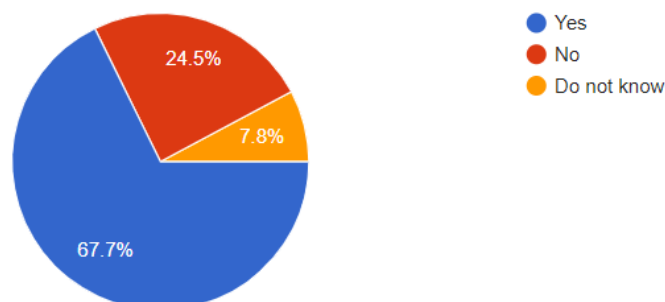
## Outdoor Dining

This year the Town allowed dining for restaurants to expand into outdoor public areas such as streets and sidewalks, as well as privately owned areas such as parking lots and underutilized spaces on adjoining properties, without going through the typical permitting process. The intent was to quickly get these businesses licensed to provide socially distanced outdoor dining service for their most important season. Restaurants taking advantage of this opportunity were not allowed to increase their capacity as a result. Some public streets in the Downtown were reduced in width and others were closed entirely to make room for these outdoor dining areas in a safe manner. (Leslie Snell, Deputy Director, PLUS, Personal Interview, 26 October 2020). The perception of outdoor dining was great overall according to many interviewees and survey respondents, though some people expressed concerns. The Town may want to reconsider certain bylaws so that outdoor dining options are more easily available for local businesses to utilize in the warmer months.

Outdoor dining was a boon to restaurants facing dire times due to the global pandemic. It enabled them to have more capacity than they could have otherwise due to COVID, but they did not exceed the overall capacity allowed in a regular year. Many interviewees felt that it brought a renewed vitality and charm Downtown, with the community interacting out in the open. Some interviewees mentioned that they ate outdoors --even braving the colder weeks towards the fall to enjoy it-- while others mentioned that, despite not eating out, they appreciated the vibrancy it added to the Downtown. Respondents in the survey loved it too, the majority of which responded in favor of keeping outdoor dining around (Figure 7)

Should the Town regularly close down streets in the summer season to allow space for restaurants to set up outdoor dining?

192 responses



*Figure 7. Public Perspective on Outdoor Dining*

Interviewees opposed to outdoor dining in the future are concerned about crowding in Downtown. Some interviewees felt this year's traffic was already bad and visitation in 2020 was lower than in the past or likely in the future. Nantucket Police Department Chief Bill Pittman (Personal Interview, 22 October 2020), worries that if the Town starts to close streets for outdoor dining, traffic congestion would become significantly worse. He also worries that if businesses could increase capacity --with normal and outdoor seating-- then crowding may become a bigger problem. To analyze these concerns, we looked for data on how COVID 19 impacted visitor numbers this year. No information is recorded on the exact number of visitors who come to Nantucket every year, but the Visitor Services department tracks how many people come into the Main Office for guidance.<sup>3</sup> This information can be used to analyze the change in the number of visitors between 2020 and 2019.<sup>4</sup> Table 2 shows that Nantucket experienced a potential 82% decrease in the number of visitors between 2019 and 2020 due to the COVID pandemic. It is possible that there was little perception of crowds or traffic as a result. If the 2021 season returns to the same level as the 2019 season, concerns of crowding while outdoor dining and street closures are present could be valid.

<sup>3</sup> Ferry passenger rates can be used, but they are biased since people who live on the island also use them for travel.

<sup>4</sup> We assume that the same portion of the total visitor population uses the Visitor Services in 2020 and 2019. We expect that the need to get additional information from the Town would stay the same, if not be greater, during the global pandemic. Thus, we can indirectly compare the total visitor populations by comparing the subset of people who used the Visitor Services.

Table 2. People visiting the Visitor Services Main Office

	2019	2020
<b>May (25th to 31st)</b>	602	14
<b>June</b>	4,214	254
<b>July</b>	6,653	1,308
<b>August</b>	7,275	1,528
<b>September</b>	5,258	1,162
<b>October (1st to 12th)</b>	1541	323
<b>Total</b>	25,543	4,589

Beyond the crowd considerations, outdoor dining may have an impact on Downtown's culture if it were allowed in the future. Some interviewees feared that allowing outdoor dining might turn Downtown into "one big bar" like New Orleans or other places. Liquor is always a big source of revenue for Nantucket restaurants (Amy Baxter, Personal Interview, 23 October 2020). Nantucket is already well known as a place to drink and allowing outdoor dining brings alcohol consumption out into the streets where it may be disruptive, unpleasant, and unattractive. While selling alcohol is profitable, allowing Downtown to become "one big bar" may ultimately harm its image in the long term. On the other hand, outdoor dining is done tastefully in many cities throughout the world.

Outdoor dining can be an important, and valuable addition to a local culture. Ray Pohl (Personal Interview, 30 October 2020), said he loved it and wants even more of it. Pohl pointed to places he has visited in Europe like Paris and Rome that had increased outdoor walking space and outdoor dining is welcomed. In Paris, outdoor cafes and bistros are commonplace and are a dear tradition to Parisians, and restaurants are commonplace in the piazzas of Rome. These cities have greater walkability and open space, relying less on private vehicles to get in and around. Pohl points out that turning Downtown into a walkable, pedestrian friendly city, would avoid issues of traffic and congestion in Downtown by moving parking largely outside city limits. Pohl

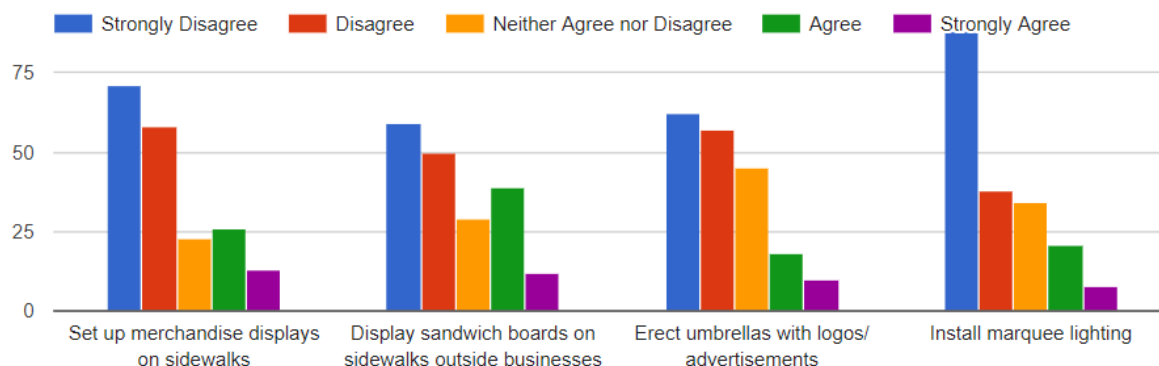
would love to see the outdoor tradition come to Nantucket. It would benefit Nantucket to develop Downtown as an open, shared space because the Town prides itself on its art, history, architecture and scenery. Such a change would obviously be a dramatic shift in Nantucket's culture, but if done thoughtful and carefully, it could bring a renewed respect to Nantucket culture of slowing down, and enjoying the beauty around Town.

Overall, outdoor dining is not a part of Nantucket's traditional history, but rather it can celebrate it. Bringing people out to eat creates a vibrancy and a bustle Downtown needs. At the same time, it gives visitors the opportunity to slow down, and enjoy the meticulously preserved architecture and scenery. Nantucket bylaws may chaff residents every now and again, but after all, it is important to keep in mind they are what maintains the island image people fell in love with when many of them or their ancestors "washed ashore". Outdoor dining highlights the efforts, bylaws, rules, and regulations, that Walter Beinecke Jr. and all Nantucket preservationists have worked on for decades.

### Downtown Signage and Merchandise Displays

Outdoor dining is one COVID-19 precaution Nantucketers would like to see stay, but people feel the opposite way about signage and merchandise displays that businesses, and in some cases even the Town, have put out during the pandemic. In order to stimulate the economy, the Town has relaxed enforcement of bylaws that regulate what type of signs can be used and where, as well as relaxing enforcement of merchandise displays outside businesses on public property. The goal was to help businesses promote themselves and advertise to promote social distancing while shopping. Business owners that we spoke to agreed they were necessary, but surprisingly some said they would like to see the signs go away after the pandemic ends. Additionally, residents share the opinion that signage and merchandise displays should not be allowed to stay according to Figure 8.

The town has relaxed its enforcement of some bylaws during COVID to help meet the needs of businesses and their customers, including visitors, seasonal residents, and year-round residents. Please indicate how strongly you agree/disagree with the following statements. "After COVID, the town should allow businesses to..."



*Figure 8. Opinions on Post-COVID Business Activity*

Nantucket has tough regulations regarding signage, because they can easily bring visual and physical clutter to Downtown. There is a preferred architecture and aesthetic Downtown that the bylaws and Historic District Commission seek to maintain, which signs can disrupt if not carefully controlled.

Modern signs put up by businesses and private individuals do not always match the ambience of Nantucket, such as the bright green sign in Figure 2. Additionally, the Town has put up laminated public health flyers on telephone poles, which are necessary precautions during COVID, but it has the same negative effect on appearance and sends a contradictory message from the town in regard to sign regulations. Some signs like sandwich boards can block the public way as well. Merchandise displays can do the same and distract from historic storefronts. Dueling displays among competition businesses can chip away at Nantucket's visual unity and turn an attraction into a distraction. In the same vein, umbrellas are not allowed to have logos, and people want to keep it that way according to Figure 8. People appreciate Nantucket's low-key advertising, for it preserves the small-town charm and feel of the island, much the same as banning chain or formula businesses. Excessive, unregulated signage and displays that do not match the identity of "Nantucket" are unwelcomed by both residents and some business owners.

It is interesting to see how people enjoyed outdoor dining, but disliked signage and displays. Both precautions were taken to promote the economy during the pandemic and are normally contrary to Nantucket's bylaws and regulations, but people feel differently about each. However, it is their impact on culture that enables for relevant comparison. Outdoor dining was viewed as attracting new life and vibrancy Downtown, in other words enhancing both the culture and economic vitality of Downtown. Signage and merchandise display might enhance economic vitality, but many felt they detracted from Downtown's culture. This divergence in attitudes illustrates how Town Administration will need to be flexible and reexamine its regulations and enforcement after COVID.

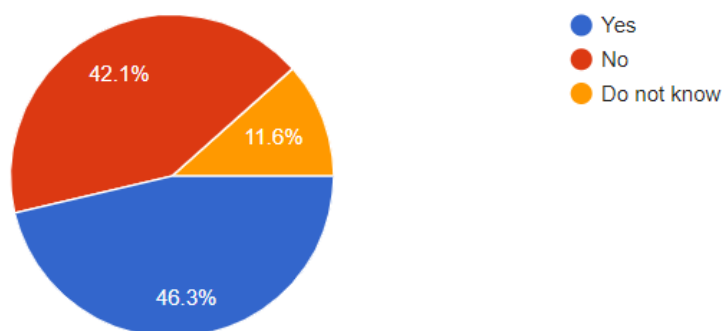
### Moving Outdoors

As part of our research in Nantucket's changing culture, we were curious to understand what residents and business owners would be willing to do to balance COVID precautions and island culture. The pandemic has encouraged businesses to operate outdoors to maintain social distancing, but survey and interview results indicate different opinions on moving businesses outdoors. Aside from outdoor dining, we were interested to see if Nantucketers would be willing to accept additional outdoor business activities not normally allowed but may be necessary in order to continue supporting local businesses. For example, we learned through our interview with David Sharpe (Coordinator, Visitor Services, Personal Interview, 27 October 2020), that the Dreamland Theater created a drive-in theater to enable outdoor screenings and the Shipwreck and Lifesaving Museum setup displays outdoors for visitors to walk through. Our team thought that it might be useful to ask residents and business owners their thoughts on conducting business outdoors in public spaces in light of the pandemic, like Dreamland's Drive-in or outdoor dining for restaurants.

Nantucket has regular farmers markets, and we imagined the same principle could be applied to retail stores who cannot move outside like restaurants can. The Nantucket bylaws prohibit outdoor markets except for locally grown produce and caught fish. To see if this bylaw should be changed or expanded, we asked residents if they would favor seeing additional temporary outdoor retail markets, such as artisan markets, outdoor clothing sales, and jewelry displays. See Figure 9 for the results. Approximately 46.3% were in favor, while 42.1% were against creating additional outdoor retail market spaces.

Do you favor creating additional temporary outdoor retail markets on Nantucket? (e.g. more farmers/artisan markets, outdoor clothing sales, jewelry displays, etc.)

190 responses



*Figure 9. Public Perception on Outdoor Retail Markets*

There is not a majority against the proposal, and we recognize our question is limited in scope. Our question did not address where, when, how, and the duration of these markets, which could all be concerns residents have before saying they are in favor of it. It is clear from our previous findings that people do not like clutter or commercialization in public spaces, such as signs or merchandise displays. As shown in Figure 8 almost 58% of residents disagree or strongly disagree with allowing businesses to put sandwich boards on sidewalks, 70% of residents disagree or strongly disagree with outdoor merchandise displays, 65% disagree or disagree strongly with marquee lighting, and 62% disagree or disagree strongly with umbrellas with logos or advertisements.<sup>5</sup> If the Town were able to devise a method to give businesses an appropriate degree of freedom while eliminating public concerns about unregulated commercialization, then such a proposal may be more favorable to residents. Additionally, the Town can run trial periods to test whether or not the public would like such outdoor markets. This is somewhat like what has happened to outdoor dining, which was not allowed before, but people enjoy now that they have seen it in action. There are plenty of details to work out, but

<sup>5</sup> Two business owners responded in the survey that they feel the Town will only create more rules that hampers business activities. Some interviewees agreed that businesses face challenges as a result of Nantucket's restrictions. Yet, we see from the survey of residents that most people are in favor of the four listed restrictions placed on businesses. The Town is caught between two populations with opposing goals based on the limited perspectives we have available.



moving business activities may potentially be favorable to residents on the island if done appropriately.

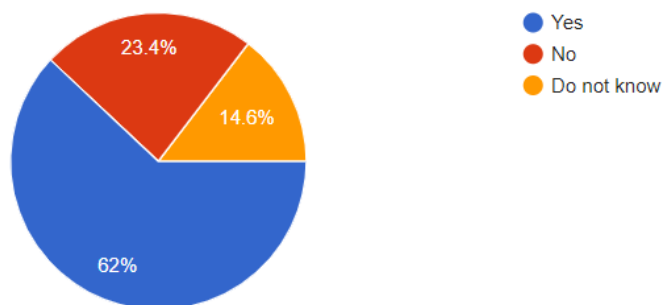
## Public Art

The Department of Culture and Tourism was also interested in a proliferation of new art installments around the island during the COVID pandemic. While art can lift spirits in these dire times, it is not allowed on public property without permission. The Department of Culture and Tourism wanted to know if these new art installments reflected a shift in public opinion on public art. In our interviews, we learned that Nantucket is a place that celebrates arts, creativity, and expression. In fact, we were pleased to learn that some of our interviewees were artists themselves and noted that Nantucket was a beautiful place that encouraged their work. The main concern in this project was public art placed on public property without permission, and as such, we wanted to gauge public opinion on this matter with our surveys.

We found that the majority of Nantucketers were in favor of allowing art in public spaces, such as sidewalks, beaches, and parks, though many had conditions or concerns that must be met first. According to our survey results (Figure 10), 62% of respondents were in favor of the Town allowing public spaces to be used for art, while 23.4% were opposed.

Should the Town allow public spaces (eg. parks, beaches, sidewalks) to be used for art works, such as sculptures?

192 responses



*Figure 10. Public Perceptions on Public Art*

Respondents who left comments in favor of art all focused on the idea that art contributes to cultural identity and visual appeal. Art is part of Nantucket's history and it should be promoted in the future. Some respondents said it would enhance the visual appeal of parks and

beaches, while others said art must be allowed for the sake of expression regardless. Additionally, with Nantucket's large tourist population, promoting local artists is a beneficial way to help them make money while enriching local landscapes. Of course, not all comments were as accepting of art in public spaces.

Some comments were in favor of art but with certain conditions in place, while some were just plain opposed. Several respondents agreed that sidewalks should not be used for art because Nantucket's sidewalks are narrow and difficult to navigate especially for citizens with disabilities. This sentiment is reflected in other questions where respondents agreed that merchandise displays, and signs should not be on sidewalks for the same reason. Additionally, some people simply disagreed with the notion of art in public spaces. One respondent said that Nantucket is not an outdoor art gallery, while others felt art may disturb Nantucket's natural beauty. Some also were concerned about an explosion of distracting or overwhelming art that could happen if artists were given free rein of public spaces. Lastly, people said that bad art is unappealing, which is always a matter of opinion but is a concern, nonetheless. It is possible some concerns may be alleviated with an appropriate process for approving and regulating art in public spaces.

## Moving Forward

Many people were concerned about dramatic shifts in culture caused by COVID. Several people wanted the signs to go away when businesses no longer needed them, while others felt outdoor dining was "not Nantucket" and exacerbated Downtown crowding. In fact, some businesspeople like Jamie Holmes or Matt Fee (Holmes, Personal Interview, 28 October 2020; Fee, Personal Interview, 31 October 2020) opposed excessive, unregulated signage. Nantucketers place significant value on what makes Nantucket culturally distinct, because we heard time after time in our interviews with "washashores" that the community and character of the island is what made them want to settle down here and never leave.

At the same time though, people have viewed the changes as positive and not far outside the realm of Nantucket's character. Some people have said that Nantucket was once a refuge for artists, and it has always been a place for change or "bohemian" culture. One person emphasized this by recalling a prank pulled on Nantucket by the famous Puppeteer Tony Sarg, who created a

giant inflatable sea monster that local towns folk then “reported” to stir up buzz on the island (Jason Bridges, Vice Chair, Select Board, Owner, Handlebar Cafe, Personal Interview, 23 October 2020). Likewise, many people felt that outdoor dining brought Downtown new excitement and vibrancy that they would love to see stay. Others would like the Town to not be as stiff about keeping a certain look Downtown so that people can embrace renewed creativity and “funk”. Though these new ideas may clash with ideas of preserving Nantucket, both sides of the debate share the value of keeping Nantucket special.

In fact, there is an implicit attitude among our interviewees, that although their perspectives can conflict, Nantucket is made special by the people who live here. This attitude adds a layer to the idea of cultural preservation, that Nantucket’ is defined by the community in addition to its natural beauty, architecture, and historical significance. Obviously, the community will not always have the same opinions about topics like signage or outdoor dining, but they are united by the shared sense of purpose as a Nantucketer. That purpose is that all Nantucketers have made a commitment to living on this “elbow of sand”, and they are all in it together. In no time is this truer than in the face of a global pandemic.

COVID has brought considerable uncertainty about the future, but also shown that the worst thing to do is to not have a plan. With many plans put on halt this year, COVID presents a general opportunity to reset and reevaluate the direction the community wants to go. We would encourage the Town to use this chance to engage with the community and ask itself what kind of culture it wants to promote after the COVID-19 pandemic ends.

## Enforcement

Nantucket has a wealth of bylaws, rules, and regulations all designed to protect its culture, but having many bylaws makes it more difficult to enforce every infraction. In some cases, there can be legal gray areas or contradictory messaging from the Town that makes it difficult to determine when a violation has occurred. After that, there is not enough enforcement personnel, including police and through regulatory agencies, to handle all of Nantucket’s bylaws. At the same time, time requirements for issuing fines can take too long. When violations do occur, the fine or punishment may not be enough of a deterrence either. All these factors combined can be a significant challenge to any enforcement agency on the island.

## Legal Gray Area

Nantucket's bylaws are extensive, but we will cover only examples of legal gray zones discovered in our research. We consider gray zones not as contradictions between laws, per se, but rather confusion about which laws apply in a particular instance.

One of the major issues in enforcement was defining the Town's authority and a person's private rights. The Town has control over public property but cannot regulate certain aspects of private property. The Town understands where public property ends, and private begins, but oftentimes, Nantucket residents do not see these boundaries so clearly and these become gray zones. In our discussions with Police Chief Bill Pittman (Personal Interview, 22 October 2020), this problem is obvious when trying to enforce issues of signs and merchandise displays. Some businesses own the property in front of their storefront, while others do not. Those who do own the property are allowed to install approved signs, but those who do not own the property cannot because it is town property and considered a public space. This latter part is not immediately obvious to business owners unless they obtain a surveyor or otherwise verify the ownership of the property, they wish to put a sign on. Furthermore, when an enforcement agent tries to enforce the law, the business owner can often point to an instance where a neighboring business was allowed to keep their sign in place. The difference is the other person put their sign on private property and thus was allowed. It can easily become too complicated for enforcement agents to manage and for business owners to accept, especially when they feel treated unfairly. Additionally, residents can put out lawn signs that have the same legal issue. They are allowed on private property, and not on public property. Enforcing the restriction on public property can immediately elevate to an issue of free speech infringement, despite the Town having legal authority to regulate public property. In both cases, should the enforcement agent try to enforce the regulations, as soon as they leave the business owner or resident can simply put the sign back up. It does not help that the Town has put up additional signage this year for COVID precautions because it sends a seemingly contradictory message as well. It simply becomes too challenging for an enforcement agent, a single person, to have such a complete understanding of town bylaws and regulations to enforce every instance of their violation.

In some instances, cultural acceptance of some bylaws are also changing, leading to more violations. Police Chief Pittman cited the example of electric scooters or "personal motorized passenger devices" (Pittman, Chief, Nantucket Police Department, Personal Interview, 22

October 2020). Years ago, the Town passed a bylaw in an attempt to keep such devices from being a public nuisance by prohibiting their use on sidewalks and bike paths; however, they can be ridden on streets. In recent years, they have become even more popular and culturally acceptable. Effective enforcement is difficult because the user can just go back on the sidewalk when the agent leaves. Residents have noticed this trend, and most see it as a problem. Of 125 responses, 89 people listed electric devices on sidewalks and bike paths as a problem, compared to 36 people who said they were not a problem. Of the 89 people who listed it as a problem, 32 said it was a major problem. Nantucket needs to resolve this challenge its enforcement agents have in this bylaw particularly, as “personal motorized passenger devices” become more popular. There is literal deterrence to prevent people from riding on the sidewalks, and people can repeat violations for smaller bylaws that protect Nantucket’s culture like the signage or scooter laws.

## Deterrence

Penalties for violations are necessary to encourage compliance. Unfortunately, sometimes the penalties are not enough to deter violations from occurring according to Chief Pittman. For example, the penalty for one frequent violation residents saw, riding a bike the wrong way down a one-way street, is a \$5 fine (Town of Nantucket Code § 57-1 Light and reflectors; direction of travel; helmets required; violations and penalties. It is tedious for an enforcement agent to go around and enforce every minor violation they see, such as cars parked on the sidewalk, people riding bikes inappropriately, or a sandwich board on the sidewalk.

Penalties against businesses are not always sufficient deterrents because the process can take too long or the fine can be insignificant to the revenue, they bring in. In some cases, it is easier for businesses to ignore requirements and hope they do not get caught instead of completing the lengthy approval process. An example would be receiving approval for signage designs by the Historic District Commission since in some cases businesses can get around the bylaws without significant consequences. Ray Pohl (Personal Interview, October 30, 2020), said that the commission struggles to issue fines for seasonal businesses since seasonal businesses close and move off-island for the winter before the commission can issue a fine. Kristie Ferrantella mentioned that even when businesses get issued a fine, some will just call it the cost of doing business on Nantucket (Ferrantella, Personal Interview, 26 October 2020). When businesses are making revenue upwards of millions, they are willing to pay a few hundreds of

dollars in fines. Bylaws as they are written now have good intentions, but some bylaws necessary to safeguard Nantucket's culture are by nature difficult to enforce in a meaningful way.

Enforcement agencies are caught in a delicate balance between not enforcing enough and being too tough. As it stands now, the level of enforcement is not enough to protect all aspects of Nantucket's culture whether due to a lack of clarity, of deterrence, or of resources to handle every bylaw, rule, and regulation. Conversely, the island cannot become significantly tougher without upsetting local populations. Increasing the penalties for violating bylaws might push enforcement into the realm of the unreasonable. There are already more regulations in place than businesses would prefer, and putting significant weight behind violations, especially minor ones, could become unbearable for the business community. At the same time, enforcing the civilian bylaws too strongly may become oppressive to the local population. For example, one interviewee mentioned an attempt to reduce on alcohol consumption and partying on beaches by tourists one year that disturbed and bothered families who were trying to enjoy the beaches on the Fourth of July (Sanders, Personal Interview, November 17, 2020). On either end of the enforcement spectrum, Nantucket's culture may suffer when there is too little enforcement. There are two potential philosophies for solving this issue: finding the balance between under and over enforcement and education to encourage voluntary compliance.

Nantucket struggles with a lack of enforcement in some areas of the bylaws, and thus needs to increase the resources available for its enforcement agencies to appropriately manage them. One way is to increase personnel dedicated to enforcement. Nantucket hires additional personnel to its police force every summer, which is positive, but there is more that can be done with other agencies. Necessary cultural regulatory agencies like the Historic District Commission are volunteer based, and do not have enough people to sufficiently handle the workload required of them without undue burden. Ray Pohl, chair of the Historic District Commission, mentioned that his workload on behalf of the commission is steadily growing in recent time due to growing demand and as a result of the pandemic (Pohl, Personal Interview, 30 October 2020). As Holdgate mentioned, Nantucket's real estate industry boomed this year which translates to more demand for commission approval, though its workforce remains the same. Some processes need to be streamlined so the job of these agencies is smoother, quicker, and more responsive. Doing so may make it clear for people to understand what rules and regulations they need to follow, as well as make it easier for enforcement agencies to give approval or enforce violations. We

recognize that the approach and mission of each agency is different and encourage the Town to work with these agencies to expand the resources available to them. The system in place for when violations occur must also be reevaluated to ensure penalties are issued fairly, in a timely manner, and are effective in the long term. Nantucket must also consider constant education as part of its tools to enforce its bylaws, rules, and regulations.

Education is an important piece of enforcement to ensure bylaws, rules, regulations, and even social customs and convention are not broken in the first place. Voluntary compliance is a necessary method to cope with difficulties present in legal enforcement. The shared identity and values of the community needs sharper focus to reinforce Nantucket's culture directly. Emphasis of why these rules are in place is important because they have context in keeping Nantucket the way people love it. To use the example of signage again, when an unacceptable sign is put up, the response should not be a tough tone of disapproval. Instead, the response should be to ask the person hanging up the sign to look around and appreciate the beauty and history of Nantucket. They must learn to consider what place their sign has in Nantucket's culture and community. As Ray Pohl put it, people will realize their mistake in the majority of the cases (Pohl, Personal Interview, 30 October 2020). In the minority of cases that do not, and fail to change their behavior, then penalties exist for that reason. A shared understanding of what makes Nantucket special commonly appeared in our interviews, and education must rely on that sense of community and the value each person places on Nantucket's culture. Nantucket needs to develop routine educational campaigns that promote the value of its bylaws, rules, and regulations year after year. The first part of this campaign should be the messaging needed and the second should be focused on distribution.

We encourage the Town to consider creating more educational materials for a cohesive campaign on desirable topics and areas where Nantucket's culture needs reinforcing, part of which we have begun in this project. Materials used should connect with a variety of audiences on the island, including year-round residents, seasonal residents, tourists, year-round businesses, seasonal businesses, and other stakeholders. As part of our project we have collected data on issues that some of these stakeholders find important, which we will make available to the Town. We have also created educational materials as well as added modifications to old ones. We have updated the Quicker Reference Guide for Businesses to have a more inclusive and welcoming tone. We recommend further modifying it graphically to be more appealing to business owners.

We have also created a potential poster concept the Town may want to consider placing in appropriate locations or send digitally. We have also created sample public service announcements to be broadcast on local radio, as well as determined possible sequencing throughout the year to target appropriate audiences. The educational campaign as a whole must be coordinated and distributed routinely to target audiences.

In the past, Nantucket has tried means to connect with various audiences on the island, and we encourage the Town to revisit such methods. In the past, Nantucket used brand ambassadors to help Visitor Services inform tourists of the island. The Town may want to consider expanding the scope of this program to spread the message of respect and love for the island. This could include sending the ambassadors to more places. Another option is to work with the ferry and transportation services to welcome newcomers to Nantucket and encourage them to return in the future. The Town may want to consider enabling ambassadors to collect and record information on possible violations, rules, and regulations that they notice. This would help the Town in the future to know what areas of Nantucket's culture are being threatened and alert the necessary enforcement agencies. For example, if these ambassadors report year after year more issues of unleashed dogs, then the enforcement agencies can be put on alert for these violations. Expanding the role of island ambassadors could not only help improve Nantucket's branding and communication, but also provide more resources and information to the various regulatory and enforcement agencies. Direct communication with target audiences is important, and some attention must also be dedicated to businesses.

We identified that there is not a direct means of communicating with business owners about relevant information like that contained in the Quick Reference Guide for Businesses and more. In the past, the police were used to meeting with businesses to discuss it, but the program was met with disfavor from locals. Sending a person to meet directly was effective, but the methodology needs improvement to be more welcoming and supportive. Nantucket could create a similar program by sending dedicated representatives to businesses, not affiliated with the police. Another method is to work with the Chamber of Commerce to develop means of communicating with businesses that are supportive and encouraging. It is wonderful to see the ways in which the Town and Chamber have worked collaboratively to improve the visitor experience and sharing of business information and resources, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Melissa Murphy, Member, Select Board, current interim President, Chamber of



Commerce, Personal Interview, 27 October 2020). There are obviously things that businesses cannot do, thus we encourage the town to be supportive and flexible in helping businesses achieve their goals while following bylaws and regulations appropriately. It is more effective to work with businesses to find something that works, than to tell them ways that do not. Additionally, new businesses need support to become established on the island since they are often not aware of relevant bylaws that apply on the island and perhaps not elsewhere. A “new business package or gift basket” could be one solution that provides the resources businesses need to get started or direction on finding out necessary information. We also identified a gap for businesses looking to start on Nantucket. Occasionally, businesses will open up or lease a shop on Nantucket, and then learn of all the restrictions in place that they feel will hamper their businesses. Making such a mistake can be costly to businesses and entrepreneurs simply because they were not aware of what it takes to make a living on Nantucket. The Town needs to address this gap by creating resources businesses can use ahead of time when deciding to start on Nantucket. Training could be provided to realtors or landlords that work with new businesses since they are the first point of contact for them. Additionally, the Town can create a webpage on their website for this information, and post informational guides like “Ten things to know before starting a business on Nantucket.” The Nantucket Island Center for Entrepreneurship would be a good resource for the Town to work with when creating these resources. Especially as COVID-19 has hurt many businesses on the island, the Town needs to increase its cooperation and communication in order to ensure businesses can thrive again when they reopen.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

We conclude that there are many customs and conventions that Nantucket should seek to preserve and reinforce, but there are aspects that should be reconsidered. We make thirteen recommendations designed to balance the desire to promote tourism and commercial activity with the desire to maintain Nantucket's unique cultural identity. We recommend the Town of Nantucket should:

**1. Encourage and emphasize the family-friendly nature of the island via messaging and advertising campaigns.** The Town of Nantucket is encouraged to employ a marketing campaign that emphasizes respect for the community and an appreciation of the island's culture, nature and history. With these efforts, Nantucket could attract a less disruptive audience that is healthier for the future of the community. Nantucket should seek to appeal more towards families and visitors who stay more than just a weekend.

**2. Develop a community integration program for new and prospective homeowners to facilitate transitioning the Nantucket community through education on Nantucket's bylaws, rules, regulations, customs, and conventions.** We encourage the Town to think creatively to develop a means of communicating to and educating potential new residents about respect for Nantucket's community. Educational materials and communication can be distributed through landlords, property owners, homeowners associations or real estate agents to help new buyers learn the various bylaws, regulations and policies of owning a home on Nantucket, appreciate living on the island and understand the customs and conventions that make it unique. Furthermore, a form of regular communication through Nantucket homeowners associations can be used to educate and remind residents about these materials.

**3. Continue expanding affordable housing programs while limiting the impact of off-island investors and businesses in short-term renting.** In order to facilitate the creation of more housing, the Town may want to reevaluate bylaws regarding the density of people and short-term rentals. The Town is encouraged to consider the bylaw regarding short term renting being proposed by ACKNow and its benefits to the community. Additionally, though bound by

their charter, the Land Bank is encouraged to seek discussions with local housing authorities and the Town government to consider involvement in affordable housing programs. We understand that housing is not a new problem and encourage the Town to look towards the resources it has already, like Housing Nantucket, the Nantucket Housing Authority, ACKNow, and others for further information and recommendations.

**4. Consider limiting the number of new events and alcohol permits, while deemphasizing the need for alcohol at culturally significant events and enforce alcohol regulations more strongly at them.** We recommend the Town and consider limiting the number of new events, and especially those with alcohol involved, and promote events that highlight Nantucket's culture. The Town should consider what impacts an event may have on local culture and the burden it may place on residents when considering issuing an event permit. Additionally, the Town must carefully consider the need for alcohol at an event when issuing alcohol licenses. Limiting the sale of alcohol may not stop tourists from bringing their own alcohol. As such, the Town must more strongly enforce alcohol restrictions, especially open containers in Downtown, in a way that does not place undue burden on Nantucket residents. Nantucket and other organizations that promote the island should consider the branding of the island after COVID, to avoid restarting the party culture and emphasize Nantucket as a respite from the stressful times we all faced during the pandemic. The Town and business community needs to realign some of Nantucket's reputation back to the charming hideaway where one can stay awhile to explore and make their own Nantucket experiences.

**5. Continue communication and cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure flexibility and opportunities exist for local businesses and artists.** As the tourism industry expands and the cost of living increases, the Town of Nantucket is encouraged to consider increasing the availability and diversity of resources, like the Rock Solid Fund, for local small businesses to prevent them from being edged out by larger businesses. Nantucket should look to resources it already has, like those through the Center for Entrepreneurship and the Chamber of Commerce, to bolster support for local businesses Nantucket should encourage local artists, craftspeople and inventors to

remain on-island to preserve aspects of its culture. The Town is encouraged to find opportunities to support local artists, through public art displays, art and culture-oriented events and more.

**6. Develop permitting process for art installations in designated public locations on a rotating basis. Create a review board to approve appropriate art and issue permits through in an equitable manner.** The Town should consider developing a pathway to allowing approved art installments created by Nantucket residents in public spaces in appropriate locations on a rotating basis. Nantucket should consider designating specific locations on the island as spots for approvable art, such as the entrance by a beach, in a park, the center of certain roundabout, or other areas confined to a single spot for an installment and not to a general zone. Second, the Town should open these spots for rotating periods of installments, such as monthly, quarterly, or as the Town sees fit. This will avoid significant disturbance by a “bad” piece of art as it will only be there temporarily. The Town should consider establishing a review board or group for permitting an art installment in these locations to ensure the fair allowance of art that is not profane, foul, or otherwise offensive to the community. Additionally, this group would be in charge of giving out permits in an equitable manner, such as through a lottery system for applicants. Applicants would then be responsible for the installation and removal of the art in a timely and appropriate manner. The board would retain the right to enforce the rotation schedule, and maintain final say over the art allowance. Art can also include live performances if there is space available for a performing arts group. While there is more to consider with the program, the Town should consider making it a reality to encourage the island’s artist community and improve the vibrancy of its landscape.

**7. Promote beach etiquette, such as cleaning up litter, avoiding dunes, and leashing dogs with summer education materials.** The beach is one of the places overtourism is observed most clearly on the island. Nantucket is encouraged to increase promotion of beach etiquette. This includes cleaning up after yourself, moderation of beach parties, observing dune and wildlife areas, and keeping dogs on leashes. Radio public service announcements, an updated Island Welcome Guide, informational posters and other materials should be used as needed.

**8. Pursue further research on methods to alleviate parking concerns Downtown.**

**Identify solutions that do not generate barriers for visiting Downtown.** The Town is encouraged to pursue additional research on peak season parking shortages. Some of these include increased promotion of walking and biking, the use of public transportation, and establishment of satellite parking lots. Paid parking should not be implemented to avoid creating financial barriers to visit Downtown. Increasing the capability and functionality of public transportation buses owned by the Nantucket Regional Transit Authority is also advised to encourage alternatives to personal vehicles in Downtown; which could be done by transitioning to smaller, electric buses, increasing the number of bus routes and stops, and implementing additional attractive promotions. Further research is recommended to select the best viable solution, either by another WPI Project team or third party consultant.

**9. Adjust bylaws to allow outdoor dining in public spaces during summer months on a more regular basis. Identify means for the utilization of public space in an equitable manner for businesses without attractive locations for outdoor dining. Develop appropriate regulations to control public drinking, litter, capacity, etc. while ensuring uniformity in outdoor dining design.**

We encourage the Town of Nantucket to reconsider its bylaw to allow businesses to use public spaces for outdoor dining on a regular basis. The Town must identify ways to close down streets without significantly exacerbating parking and congestion. Additionally, the Town should assess how to make utilization of open spaces equitable for dining establishments to accommodate businesses in locations unfavorable for outdoor dining. We encourage the Town to work with the community and business owners to develop outdoor dining in a way that is fair, accessible, and celebrates Nantucket's cultural heritage

**10. Clearly and definitively, gradually phase-out outdoor signage and merchandise displays for businesses when no longer deemed necessary by the Economic Recovery Task Force after the COVID pandemic has ended.**

We recommend the Town create a plan for gradually phasing out signage and merchandise displays once the pandemic has ended. Signs and displays are necessary so long as the pandemic carries on, but they should not stay forever. The Town must be clear and communicate to businesses when this phase out period begins and ends. The Town may not be able to implement phase-out so long as COVID persists, but until then it

should consider other means to enable businesses to function while adequately representing Nantucket's culture.

**11. Consider adopting a temporary program for outdoor retail markets in select locations at specific times to enable additional commerce for the retail industry. Collect public feedback to determine whether the program should continue until the COVID pandemic ends.** As COVID persists, the Town should experiment with utilization of public spaces on a limited basis by other businesses outside the food and dining industry to enable additional commerce. Resident opinions were split on this issue, but temporary outdoor markets may become favorable if the Town can creatively manage them to avoid detracting from the appeal of Downtown. This could take the form of permitting some non-restaurant businesses to move outdoors for a day onto a street already closed down for outdoor dining, and then solicit public opinion on its recurrence. We recognize that the needs of the business community are varied, and as such there is no one solution to facilitating commerce during the pandemic. The Town will need to continue being flexible with businesses, and ensure that there is clarity when creating new restrictions and returning to old ones.

**12. Continue gathering public opinion on what the culture the community wants to foster after the pandemic ends, relevant to reestablishing events and normal business operations, renewing Nantucket traditions, and strengthening community ties.** With many plans put on halt this year, COVID presents a general opportunity to reset and reevaluate the direction the community wants to go. We would encourage the Town to use this chance to engage with the community and ask itself what kind of culture it wants to promote after the COVID-19 pandemic ends. This includes opinion on events, signage, outdoor business activities and more. In addition to Town Hall meetings and discussions, opinions can be gathered through surveys, anonymous submission boxes, meetings with individuals, and others to gauge how community members envision the Town after the pandemic has ended.

**13. Provide more resources to enforcement agencies and strengthen deterrence capabilities.** Enforcement agencies, both voluntary and paid, should evaluate their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and identify the resources necessary to bolster

capabilities and optimize operations. Agencies should communicate their findings to Town Administration, who should work with the agencies to provide the resources requested when possible. We encourage enforcement agencies to conduct this feedback process yearly or otherwise repeatedly as necessary to ensure shortcomings are identified and addressed quickly while successes are identified and repeated.

Specifically, one area that needs to be addressed is penalties and fines. Fines distributed to businesses can take a long-time to reach their recipients and can seem insignificant to their generated seasonal revenue. We recommend the turnaround time for fines be reduced in order to reach businesses before they leave for the season. In addition, we recommend the Town reassess the values of various fines and consider increasing their penalties. If the Town can enforce penalties at an appropriate severity, it can deter Nantucketers from violating bylaws. Penalties and fines are not, and should not be, the first line of defense for Nantucket's culture; but, they can assist in its reinforcement. Education, public outreach and reminders should be emphasized before any fines or penalties are imposed.

**14. Routinely distribute educational materials to various groups to improve bylaw awareness and adherence.** Regular distribution of educational materials to different groups including residents, businesses, and visitors, can help people on Nantucket avoid violating bylaws unknowingly and foster appreciation for the island's unique culture. These materials can be distributed as follows:

- **All Groups**
  - Radio Public Service Announcements can be used to disseminate information to residents, businesses and tourists alike. PSAs can be tailored to different groups depending on the season; see Appendix G.
  - The Inquirer & Mirror Printed Materials display information on bylaws and customs in a visual medium through local newspapers and other print sources; see Appendix K.
- **New and Prospective Residents** - delivery of educational material and communication through landlords, property owners, real estate agents or homeowners associations. Materials can include an updated "Welcome to Nantucket - An Island Guide" (see

Appendix I), informational packets on home and building etiquette on Nantucket and more.

- **Businesses** - routine delivery of the updated “Quick Reference Guide for Businesses” and other materials. We have created a “COVID-19 Business Guide” and a “Back-to-Normal Business Guide”, which can be found in Appendix H and I, respectively. Emails from the Town government can remind businesses periodically about various customs and bylaws, and include visuals like the sample informational poster found in Appendix K.
- **Visitors** - the “Welcome to Nantucket - An Island Guide” (Appendix I) can be available to pick up for free on the ferry, on informational kiosks around the island, or published online on Town social media.

**15. We recommend the Town use the following timeline to distribute our educational materials in an effort to achieve our project goals.** The timeline assumes Nantucket will transition “back-to-normal” starting the summer of 2021; however, as the situation created by COVID-19 is ever-changing, this timeline of course may be modified to best achieve the goals of the Town.

### Spring 2021

- Review revisions of the “Quick Reference Business Guide” and make any changes as needed
- Delivery of “COVID-19 Business Guide” through Chamber of Commerce
- Outsource revision of Island Welcome Guide based on our recommendations
- Outsource creation of additional Informational Posters to be delivered Summer 2021
- Airing of first radio Public Service Announcement
- Propose Town Hall discussion on the creation of New-Resident and New-Business education programs

### Summer 2021

- Airing of summer radio campaign
- Dissemination of revised Island Welcome Guide
- Publishing of Informational poster(s) in local newspapers, on Town social media, online, etc.
- Redistribution of our Business Survey to target businesses during the summer season and solicit more responses



- Delivery of “Back-to-Normal” Business Guide through Chamber of Commerce, assuming COVID situation improves sufficiently.

### Fall / Winter 2021

- Airing of fall/winter Public Service Announcements as needed.

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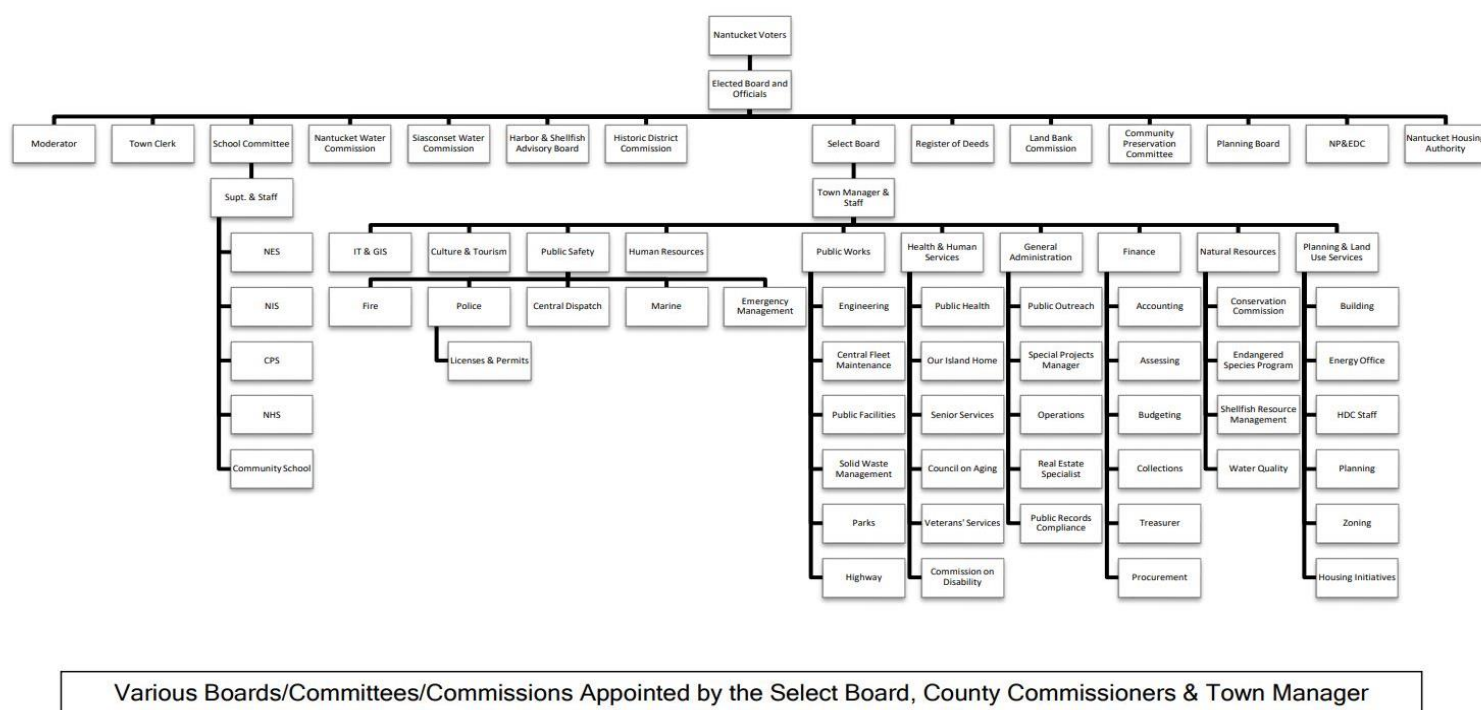
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## Appendix A - Sponsor Description

Nantucket is a small island 30 miles off the coast of Massachusetts and is home to around 11,000 permanent residents (*General FAQs, n.d*). In the summer months, the island houses upwards of 50,000 people including tourists and temporary visitors. Nantucket is a popular summer resort island, famous for both its luxurious access to the sea, but also for its rich whaling history. Elizabeth Oldham (2000) sums up the history that makes Nantucket so unique. The island was first home to members of the Wampanoag Tribe, but was later claimed by Great Britain in 1641. By 1659, the island was sold to several families, who began establishing Nantucket as a town. At first, the island's main industry was farming, but gradually it became reliant on whaling after first capitalizing on the oil of beached whales. By 1715, Nantucket was the whaling capital of the world with a growing fleet of ships that ventured further and further into the word and inspired famous tales like *Moby Dick*. The island prospered so long as there were whales to hunt, but by the 1830s, the decline of whale populations worldwide and the wealth of oil in Pennsylvania made it difficult for whale oil to compete. The economy of the island was depressed for a time, until islanders found a new creature to farm, tourists. In 1870, the island reinvented itself as a resort, to attract wealthy mainlanders who adored the island setting and local cuisine.

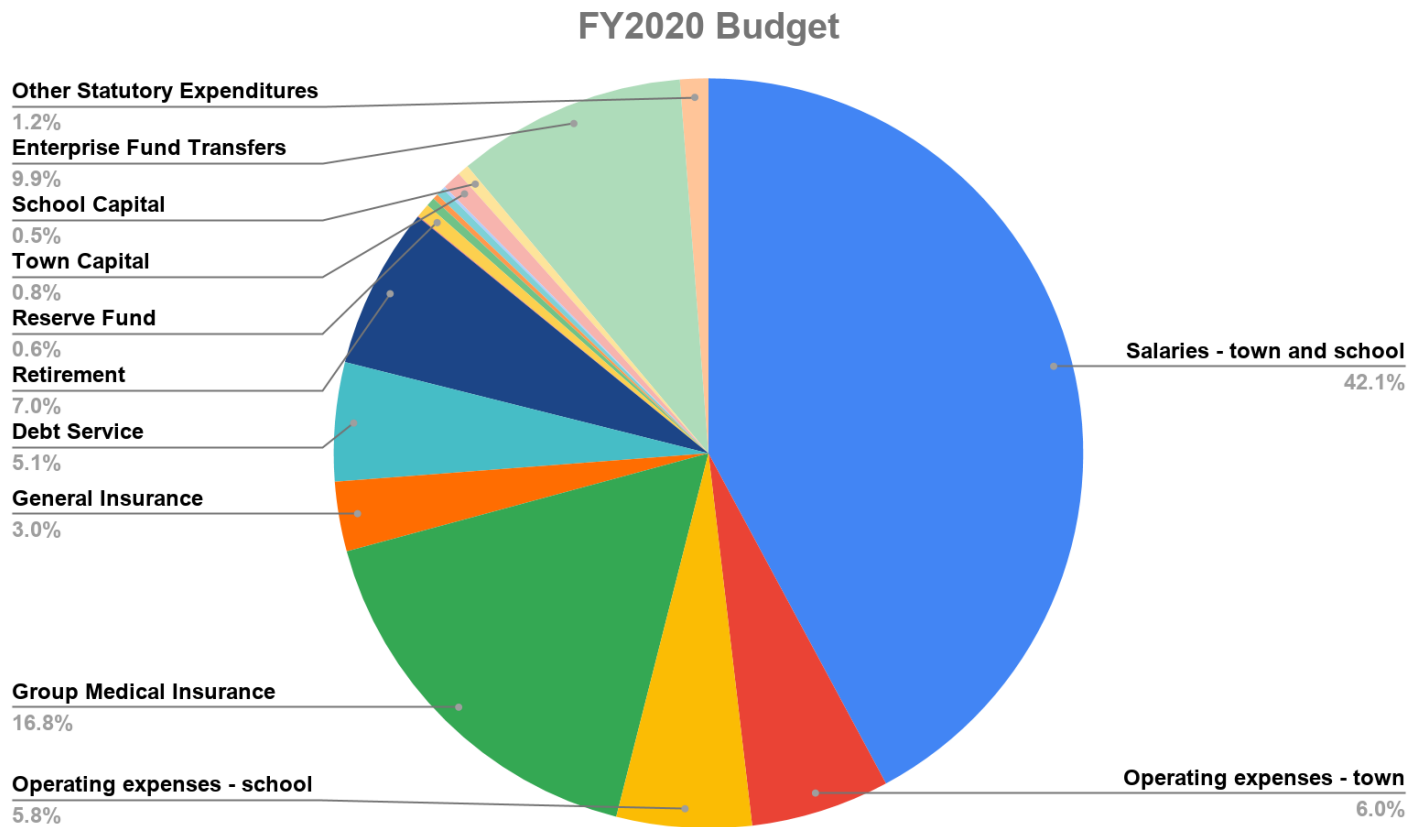
The county of Nantucket was founded in 1695, and its government has grown to encompass many different departments, committees and boards (*Nantucket County, Massachusetts Genealogy*). Nantucket is unique in the US because it is a county and a municipality. The governance structures reflect these attributes. According to the Nantucket Boards, Commissions, and Committees Handbook, Nantucket is “a municipality organized and operated in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws. The Town Charter dictates the structure of Nantucket's municipal government and identifies the responsibilities of the various entities that comprise [it].” (*Town of Nantucket Boards, Commissions, Committees Handbook*) The Select Board acts as Nantucket's executive branch, establishing policies and providing overall direction to Town operations, and the Town Manager works under the board and is responsible for the operations to achieve the board's goals. The municipal government delivers

services to constituents through numerous departments and offices, including the departments of finance, health, public works, police, fire, and wastewater and the energy office and the Town Clerk's office (Figure 11). Additionally, Nantucket has many committees that allow residents to participate in municipal government. These committees are created mainly to give the Select Board input on various policy matters and give feedback on Nantucket operations, but can also work in policy settings. These committees address diverse issues from finances to hazard mitigation.



*Figure 11. Town of Nantucket Organization Chart FY2019 (Town of Nantucket Annual Report, 2019)*

The Town of Nantucket has a FY2020 budget of \$83,953,267. The majority of Nantucket's budget (Figure 12) is allocated to pay the salaries of public school and other Town employees as well as Town and school operating costs. Medical insurance and enterprise fund transfers are also significant outlays. Enterprise funds are dedicated to supporting public enterprises like Our Island Home and Siasconset Water.

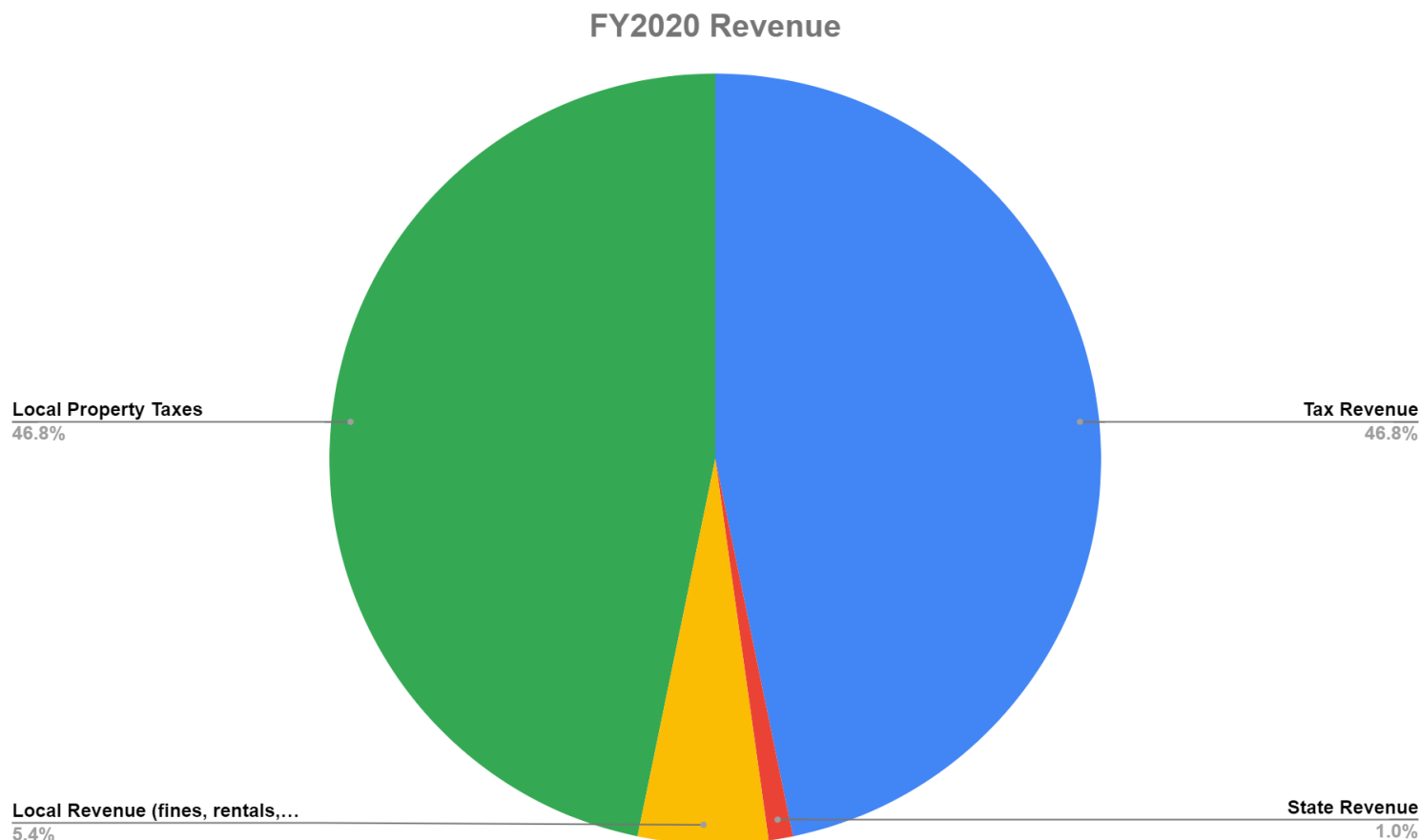


*Figure 12. FY2020 Budget.*

*(Budget Information, n.d.)*

The Town of Nantucket anticipates revenues of \$83,953,267 in FY2020, primarily from sales, lodging, property taxes (Figure 13). Fines, rentals, permits, licenses, and motor vehicle excise taxes contribute additional income.





*Figure 13. FY2020 Revenue.*  
*(Budget Information, n.d.)*

Nantucket's cultural history is one of the major attractions to the island. Its remarkable, well-preserved whaling era housing and its old Historical District provide a charm not found anywhere else in the country. This, in part, comes thanks to the efforts of the Nantucket Preservation Trust, Nantucket Historical Association (NHA), the Nantucket Historic District Commission, the Conservation Foundation, the Nantucket Land Bank, the Department of Culture and Tourism, and the townsfolk themselves. Working under the Select Board and Town Manager, the Office of Culture and Tourism has three main objectives: to provide information to tourists through its Visitor Services and remote kiosks, support activities in the Nantucket Cultural District and cultural sites across the island, and create economic initiatives to support local businesses (Town of Nantucket Annual Report, 2019). The Department of Culture and

Tourism is crucial in promoting and maintaining the tourism market. Not only does the department provide valuable information to would-be visitors, but it supports one of the island's major attractions, the Cultural District. The Cultural District comprises several blocks of Downtown and is home to many of Nantucket's cultural institutions such as the Dreamland Theater, the Whaling Museum, and the White Heron Theatre, as well as many of the restaurants and retailers that cater to tourists (*Welcome to the Nantucket Cultural District, n.d.*). This district forms the core of Nantucket's cultural identity, and will be a main focus of our project. With the cultural district and its many attractions, tourism is a mainstay of the Nantucket economy.

The Nantucket Department of Culture and Tourism provides several resources to assist visitors and local residents. They promote many events to visitors and residents such as the Nantucket Arts Festival, Independence Day fireworks, the Cranberry Festival and more through their website and other channels. The Culture and Tourism Department also offers referral and information services for lodging, transportation, tours, and activities, and updates a list of open restaurants to aid residents and visitors. Most have offered specific guidance on shopping, rentals, bike paths, beach use, and parking during the COVID-19 pandemic. In an effort to help preserve Nantucket customs and culture, the Town created a "Quick Reference Guide for Businesses" which outlines some rules about serving alcohol, smoking, noise levels, lighting, and occupancy. The Culture and Tourism Office is led by its Director Janet Schulte and Visitor Services coordinator David Sharpe. Their office works alongside the Nantucket Island Chamber of Commerce which performs similar functions but is more geared to help Nantucket businesses directly.

## Appendix B - Interview Preamble

We are students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. We are conducting research on the change in Nantucket's local culture over time. We are collaborating with the Nantucket Department of Culture and Tourism and wish to interview you about your perspective on the current state of Nantucket's cultural identity. Participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. Do you agree to be interviewed? If so, may we also record the interview for data retention purposes? Additionally, please let us know if we may quote you or if you wish to remain anonymous. We will give you the opportunity to review any material we use from this interview before publication.

## Appendix C - Initial Town Official Questions

Below are a series of questions we would like to ask in our interviews with Town officials. We will prioritize and adapt the questions based on the interviewee's position and expertise.

- In terms of cultural identity, what are some of the things that make Nantucket unique? In your words, what makes Nantucket, Nantucket?
- What are some bylaws and conventions that people seem to disregard the most?
- Do you think this is a greater issue with businesses or residents? What demographic do you think we should focus on for this study?
- How has the image of Nantucket changed?
- Who do you find are bringing the most complaints?
- What has the town done in the past to address issues regarding culture? We have spoken to our sponsors about the Guides to Nantucket and the quick business reference guides and would like to know if you have anything else to add to further our background knowledge.
- Are you familiar with other towns that have faced similar issues?
- What approaches have worked? What has not worked?
- What do you think we could produce that would be most useful for the town?
  - Can you tell us more about them and anything else that may be relevant?
- What are some things you have done to manage COVID in the town? How has it impacted local culture?
- Are people eager to get back to old customs and bylaws or are people excited to be doing things differently? For example, increased outdoor dining on public streets and sidewalks downtown, street and sidewalk art, more signs and advertisements on display, etc.
- Do you have concerns about returning the town back to normal after COVID? What do you think might be the most significant challenges?
- How might we ascertain public opinion about recent changes in culture on the island?

## Appendix D - Initial Business and Other Stakeholder Interview Questions

Below are a series of questions we would like to ask in our interviews with business owners and other stakeholders. We will prioritize questions based on the relevance to the interviewee or the interviewee's business.

- What makes doing business on Nantucket unique?
- Do the town of Nantucket's bylaws have a significant impact on how you run your business?
- How has the Coronavirus pandemic affected your business on Nantucket?
  - Have there been changes to how business is run on Nantucket since the pandemic that you enjoy? Ex. increased outdoor seating, easing sign restrictions, etc.
- Are there any bylaws you think should be changed?

## Appendix E - Residents Survey

We are students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. We are conducting research on the local customs and social conventions that make Nantucket unique, many of which are often enshrined in town bylaws. We are collaborating with the Nantucket Department of Culture and Tourism and would like to know more about your perspectives as an island resident on recent changes in customs and behaviors, especially in light of COVID-19. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and your responses will remain anonymous. This survey will take approximately 5 minutes and you may skip any questions you prefer not to answer. Thank you for your participation.

### Nantucket's Customs and Bylaws

- Nantucket has its own distinctive customs and social convention. Some of these are enshrined in Town bylaws. Before the COVID pandemic began, how did you feel about each of the following?

#### Rows

- Beach parties
- Overcrowding on beaches
- Litter on beaches (trash, broken glass, etc)
- Too few public restrooms
- Insufficient beach access
- Ignoring endangered bird signs on beaches
- Dog owners who disobey leash laws
- People trampling dunes
- Illegal driving on public beaches
- Proliferation of food trucks
- Excessive early-morning noise downtown
- Excessive evening noise downtown
- Excessive light downtown
- Inadequate lighting downtown
- Public smoking in downtown
- Forbidden signs/advertisements
- Approved signs or advertisements in the public way
- Not enough directional/traffic signs downtown

- Public street/sidewalk blocked by outdoor dining
- Public street/sidewalk blocked by stores' merchandise displays
- Outdoor greeters / "hawkers"
- Curbside pickup/takeout
- Benches of inconsistent design
- Too many benches downtown
- Too few benches downtown
- Too many bike racks downtown
- Too few bike racks downtown
- Bikes secured to trees, sign posts, benches
- Postings on poles (yard sales, local events, etc)
- Motorized electric devices on bike paths and sidewalks
- Too few trash receptacles on bike paths
- Too many directional/traffic signs or markings on bike paths
- Too few directional/traffic signs or markings on bike paths
- Yard signs in public way

#### Columns

- Not a problem
- Minor problem
- Significant Problem
- Please list any other customs and conventions that you think shape Nantucket but residents and visitors fail to follow.
  - Open ended
- The town has relaxed its enforcement of some bylaws during COVID to help meet the needs of businesses and their customers, including visitors, seasonal residents, and year-round residents.

Please indicate how strongly you agree/disagree with the following statements.

"After COVID, the town should allow businesses to..."

#### Rows

- Set up merchandise displays on sidewalks
- Display sandwich boards on sidewalks outside businesses
- Erect umbrellas with logos/advertisements
- Install marquee lighting

#### Columns

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Should the Town regularly close down streets in the summer season to allow space for restaurants to set up outdoor dining?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Do not know
- Should the Town allow public spaces (eg. parks, beaches, sidewalks) to be used for art works, such as sculptures?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Do not know
- Please Explain your answer above.
  - Open ended
- Once the COVID-19 pandemic ends, how do you feel about the number of summer events on Nantucket?
  - I favor more events
  - I favor fewer events
  - I favor keeping the number of events the same as now
- Do you favor creating additional temporary outdoor retail markets on Nantucket? (e.g. more farmers/artisan markets, outdoor clothing sales, jewelry displays, etc.)
  - Yes
  - No
  - Do not know

## Demographics

- In what year were you born?
  - Open ended
- How long have you lived on Nantucket?
  - < 5 years
  - 5-10 years
  - 11-25 years



- > 25 years
- Where on Nantucket do you currently live in (e.g. "Town", "Madaket", "Sconset", "Mid-island")?
  - Open ended
- Were you born on Nantucket?
  - Yes
  - No
- Which of the following best describes you?
  - Year-round resident
  - Seasonal resident
  - Non-resident taxpayer
  - Frequent visitor
  - Other (Fill-in)

## Appendix F - Business Survey

We are students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. We are conducting research on the local customs and conventions that make Nantucket unique, many of which are often enshrined in town bylaws. We are collaborating with the Nantucket Department of Culture and Tourism, and would like to know more about your perspectives as a businessperson on recent changes in customs and behaviors, especially in light of COVID-19. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and your responses will remain anonymous. This survey will take approximately 5 minutes and you may skip any questions you prefer not to answer. Thank you for your participation.

### Business on the Island

- What area of the island is your business located?
  - Open ended
- What kind of business do you own on Nantucket?
  - Retail
  - Accomodations
  - Arts / Culture
  - Food and Dining
  - Services (eg. homecare) / Transportation
  - Weddings / Functions
  - Activities
  - Catering
  - Nonprofit
  - Other (fill-in)
- What three aspects of Nantucket's culture and character encouraged you to open a business on Nantucket rather than elsewhere?
  - Open ended
- How long have you been running your current business on Nantucket?
  - < 5 years
  - 5 - 10 years
  - > 10 years

## Long-Term Change (if answered > 10 years to previous)

- What changes have you noticed in terms of character, culture, customs, clientele? For example, more tourists and fewer Nantucket families visiting downtown, or an increasing number of signs over the years.
  - Open ended

## Timing and Location

- When does your business normally operate on Nantucket? (Select all that apply)
  - Off season (January -March)
  - Spring shoulder season (April-June)
  - Summer season (mid-June to mid-September)
  - Fall shoulder season (October -December)
  - Other (fill-in)
- When do you typically reside on Nantucket during a regular business year? (Select all that apply)
  - Off season (January -March)
  - Spring shoulder season (April-June)
  - Summer season (mid-June to mid-September)
  - Fall shoulder season (October -December)
  - Other (fill-in)
- Do you operate another business off-island, or have in the past?
  - Yes (go to **Off-Island Business**)
  - No (go to **Changes in Businesses Outdoors Pt.1**)

## Off-Island Business

- How is operating on Nantucket different than elsewhere in terms of customs, conventions, and regulations that affect business operations?
  - Open ended
- What are things you can do with your business elsewhere you wish you could do on Nantucket?
  - Open ended

## Changes in Businesses Outdoors Pt.1

- We understand that operating a business during COVID has presented enormous challenges. Please indicate which of the following strategies you have implemented OUTSIDE your premises to encourage customers to patronize your business in Nantucket during COVID. Please indicate how likely you are to continue them in the future. (Select all that apply)

### Rows

- New signage (in addition to COVID-related signage)
- New banners
- Sandwich boards
- Merchandise displays
- “Take One” Information hangers
- Temporary benches or chairs
- Ashtrays
- Patron seating
- Tables/dining
- Greeters
- Music
- Lighting
- Artwork
- COVID displays (including sanitizer, towels, masks, info brochures)
- Posting QR codes on your windows/storefront (for menus, coupons, promos etc)
- Other (Fill-in)

### Columns

- Is currently implemented in 2020
- Will implement in 2021 if COVID persists
- May implement after COVID pandemic ends
- Do not wish to continue
- Are there other actions that you have taken or plan to take that are not listed above?
  - Open ended

## Outdoor Dining

- The town allowed several restaurants to expand outdoor dining areas onto the streets and sidewalks this year in response to COVID. Do you favor the presence of outdoor dining on public property this year?
  - Strongly favor
  - Somewhat favor
  - No opinion
  - Somewhat oppose
  - Strongly oppose
- Did you think outdoor dining was popular with visitors and residents?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Do not know
- What impact did outdoor dining in public spaces have on Downtown's character or ambiance?
  - Positive
  - Negative
  - No impact
  - Do not know
- Please explain your answer to the question above
  - Open ended
- Should the town allow for outdoor dining on public streets and sidewalks after the COVID pandemic has ended?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Do not know
- Should the town expand the number and size of outdoor dining areas on public streets or sidewalks in the future?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Do not know
- Should the town change the bylaws to make it easier for businesses to obtain outdoor dining permits?
  - Yes

- No
- Do not know
- For businesses besides those in food and dining, would you favor having the use of public space to conduct some of your business outside?
  - Favor
  - Oppose
  - Do not know

## Nantucket's Character-Forming Bylaws, Regulations, and Policies

- Have you read or seen the Quick Reference Guide for Businesses?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Do not know
- Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.  
“Once the COVID 19 pandemic ends, the town should...”

### Rows

- Permit more food trucks and street vendors on the island
- Support more events like Figawi, Wine Festival, Christmas Stroll, etc. (after the COVID-19 pandemic)
- Enforce HDC sign guidelines more strictly
- Issue more temporary alcohol pouring licenses
- Allow display of merchandise outside businesses on public property if not blocking the public.
- Relax noise restrictions for businesses
- Relax light restrictions for businesses
- Ease restrictions on outdoor building and renovation for businesses
- Be more proactive on informing businesses of its bylaws, regulations and policies
- Relax restrictions on parking downtown
- Establish a business improvement district in the downtown area

### Columns

- (1) strongly disagree
- (2) disagree
- (3) no opinion / neutral

- (4) agree
  - (5) strongly agree:
- Which bylaws, regulations or policies should be maintained or strengthened to preserve Nantucket's unique culture and character? (If any)
  - Open ended
- Which bylaws, regulations or policies should be relaxed to help businesses thrive? (If any)
  - Open ended

## Appendix G - Radio Public Service Announcements

*The following public service announcements serve as a sample campaign the Town of Nantucket can use to deliver messaging to different groups: Residents, Businesses, and Visitors. This campaign can begin in spring 2021 and conclude the following winter, or as the Town may see fit. The PSAs are sorted by season, topic and sample messaging content.*

### Spring Campaign - Resident and Business Focus

#### Signs and Advertisements

Sandwich boards, banners, “post-COVID” sign policy (allowed to advertise reopening, grace period to remove thereafter), merchandise displays, umbrellas with logos.

*Sample:*

- *As the world slowly goes back to normal after the effects of COVID-19, Nantucket seeks to return to its traditional island life. As such, a sign bylaw grace period will begin on [date] and last for two weeks. After that, things like sandwich boards, banners, umbrellas with logos and outdoor merchandise displays will be expected to be taken down to bring back the quaint Downtown atmosphere we all know and love.*

### Summer Campaign - Tourist and Visitor Focus

#### Beach Etiquette, Dogs on leashes

Litter on beaches, beach parties, illegal driving on beaches, trampling dunes, leash laws.

*Sample:*

- *Nantucket has gone through many changes this year. Some things that haven't changed are the customs and conventions we all hold dear to preserve what makes our home special. Please remember to throw all trash and recycling into the appropriate receptacles and clean up after yourself before leaving. When driving on permitted beaches, remember to let air out of your tires, watch out for endangered piping plover nesting sites and stay off the dunes! Also, please remember to keep your furry friend on a leash when out and about!*



### Bike and Bike Path Etiquette

No biking on sidewalks, follow bike paths and street signs, do not bike the wrong way on one way streets, no motorized electric devices on sidewalks.

*Sample:*

- *Nantucket is a very bike-friendly island - after all, it's home to over 50 miles of bike trails. But, please remember to keep bikes, skateboards, electric scooters off of the sidewalk, and follow all traffic signs! Never bike the wrong way on one-way streets. If you're confused if you are biking in an allowed area, it's always safer to walk your bike until it's clear! Be sure to stop at one of the many scenic overlooks on our bike paths and enjoy the beautiful view!*

### Parking and Driving Reminders

No parking on private property, following street signs, speeding, horn honking

*Sample:*

- *Driving on Nantucket may not be as stressful as driving in New York **\*horn honks sound clip\*** but it is certainly something to be careful with. Please remember to follow all traffic and directional signs and stay below the marked speed limit to protect pedestrians. Please only honk your horn when truly necessary. If you do take a car into town, please only park in designated parking spaces, and stay off private property. If you are confused about the validity of a spot, it's always safer to move! Alternatively, try parking away from downtown and enjoy a nice walk through the Nantucket scenery on your way to town!*

### Memorial Day Weekend and Fourth of July

Responsible gathering, consumption of alcohol and social etiquette

*Sample:*

- *[Memorial Day, Fourth of July] is a great time to relax and pay tribute to the brave men and women who fought for this country. Though we all need some time to put our feet up, please remember to gather and celebrate responsibly, and observe mask and social distancing guidelines. Please be courteous to your neighbors and be sensitive to light and noise restrictions.*

## Fall Campaign - Resident and Shoulder Season Focus

### Fall Events

Cranberry Festival, Veterans Day weekend, Halloween

#### Sample:

- *As the summer season winds down, we're looking forward to some of Nantucket's most beloved and traditional events, like the Cranberry Festival. During these events, please remember to gather and celebrate responsibly, and observe mask and social distancing guidelines. Please be courteous to your neighbors and be sensitive to light and noise restrictions. We all have to support our culture and traditions safely and responsibly.*

## Winter Campaign - Resident and Winter Event Focus

### Winter Events

Stroll, New Years, open container law, drinking and gathering responsibly

#### Sample:

- *One of the most exciting times of year on Nantucket is approaching, with Nantucket Noel and New Year's celebrations on their way. It is important to emphasize the value of spending this time with family and appreciating traditions like these that make the island special. Please remember to gather and celebrate responsibly this winter, and take time to slow down and appreciate the family-friendly culture of Nantucket.*

## Appendix H - COVID-19 Business Guide

*This revision of the quick reference guide for businesses contains an additional section on COVID-19 policies and outdoor dining, and excludes the section on live music and DJs in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

### **Town of Nantucket**

**16 Broad Street  
Nantucket, Massachusetts 02554**

# ***COVID-19 QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR BUSINESSES***

**Updated November 2020**

### **GREETINGS!**

As you are aware, Nantucket has many bylaws and regulations that govern the way businesses add to the unique character of the island. All Town codes and regulations can be found on the Town's website at [www.nantucket-ma.gov/197/licensing](http://www.nantucket-ma.gov/197/licensing) or by a call to one of the numbers provided. Whether you are a long-time, year-round business owner or a new seasonal manager, please familiarize yourself with the policies that make Nantucket such a wonderful place to live and visit.

Below are some common reminders to help make EVERY season the best ever!

### **COVID-19 POLICIES**

If your establishment is open to in-person business, it is helpful for patrons to display signs indicating you are open. Signs describing mask and distancing policies don't require HDC permission like other signs, however advertisements, banners and other signs do. Contact the HDC sign advisory committee for changes to your official business sign or to request approval for a new sign at 508-325-7587.

### **OUTDOOR DINING**

Many restaurants have moved some of their seating outside this year to accommodate COVID-19 policies. If you would like to request use of public space for outdoor dining, please contact Town Administration at 508-228-7255.

### **ALCOHOL**

If your business wants to pour alcohol for public consumption, you will need a liquor license. Whether you require a year-round license, seasonal, or just for One-Day, contact the Licensing Agent at 508-325-4137 or [licensing@police.nantucket-ma.gov](mailto:licensing@police.nantucket-ma.gov).

### **SIGNS AND MERCHANDISE DISPLAYS**

Nantucket has a unique ambiance that attracts thousands of visitors each year. In order to preserve downtown's quaint atmosphere, we ask you that you do not put out sandwich boards, merchandise displays or signs on the exterior of your building. However, feel free to decorate your windows/exterior with flowers, potted plants or window boxes! If you have questions about signs or allowed advertisements, or wish to make a change to your official business sign, please contact the HDC Administrator at 508-325-7587. For information about merchandise displays, contact Town Administration at 508-228-7255.

### **BALLOONS**

If you want to display balloons at your business, you may do so if they are not helium-filled and are not attached to the outside of your business structure. Helium balloons are not allowed anywhere on the island, but regular air-filled balloons are ok.

### **ZONING**

Nantucket has several business zones, with different uses allowed in each. Many businesses have special permits in place that allow them to operate. Check with the Planning and Land Use Services Department (PLUS) prior to making any changes to your business, such as adding seating, making changes to the use of the property, altering exterior features like patios or parking lots, or adding additional services. PLUS can be reached at 508-325-7587.

### **SIDEWALK / STREET BLOCKING**

On Nantucket, we are often limited by our sidewalk space and narrow streets. To keep our streets and sidewalks clear, we ask that you do not put out signs or other obstructions on the sidewalk, street, or otherwise in the public way. If you require the use of public streets or sidewalks for a temporary purpose (such as needing ladders to paint building, clean windows, make necessary repairs) you can do so by requesting a One-Time Street or Sidewalk Blocking Permit from Town Administration at 508-228-7255.

## **LIGHTING**

Seeing the stars and taking in Nantucket's undisturbed natural beauty is one of the best things to do on the island. To preserve Nantucket's scenic skyline, we ask that you keep lights or lighted signs to those that do not flash, blink, change intensity or change color except for temporary holiday displays, public safety or traffic control. For more information on the Town's lighting bylaws, see Town Code *Chapter 102: Outdoor Lighting* or contact the Lighting Enforcement Officer at 508-325-7587.

## **FOOD PERMIT**

The Public Health Office issues food service permits. If your establishment does not have a common victualler license but wishes to serve food for a one-time event, please contact the Public Health Office at 508-228-7200 x-7014. If your business wants to put out a lemonade stand, bake sale table or any other outdoor sales stand, please seek approval from the Public Health Office. If you want to set up a stand on public property, we ask that you get permission from Town Administration at 508-228-7255.

## **STAGES AND OTHER STRUCTURES**

If you are doing any construction, including a temporary stage, additional seating, tent or other structure, please contact the Building Office at 508-325-7587 to request a Building Permit.

**CIGARETTES/LITTER/SWEEPING** Nantucket is a beautiful place, and we all have to do our part to keep its streets and sidewalks clean. All businesses are encouraged to keep the sidewalks outside their establishments free of cigarette butts, wrappers and other garbage. If you want to put up a cigarette disposal container or urn, you can do so if it is on private property.

## **STREET FURNITURE**

If you wish to put a bench, bike rack, reservation stand or other street furniture outside your business, you may do so if it is placed on private property. To put street furniture on sidewalks or other public property, please contact Town Administration at 508-228-7255 to get special permission.

## **OCCUPANCY**

Many buildings have reduced occupancy limits due to COVID-19. If you have questions about the allowed occupancy in your establishment, please contact the Public Health Office at 508-228-7200 x-7014.

\*\*\*\*

## **Helpful Contact Numbers**

Entertainment Licenses:  
*Licensing Agent*      508-325-4137

One-Day Pouring Licenses:  
*Licensing Agent*      508-325-4137

Event Permit:

*Event Coordinator 508-325-4166*

Food Permit (non-restaurant, in-store)

*Public Health 508-228-7200 x-7014*

One-Time Noise Bylaw Waiver:

*Town Administration 508-228-7255*

Temporary Structure/Tent Permit:

*Building Inspector 508-325-7587*

Street/Sidewalk Blocking:

*Town Administration 508-228-7255*

License and Permit Enforcement:

*Enforcement Officer 508-325-4137*

HDC/Sign Advisory Committee:

*HDC Administrator 508-325-7587*

Lighting Enforcement:

*Lighting Officer 508-325-7587*

All Other Queries or for Guidance:

*Town Administration 508-228-7255*

***Best Wishes for a Terrific Season!***

## Appendix I - “Back-to-Normal” Business Guide

*This revision of the quick reference guide for businesses includes all topics from the original version of the guide, but language has been changed on every topic to seem a little less heavy-handed and more encouraging.*

**Updated November 2020**

### **GREETINGS!**

As you are aware, Nantucket has many bylaws and regulations that govern the way businesses add to the unique character of the island. All Town codes and regulations can be found on the Town’s website at [www.nantucket-ma.gov/197/licensing](http://www.nantucket-ma.gov/197/licensing) or by a call to one of the numbers provided. Whether you are a long-time, year-round business owner or a new seasonal manager, please familiarize yourself with the policies that make Nantucket such a wonderful place to live and visit.

Below are some common reminders to help make EVERY season the best ever!

### **ALCOHOL**

If your business wants to pour alcohol for public consumption, you will need a liquor license. Whether you require a year-round license, seasonal, or just for One-Day, contact the Licensing Agent at 508-325-4137 or [licensing@police.nantucket-ma.gov](mailto:licensing@police.nantucket-ma.gov).

### **ENTERTAINMENT**

All entertainment in areas where the public has access or is invited - from DJ’s to amplified live bands - requires licenses. The Town Code *Chapter 105 Article IV: Public Entertainment* allows for One-Day Temporary Entertainment Licenses to be issued by the Town. For more information, please contact the Licensing Agent at 508-325-4137 or [licensing@police.nantucket-ma.gov](mailto:licensing@police.nantucket-ma.gov).

### **SIGNS AND MERCHANDISE DISPLAYS**

Nantucket has a unique ambiance that attracts thousands of visitors each year. In order to preserve downtown’s quaint atmosphere, we ask you that you do not put out sandwich boards, merchandise displays or signs on the exterior of your building. However, feel free to decorate your windows/exterior with flowers, potted plants or window boxes! If you have questions about signs or allowed advertisements, or wish to make a change to your official business sign, please contact the HDC Administrator at 508-325-7587. For information about merchandise displays, contact Town Administration at 508-228-7255.

### **BALLOONS**

If you want to display balloons at your business, you may do so if they are not helium-filled and are not attached to the outside of your business structure. Helium balloons are not allowed anywhere on the island, but regular air-filled balloons are ok.

### **ZONING**

Nantucket has several business zones, with different uses allowed in each. Many businesses have special permits in place that allow them to operate. Check with the Planning and Land Use Services Department (PLUS) prior to making any changes to your business, such as adding seating, making changes to the use of the property, altering exterior features like patios or parking lots, or adding additional services. PLUS can be reached at 508-325-7587.

### **SIDEWALK / STREET BLOCKING**

On Nantucket, we are often limited by our sidewalk space and narrow streets. To keep our streets and sidewalks clear, we ask that you do not put out signs or other obstructions on the sidewalk, street, or otherwise in the public way. If you require the use of public streets or sidewalks for a temporary purpose (such as needing ladders to paint building, clean windows, make necessary repairs) you can do so by requesting a One-Time Street or Sidewalk Blocking Permit from Town Administration at 508-228-7255.

### **LIGHTING**

Seeing the stars and taking in Nantucket's undisturbed natural beauty is one of the best things to do on the island. To preserve Nantucket's scenic skyline, we ask that you keep lights or lighted signs to those that do not flash, blink, change intensity or change color except for temporary holiday displays, public safety or traffic control. For more information on the Town's lighting bylaws, see Town Code *Chapter 102: Outdoor Lighting* or contact the Lighting Enforcement Officer at 508-325-7587.

### **FOOD PERMIT**

The Public Health Office issues food service permits. If your establishment does not have a common victualler license but wishes to serve food for a one-time event, please contact the Public Health Office at 508-228-7200 x-7014. If your business wants to put out a lemonade stand, bake sale table or any other outdoor sales stand, please seek approval from the Public Health Office. If you want to set up a stand on public property, we ask that you get permission from Town Administration at 508-228-7255.

### **STAGES AND OTHER STRUCTURES**

If you are doing any construction, including a temporary stage, additional seating, tent or other structure, please contact the Building Office at 508-325-7587 to request a Building Permit.

**CIGARETTES/LITTER/SWEEPING** Nantucket is a beautiful place, and we all have to do our part to keep its streets and sidewalks clean. All businesses are encouraged to keep the sidewalks outside their establishments free of cigarette butts, wrappers and other garbage. If you want to put up a cigarette disposal container or urn, you can do so if it is on private property.

### **STREET FURNITURE**

If you wish to put a bench, bike rack, reservation stand or other street furniture outside your business, you may do so if it is placed on private property. To put street furniture on sidewalks or other public property, please contact Town Administration at 508-228-7255 to get special permission.

### **OCCUPANCY**



Make sure to know the occupancy limits of your building or establishment. If you have questions about the allowed occupancy in your establishment, please contact the Public Health Office at 508-228-7200 x-7014.

\*\*\*\*

**Helpful Contact Numbers**

Entertainment Licenses:

*Licensing Agent*      508-325-4137

One-Day Pouring Licenses:

*Licensing Agent*      508-325-4137

Event Permit:

*Event Coordinator*      508-325-4166

Food Permit (non-restaurant, in-store)

*Public Health*      508-228-7200 x-7014

One-Time Noise Bylaw Waiver:

*Town Administration*      508-228-7255

Temporary Structure/Tent Permit:

*Building Inspector*      508-325-7587

Street/Sidewalk Blocking:

*Town Administration*      508-228-7255

License and Permit Enforcement:

*Enforcement Officer*      508-325-4137

HDC/Sign Advisory Committee:

*HDC Administrator*      508-325-7587

Lighting Enforcement:

*Lighting Officer*      508-325-7587

All Other Queries or for Guidance:

*Town Administration*      508-228-7255

***Best Wishes for a Terrific Season!***



**Town of Nantucket**  
16 Broad Street  
Nantucket, Massachusetts 02554

***QUICK REFERENCE  
GUIDE  
FOR BUSINESSES***

## Appendix J - Welcome to Nantucket: An Island Guide


### Revisions

*The “Welcome to Nantucket: An Island Guide” is a tool the Town uses to deliver information on Nantucket’s customs and bylaws to new Nantucketers. As 2020 has been a tumultuous year, our team has made suggestions on how to update the guide to incorporate new pandemic information and data from our study to more accurately reflect the issues that need messaging.*

**Health and Safety**

**This year, many aspects of life are a little different on Nantucket and around the world. In order to keep our island safe, we ask that you do a couple of things:**

- **Wear a mask** at all times when outside your residence, indoors and outdoors
- Follow **Social Distancing Guidelines** downtown, at the beach, even on bike paths



***We all need to do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19 so Nantucket can be enjoyed to its fullest!***

*This slide can be inserted anywhere near the beginning of the guide, for obvious reasons. In a 2020-2021 updated Welcome Guide, a slide addressing concerns of COVID-19 is essential.*

## Signs

On Nantucket, we take pride in our historic island atmosphere. Before it is put in place, please take a moment to consider how the tone of your sign aligns with the character of Nantucket.

- Signs are **not allowed** on public property without approval from the Historic District Commission. This includes sidewalks, bike paths, and downtown.



Photo credit: ReMain Nantucket

For resources on sign bylaws and approvals, contact the Historic District Commission Administrator at 508-325-7587.

*Due to the increased number of signs on the island, we recommend including a slide like this to emphasize their regulations. As the Town transitions back to “normal”, we recommend an increased attention to the sign bylaw; and this addition to the Welcome Guide could help.*

## Downtown - Outdoor Dining(between pg. 11 and 12 in welcome guide)

### *Trash and Recycling*



Single-use plastic utensils, napkins and straw wrappers are not allowed on Nantucket, but if you find yourself using them when eating outdoors, please remember to throw them away so they don't become litter!

***We all need to do our part to keep Nantucket clean!***

*From our interviews, a concern identified with outdoor dining is the trash and litter it can cause. We recommend this slide be inserted between pages 11 and 12 in the 2016 Welcome Guide, after the other pages about Downtown.*

## Beaches (between pg. 13 and 14 of 2016 Welcome Guide)

### *A day at the Beach - Checklist*

- ☐ Enjoy beautiful ocean view
- ☐ Catch a glimpse of an endangered piping plover
- ☐ Throw out Trash and clean up!



➤ Please remember to take all trash with you when leaving the beach. Cleaning up after yourself is not only courteous but helps to preserve the environment!

*Our survey results indicate the majority of respondents feel trash and litter on the beach is a significant problem. As such, we recommend a slide dedicated to beach trash and litter be inserted into the Island Welcome Guide, between pages 13 and 14.*

## Bikes, Skateboards and Scooters (between pg. 7 and 8 on 2016 welcome guide)

Enjoy over 35 miles of beautiful bike paths and trails! ➔



Bicycles, Skateboards, Scooters, and all electric devices are not allowed on town sidewalks.  
➔ Skateboards, rollerblades, and roller skates are also not allowed downtown between June 15 and September 15. But, make sure to check out the local Nantucket Skatepark at 6 Backus Lane, open daily!

Image source: Town of Nantucket, MA Photo Gallery

*A main concern identified in our interviews and surveys was bicycles and other electric and non-electric devices on sidewalks. We recommend the Town insert a slide between page 7 and 8 of the 2016 Welcome Guide dedicated to keeping these devices off of the sidewalks.*



## Parties and Gatherings

**N**antucket is a wonderful place to vacation and escape the bustle of everyday life. But, it is important to enjoy the island responsibly and courteously.

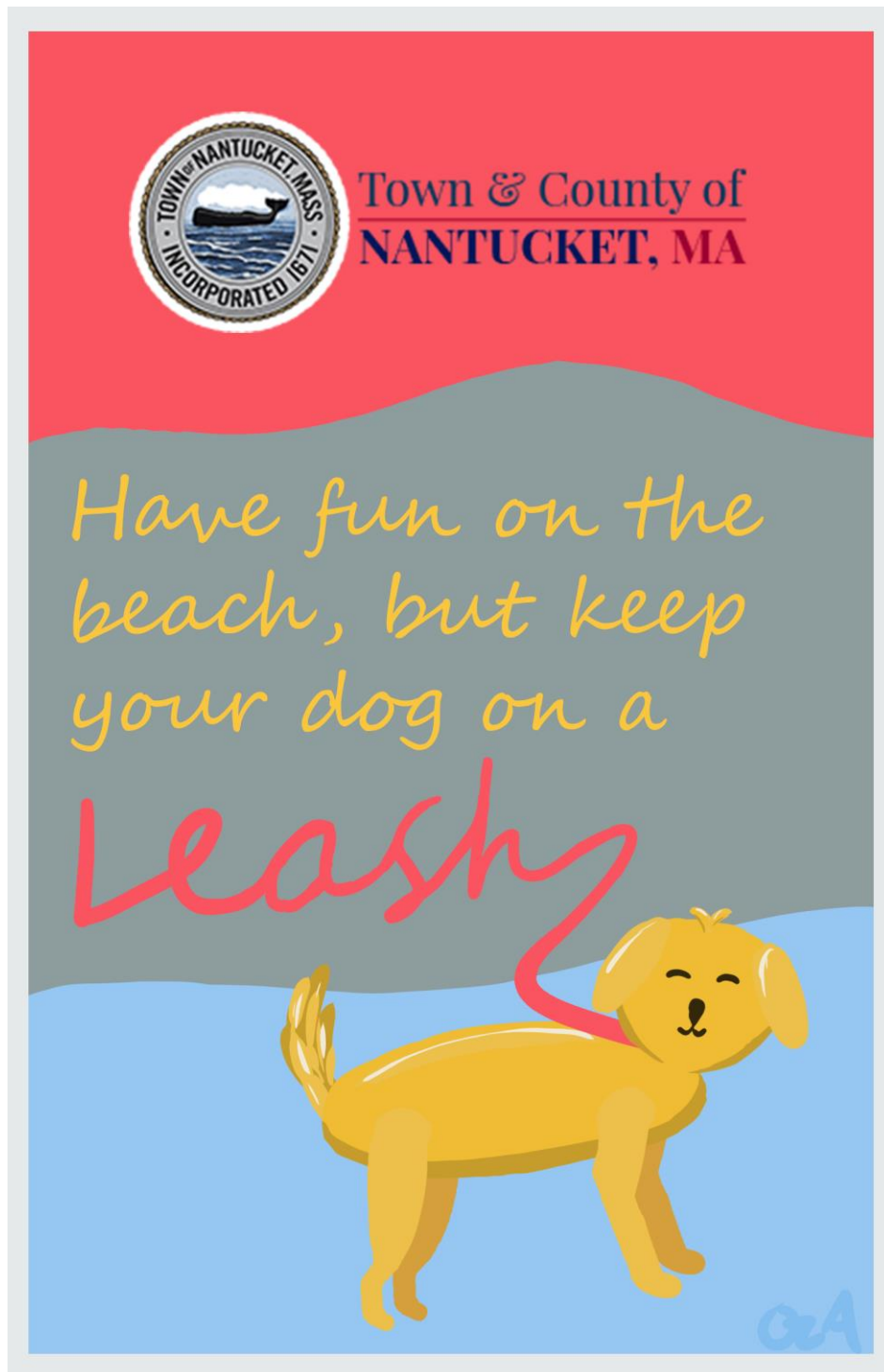
- Parties are allowed on Nantucket, but please be courteous of your neighbors: Excessive **noise** and **light** can disturb the peace of our residents.

***“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”***

*We recommend the Town insert a slide dedicated to responsible gatherings in an updated Welcome Guide. In a pandemic-changed world, this not only reflects common neighborly courtesy, but also its importance to public health and disease prevention.*

## Appendix K - Sample Informational Poster

*We recommend the Town use digital promotional posters through email or social media such as this one to remind Nantucket residents and visitors of important bylaws.*



## Appendix L – Educational Campaign Timeline

We recommend the Town use the following timeline to distribute our educational materials in an effort to achieve our project goals. The timeline assumes Nantucket will transition “Back-to-Normal” starting the summer of 2021; however, as the situation created by COVID-19 is ever-changing, this timeline of course may be modified to best achieve the goals of the Town.

### Spring 2021

- Review revisions of the “Quick Reference Business Guide” and make any changes as needed
- Delivery of “COVID-19 Business Guide” through Chamber of Commerce
- Oursource revision of Island Welcome Guide based on our recommendations
- Outsource creation of additional Informational Posters to be delivered Summer 2021
- Airing of first radio Public Service Announcement
- Propose Town Hall discussion on the creation of New-Resident and New-Business education programs

### Summer 2021

- Airing of summer radio campaign
- Dissemination of revised Island Welcome Guide
- Publishing of Informational poster(s) in local newspapers, on Town social media, online, etc.
- Redistribution of our Business Survey to target businesses during the summer season and solicit more responses (see “Surveys” folder)
  - When ready to send, go to business survey and click on the purple “send” button in the upper right. Then you can copy and paste the survey link and distribute online, by email, on social media, twitter, etc.)
- Delivery of “Back-to-Normal” Business Guide through Chamber of Commerce, assuming COVID situation improves sufficiently

### Fall / Winter 2021

- Airing of fall/winter Public Service Announcements as needed