

Nantasket Focused Area Study

Community Development Plan

Town of Hull, Massachusetts

June 2004

Prepared for:

The Hull Planning Board

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1. Envisioning the Future of Nantasket

The Vision

The Town of Hull can realize an ambitious vision that will redevelop the Nantasket Beach area. By encouraging mixed-use development consisting of offices, cultural destinations, and retail outlets, the town could revitalize the area and re-integrate the waterfront with adjacent properties. This vision aspires to stimulate economic development and reconnect the area to its history. For residents and visitors alike, the Nantasket Beach area will provide a wonderful impression of this beautiful and historic seaside community. With a carefully planned approach, the town has a very real opportunity to meet many of its community goals within this vision.

The Area of Opportunity

The study area is approximately 78 acres and includes the land between Bay Street and Rockland House Road. The study area has been further segmented into four sub-districts that propose a Business District, a Cultural Neighborhood, Nantasket Pier, and a Village District.

Business District (I) - This district would support the core commercial and retail businesses.

Landscape and architectural guidelines would be designed to support these uses.

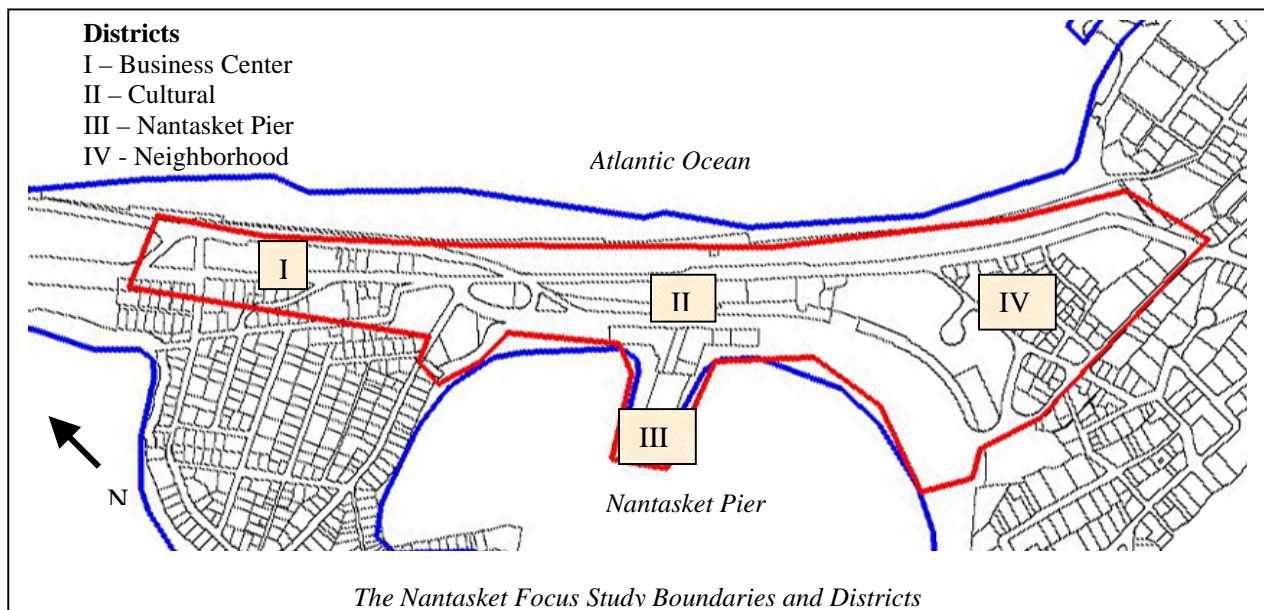
Cultural Neighborhood (II) - This area would encourage a lively mix of new retail outlets, services, a hotel, and artist studios. Combined with improved pedestrian connections and other transportation enhancements, the Cultural Neighborhood can become an active, appealing destination.

Nantasket Pier (III) - The pier is a valuable waterfront asset to the community, providing a visual link to the area's historic maritime uses, and a potential link to future transportation and recreation.

Village District (IV) - This area includes the existing residential blocks north of Rockland House Road and west of Nantasket Avenue. The Village District will strive to maintain its low-density, village-scale character.

The Planned Future

The future vision of the Nantasket area will be created as a highly faceted concept: connections



to attractions and shops, a diversity of uses, high quality of its design, amenities and programs, preservation of historic architecture, and functionality of the transportation and parking network.

When the area is fully developed, visitors will be able to arrive at Nantasket Pier after a pleasant journey on the inner harbor shuttle. Other visitors will arrive to the Nantasket area either by shuttle or from their own cars. Re-organized parking areas and satellite parking lots will greatly improve motorists' experience and preserve the core for pedestrian activity.

Convenient travel will be afforded to pedestrians between the area's attractions, shops, and neighborhoods and create vital links between the districts. Certain blocks will regain their historic residential character.

Informational kiosks and other signs will help guide visitors to the area's harborside restaurants, shopping, and attractions. Visitors and residents will stroll along the pedestrian walkways and beachfront boardwalk. Beach-blanket-toting pedestrians will walk conveniently and safely

across the specially paved crosswalks. People will be able to enjoy the historic architecture and artwork. They will encounter several small parks where they can rest or simply take in the beautiful panoramic views.

Overall, the effect will be to create a wide range of experiences that are satisfying from many different viewpoints. The message will be that visitors and residents alike will be able to find unique and quality experiences beyond the beach in the Town of Hull.

The area's success will depend on developing a solid framework that can guide investments and decisions to maximize the combined efforts of individual projects in a critical mass of positive changes. This starts with a clear set of goals to guide the process.

Aerial View of the Future Nantasket Pier and Beach Area



Goals and Challenges

In order to realize the vision of the Nantasket area, the Town of Hull will have to institute the following actions:

- Create a clear and practical plan for future land uses;
- Envision a special place that is uniquely Hull's;
- Build the consensus required to ensure the plan succeeds;
- Establish a clear path through funding, construction, and maintenance.

Revitalization strategies of this historic and recreational area of Hull must address a number of challenges:

Organization and Leadership

The public leadership must be creative and focused on achieving the vision and providing a clear direction for all involved. The leadership holds the keys to the success of the plan. In order to achieve the multiple goals set forth by the plan, the leadership and the public alike must make a concerted effort to meet challenges head on.

Public Participation

The Town must continue to engage, inform, and encourage the public to participate in the decisions and accomplishments of the plan as it unfolds. The public's involvement is critical to the successes of the plan.

Physical Changes

There will be many physical changes to the area's existing and future roads, sidewalks, buildings, and parking areas. All of these improvements

will need to be reviewed and coordinated so that they function properly and meet the overall goals of the plan.

Timely Funding

Fundamental to the success of this project is funding. The timing of the securing of funds is crucial to allowing the redevelopment to occur in an orderly, phased manner.

The Planning Process

Major planning efforts that focused specifically on the Nantasket area began in the early 1990's. As a result, the Hull Vision Statement established overall principles that guide the town's plans for their natural resources, neighborhoods, economy, and land use. These principles set the stage for the Hull Harbor Plan. This plan further advanced the planning process by specifically addressing the needs and opportunities of the waterfront area and the land between Nantasket Beach and Nantasket Pier.

As the planning process advances, designs and concepts will be refined and completed, leading to the eventual implementation of a final plan.

Nantasket Area Planning Events

1992 - Hull Harbor Planning Committee formed

1994 - Hull Vision Statement

1995 - Market Feasibility of the Focus Area

1994 to 1998 - Hull Harbor Plan

2003 to present – Hull Vision Update



2. Defining the Area

This section summarizes some of the history and conditions within the study area. Determination of the key, existing aspects of the area will lead to an understanding of opportunities for the revitalization of this area and the Town as a whole.

A History of Change

Within its history, the Nantasket area has seen significant physical and socio-economic changes corresponding to changing market demands and civic needs.

Nantasket Pier once accommodated steam-powered ferries and the railroad, bringing thousands of vacationers to the beaches and attractions of Hull each year. Once there, visitors were greeted with wide streets and boardwalks, allowing the crowds to visit the area's many attractions and entertainment areas with ease. Many people were so captivated with the charm of Hull that they decided to stay all year, leading to an increase in the population.

After years of great popularity, the once thriving beachfront destination began a steady decline. Hull suffered from disinvestments and a reduced demand for the modes of transportation that once brought thousands to its shores. As the automobile took over as the choice for getting to Hull, the market was no longer 'captured' and the area underwent changes to support auto-oriented transportation. These changes eventually eroded the area's economic and social vitality.

An Opportunity Develops

Now people are once again recognizing Nantasket as an opportunity. There appear to be no lack of beach goers who want to spend time on the state beach, but more importantly, new business investment is creating noticeable change and restoring local confidence.

Public investment has been proposed or completed in certain areas such as the seawall and beach pavilion, and the Hull Redevelopment Authority now has an implementation plan for its property.

A huge opportunity is now arising for a potential partnership with the state for the properties outside of the beach. The state has significantly changed budgeting and organization of its parks functions setting up the chance for Hull to

negotiate a plan for those properties within the very heart of the Nantasket area. The basis for the new plan is to understand this opportunity in the context of the site.



Existing Conditions

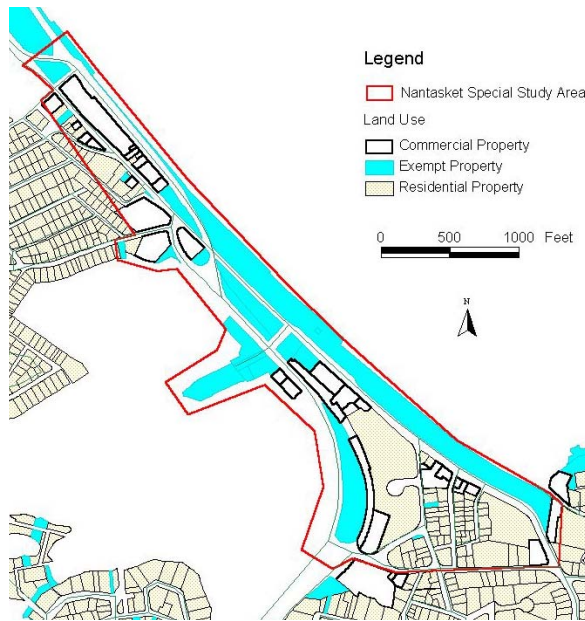
The study area is located where George Washington Boulevard, Nantasket Avenue, and Hull Shore Drive converge, bringing residents, tourists, beach goers, business people, and students in close proximity. This study area is a little over a mile long stretch in the south-central section of Hull with open water on either side. Here, about 128 commercial, public, and residential parcels line about 15 streets as shown in the following table. Several of these roads and parcels are some of the most important properties in Hull.

Properties and Land Uses in the Nantasket Focused Study Area

Land Use	Acres	% of Total Area	Parcels
Residential	17.7	35%	76
Commercial	12.8	25%	31
Exempt	20.4	40%	21
Total	50.9	100%	128

Sources: MassGIS 2003; Assessor Database, Town of Hull 2002.

Land Use in the Study Area



This area is also the location of many state and town properties. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) manages the Nantasket Beach Reservation and Mass Highway Department (MHD) maintains several roads in Hull. The Town owns properties at Nantasket Pier. However, these significant public property holdings have not yet been realized as important contributors to the Town except for the beach.

The Nantasket business areas are where there has been the most recent and significant private investment, which includes new hotel and entertainment facilities, new mixed-use projects, and supporting business development. Yet the flavor of many businesses remains as one of a highly seasonal nature that does not always take advantage of the local, year-round market potential.

Some of the restrictions on expanding the market have been identified by local business owners as structural. Accessibility to this district and Hull in general, is a key limitation. The traffic pattern is not well organized and does not support the flow of traffic, especially during peak periods and at the main intersections. Transit service is also very

limited: only one bus route runs between Hull and Hingham Center and runs approximately every hour. There is also a commuter ferry service between Boston and Quincy, which has limited stops in Pemberton Point. A transit analysis was conducted by CTPS and identified existing and potential ferry, shuttle, and bus connection to Nantasket Pier (see Appendix I).

Nantasket Beach Reservation

The Massachusetts Division of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) owns, maintains, and operates property in Hull, which is known as the Nantasket Beach Reservation. It is part of the agency's system of coastal, river, and woodland reservations located throughout the Boston metropolitan area. The reservation encompasses 26 acres along one and a third miles of oceanfront. All of this property is located in the study area except for a long thin stretch of the beach on the north side.

The DCR holds approximately 15 acres of land in the study area according to the Town of Hull Assessor database. There are 12 buildings that are used for a variety of purposes including, support and maintenance, sanitary, and management. A large portion of these properties, more than seven acres, is used for parking and can hold approximately 820 cars and 16 buses.

DCR Property in Hull

Property	Size	Number
Buildings	43,300 sq. ft.	12
Parcels	15.5 acres	7
Parking Areas	7.7 acres	6 lots

Sources: DCR maps #18953, March 1930 and #R81-0954, April 1981; MassGIS Aerial Photo, 2003; Assessor Database, Town of Hull, 2002.

Regardless of problems with access and parking, large numbers of people still visit the state beach. The State, through the former Metropolitan District Commission (now DCR), has made recent investments on the beach, including the former upgrading of the main beachfront building and the construction of the new pavilion. Significant state properties that do not front on the water or beach, however, have been left relatively unattended.

3. Developing a Concept

Concepts, alternatives, and ideas presented here were developed and refined during this study with the help of many people - those who realize a broader vision of change and improvement.

Planning for Change

This study has evolved in large part through input at public workshops and meetings where the opinions from many interested and concerned residents, area merchants and business owners, state and local agencies, and town officials and committees were discussed. In respect to these ideas, the proposals here are presented to reflect these participants' concerns, suggestions, and the consensus reached for future changes.

A constant through the series of public meetings and workshops was to meet the challenge of creating a vision for the best possible future for the Town. In a short time, it was determined that the Nantasket Pier and Nantasket Beach area of Hull are an important and critical area that need attention. Participants at the various meetings regarded this area of Hull as the critical location for development initiatives. Due to this importance of the Nantasket area, it was determined to be the best place to achieve most of Hull's established community development goals and objectives.

From this realization, subsequent public meetings and workshops focused on the beach and pier area. This area for this study lies between Nantasket Pier and Nantasket Beach and between Water Street and Rockland House Road. As participants considered this area and the town as a whole, several elements developed and helped to formulate the vision.

The following elements provided the basis for the recommendations of the Nantasket area.

- Limit new residential development given the current housing stock in Hull.
- Become a destination for retail, restaurant, and entertainment.

- Orient the area for both residents and visitors.
- Retain the character of Nantasket.

Study Area Recommendations

Overall, the following recommendations describe a concept of land use and activities that will knit the area together and create a 'destination.' These concepts are designed to be compatible with the prevalent conditions and issues within the overall study area and each of the four sub-areas or districts.

Proposed actions are accompanied with illustrations of a potential land use scenario. These illustrations, however, only represent one of many possible ways the improvements may appear when they are applied to each district.

Creating the Environment for Change

Several general or area-wide actions will need to be completed to set the stage for future changes.

1. Provide town support for the mix of uses that will be attracted as the Nantasket Focused Area evolves.

- Establish an overlay district for the Nantasket Focused Area. This district would unify the diversity of uses within the whole Nantasket area by defining the districts. It would also encourage and support appropriate primary and supporting uses within each district.
- Form a partnership of existing business owners. A partnership of business owners, merchants, and residents from each district could provide proactive support for new uses and encourage the types of uses that reinforce the Focused Study areas' character and overall image desired by the Town.

Establishing the Base for Change

Within the study area, structural and regulatory changes and funding are needed to ensure that the districts and uses within them will work in concert with each other.

1. Preserve the heritage within the study area.

- Provide support for the Paragon Carousel and other entertainment uses. Additional support from public and private sources should be encouraged since the carousel has the potential to set the stage for positive changes in the cultural neighborhood area.
- Create and adopt programs and ordinances to preserve historic architecture. The town should define a historic district so that it can provide special review of proposed projects. Another method would be to establish design guidelines for building renovation or new development. Both means would help protect historically significant structures and prevent them from being demolished.
- Create site planning and design standards. Each district has a unique character that has and will continue to develop over time. New structures and buildings should be setback from roads and other buildings in a manner that reflects this character. For example, a new building in the Business District may have a front yard setback that is depth of the sidewalk while a new development in the Village Center would have a larger setback to reflect the historic residential character of other homes in the neighborhood. Other considerations for design guidelines should include, but not be limited to, parking, landscaping, sidewalks, building heights, colors, and construction materials.
- Improve the streetscape. Construct improvements at key intersections, gateways, and transitions between districts. Such enhancements may include specialty paving, landscaping, site amenities, and art work installations that will improve the image and character of each district as well as unify all the districts of the study area.

2. Change vehicular traffic flow patterns.

[see Transportation Options figure on next page]

- Realign portions of the area's roadway network. Excessive right-of way widths and odd shaped parcels could be combined into new developable properties after roads are realigned. At the same time, changes in the road configuration will reduce traffic speeds, and visitors will be exposed to more of the area's character and attractions.
- Create cross-street connections between the major thoroughfares. New cross-street connections between Nantasket Avenue and George Washington Blvd. should be made to reduce congestion and the travel time, and new alternate routes for those exiting and entering this area should be created. Furthermore, a new route would have to be built if Wharf Avenue is closed as recommended for the Neighborhood Village District.

3. Improve the function and operation of parking resources.

- Create or expand satellite-parking facilities. The parking spaces available within the study area are rarely filled to capacity. This excessive parking area should be reduced or modified. Satellite parking facilities could be set up in other parts of Hull or transit hubs in other towns to accommodate the spaces that will be removed and to meet the seasonal peak parking demands.
- Relocate required parking capacity within the district. Parking is required within each district to support existing and proposed uses. Such parking should not remain or be located in highly visible locations. Instead, these lots should be setback from streets in accordance to the approved site standards for each district. As well, parking should not be located in front of buildings and should be alongside or preferably behind buildings. This would help enhance the desired character of each district by changing the area's image as being dependent upon automobiles to attract visitors.

Transportation Options



Explore parking surface alternatives.

Alternative surface materials should be used in parking areas that are used only during peak times of the summer. This reduces the impermeable surface area, runoff, and pollution into the nearby marine ecosystem, and maintenance costs. These parking lots can also be attractive areas for staging larger festivals and other civic events.

4. Establish a unified pedestrian network.

- Create a unified wayfinding and signage program. This type of program should clearly identify attractions and primary and secondary pedestrian routes. Directive and informative signage will help visitors, especially pedestrians, to find their destinations and make the area more convenient and attractive. The improved pedestrian connections will also allow visitors to use alternative routes and disperse across the area to their destinations.
- Add crosswalks and widen sidewalks. Construct attractive and safe crosswalks at intersections and mid-block locations and add wider sidewalks to encourage pedestrian use and reduce automobile use. Ornamental pavement treatments in these areas will provide safer street crossing and walking for pedestrians. It also enhances the visual character of the streetscape.

5. Expand transit options.

Seasonal visitors could board mass transit, such as ferries or buses that would bring them to the attractions within the study area. Changing these visitors from drivers to pedestrians will greatly reduce the amount of land needed to accommodate their vehicles and reduce traffic congestion across the various districts.

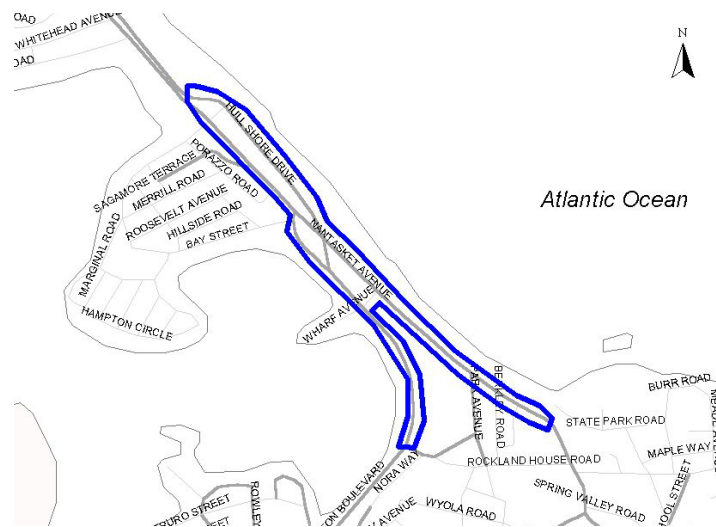
- Create a new, local trolley line. This trolley would loop around the waterfront along Nantasket Avenue and to the intersections of Rockland House Road and George Washington Boulevard (see

Figure 1). An option for this run would be to connect to Pemberton Point to pickup or discharge passengers that used other transportation modes such as the ferry to Boston or the Boston Harbor Islands.

The following two options would have to meet sufficient ridership thresholds to support capital and operational costs, which could be determined by a market analysis of potential recreational and commuting riders.

- Establish a bus connection to the future Nantasket Junction rail station in Hingham based on demand. This station, which is part of the Greenbush line that connects to Boston, could be serviced by an existing MBTA bus route #714, or be a separate bus that runs directly to Hull. While feeder bus service to MBTA commuter rail stations outside of Boston have attracted very low ridership the option for seasonal demand service organized for supporting commuter transit could enhance the viability of the service.
- Address options for ferry service with other locations such as Boston or Hingham. A vessel transit option from Nantasket Pier could be cost prohibitive *unless* it carried a substantial number of full fare passengers and saw increased demand because of an increase in the number of attractions and customers for Hull.

Potential Trolley Route for the Nantasket Area



District Recommendations

This section provides detailed recommendations for each district within the study area.

Define a Business Center – Area I

The Town of Hull needs to regain a level of economic vitality, and this portion of the study area is the best place to start. The business district should become a center of commerce in Hull, and a complementary mix of retail and commercial uses would define it. Revitalization of this center has begun with the development of the Clarion Hotel, and the Town should build upon this momentum. To revitalize this district, the following strategies could be used.

1. Create additional developable land parcels.

Two roads should be changed to create additional developable land parcels and more market-oriented development. These new lots could support commercial uses that complement existing land uses in this district.

- Realign Hull Shore Drive. The design concept shows Hull Shore Drive realigned; the southern section of the road between Water Street and Bay Street is shifted east and runs parallel with the beach. On the

south portion, it intersects with Nantasket Avenue and Bay Street. At the southern end, this new alignment could create or expand lots that the street now crosses at an angle to a north-south alignment.

- Realign Sagamore Terrace. Parcels located along Nantasket Avenue between Bay Street and Sagamore Terrace are restricted by the location of Sagamore Terrace, which runs behind many of these properties. In order to make more efficient use of the land and allow commercial properties to expand, the east portion of Sagamore Terrace could be closed and the right-of-way added to the parcels.

The illustrative design concept considers the properties in terms of lot depth and shows the buildings to the limits of the business-zoning district. The intent of this concept is to increase building depths from the street. The larger building square footages could be used to attract new development that would include locally oriented uses such as a financial planner or lawyer's office. The same space could remain undivided and be used to attract a use into the district that that is oriented to a regional market and requires the larger square footage.

Illustration of the Business District



A benefit of having deeper lots is the option to create additional off-street parking instead of building to the limits of the business district. New parking spaces could be for employees and would allow on-street parking spaces to be used by patrons of the local businesses.

2. Improve the efficiency of parking facilities.

An adequate supply of convenient and accessible parking is an essential revitalization component of the Nantasket Focused Study area. In the Business District, this translates into the creation of new parking facilities that support development efforts and replace parking capacity lost due to the realignment of Hull Shore Drive.

- Improve use of on-street parking areas. The new Hull Shore Drive should include a parking lane on both sides to help offset the number of parking spaces lost after the existing parking areas are developed.
- Establish satellite parking facilities. As infill development occurs on these lots, the parking capacity should move to satellite parking locations. The illustrative concept shows the later stages of revitalization in the Business District. New properties created by the realignment have been fully developed with buildings while parcels of land on the south side of the hotel remain as parking areas.
- Better manage the parking needs of business employees, operators, and patrons. Employee parking should be directed away from spaces that best serve the patrons of the district's businesses. The more convenient and accessible parking should be established for patrons. Employee parking should be located behind buildings that front Nantasket Avenue.

3. Improve traffic circulation.

- Improve the intersection between the major roadways. A new intersection configuration at Nantasket Avenue and George Washington Boulevard is part of the proposed design for the realignment of Hull Shore Drive. The proposed design establishes a relationship between traffic flow through the district and the business in it and creates a stopping point for vehicular traffic. The intent of this stopping point and intersections located north of it is to slow traffic and allow drivers to observe the new image and uses of a revitalized Business District area.
- Improve access to district uses. Improving vehicular access and opportunities for patrons at existing district uses will support revitalization efforts. As these businesses become more successful, other uses will be attracted to the district. In the previous illustration, the roadway realignment and the proposed intersection design suggests that visitors will be able to conveniently park close to their destinations. The perception by patrons and visitors that their destination is easily accessible will greatly add to the success of this district.

4. Create an attractive and functional streetscape.

An attractive and functional streetscape is composed of physical elements that create a sense of place for the motorists and pedestrians. These elements consist of buildings, signs, sidewalks, landscape materials, and areas of open space. The attractiveness of an urban area is a result of a design that collects all of these elements in a cohesive manner. Having a pedestrian friendly and inviting streetscape is a critical piece to the revitalization of the Business District. The following recommendations support this type of development.

- Construct a boardwalk. A boardwalk should be constructed along the beachfront as part of the Hull Shore Drive realignment. This boardwalk would facilitate pedestrian access up and down the beach. It would also

connect the modern, year-round business district to the area's historic and seasonal image.

- Install sidewalk extensions. These extensions would be constructed at intersections and mid-block locations in order to shorten the street crossing distances for pedestrians. This design provides a safer path for pedestrians to cross the street by improving the drivers' sight of those that want to cross the street.
- Designate pedestrian paths. There should be clearly marked pathways, wayfinding stations, and signs that link uses throughout the Business District. These markings should be developed as part of a larger pedestrian network that will link all the other study area districts so that pedestrians can walk conveniently and without confusion.
- Establish design guidelines and standards. The Town of Hull should establish design guidelines for existing and proposed development. Such guidelines and standards would define the desired image and character the Town for the Business District in terms of design elements such as building height, colors, materials, and setbacks. These guidelines would also consider landscape elements such as paving materials, colors, street trees and furniture, and viewing opportunities.

5. Create gateways into the district.

- Create gateways at the north and south sides of the district. As part of an overall streetscape design, this gateway would let visitors and residents know that they have entered the Town's main area of commerce. On the south side of the district, the proposed intersection of Nantasket Avenue and George Washington Boulevard creates a physical edge between this district and the adjoining Cultural Neighborhood. A properly designed streetscape could unify the two separate identities of these districts through the use of paving materials and other design elements. The illustration on

page 11 suggests the location of a watchtower at the intersection. This landmark could provide a physical element that defines the common edge of these two districts. Additionally, the landmark could be a visitor center that provides panoramic views of the beaches and harbor from its upper levels.

The Clarion Hotel establishes the northern edge of the Business District relative to property and uses further north. This edge is reinforced with the location of Water Street, which connects Nantasket Avenue and Hull Shore Drive. The illustrative concept considers the hotel, Water Street, the businesses on Nantasket Avenue and Hull Shore Drive, and the proposed boardwalk. The relationship of these uses and destinations could create a northern gateway to the Business District.

Creating a Cultural Center – Area II

The Cultural Neighborhood District contains properties that are the most important to community development initiatives in the Nantasket Focused Study area. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Town of Hull own most of the land in this district. The only privately owned lands are the mini golf course and the Paragon Carousel. The redevelopment of properties in this area can create uses that relate to the history and culture of the Town of Hull. The following strategies are suggested to help the Town develop this district.

DCR Maintenance Building



1. Place all publicly owned lands under single ownership.

- Procure existing DCR property. The development of this area as a Cultural Neighborhood District starts with transferring all of the DCR properties to the ownership and guidance of a single organization that would manage their development. Several seasonal businesses, a police barracks, DCR offices, and a maintenance facility are currently on these properties. The Town should negotiate with the DCR in order to transfer these lands over to an agreed upon agency.

2. Conduct inventory of historic public places and structures.

- Identify historic structures. Historically, this area of Hull has been an entertainment and recreational destination for both residents and summer visitors. An inventory of existing public places and structures that contribute to the historic character and support its revitalization should provide insight to the need for protecting the areas historic resources. For example, Paragon Carousel should be part of the first redevelopment efforts. This Hull landmark is well known to both residents and visitors and represents a historic image. Use of the Carousel in early stages of revitalization efforts would spread this character and image of the structure into the new activities and uses and reinforce the cultural neighborhood's connection to its past.
- Convert existing structures. An early step in the revitalization process is to convert DCR properties and structures in the area of the Paragon Carousel that foster development and attracts art studios and similar culturally oriented uses. The purpose of establishing these types of uses so close to the carousel is to draw from the high-volumes of seasonal visitors walking between Nantasket Beach, Paragon Carousel, and Nantasket Pier.

The former DCR maintenance facility should be converted into heavier use art studios, such as for glass blowing or pottery

studios, given its method of construction. Parking for store artists and workers can be provided with off-street facilities and are shown in the two design concept Alternatives A and B. Conversion of these existing DCR structures would preserve the few historically significant structures in the cultural neighborhood district. Later development of new structures would be encouraged to follow the architectural style of the existing buildings so that it maintains a continuity of the historic character of the area. Existing offices could, in-time, be relocated north into the Business Center District.

3. Support development of a cultural identity for the district.

Revitalization of the cultural district should be sensitive to both the past and future in terms of visitors to this area of southern Hull. Two illustrative design concepts support development of culturally oriented uses and activities in what has been traditionally an area of tourist-oriented uses.

- Encourage a diversity of culturally oriented activities. Early redevelopment efforts to initiate change in the area should include social activities and events. Both conceptual design alternatives create open space areas that are centered around the carousel. Festivals, weekend art fairs, and similar types of events at these open spaces would reconnect the area to its history and create a new image of the area to both residents and seasonal visitors. These types of events and venues represent immediate actions that can be implemented with less investment costs than the costs of redeveloping one of the existing structures. As the image and character of the area changes, the revitalization momentum can attract a variety of uses with the conversion of the existing structures around the Paragon Carousel.
- Attract a diversity of culturally oriented uses such as art studios and shops for local artisans. Business programs should be established to encourage artists from Hull and adjoining towns to open work studios,

individual stores, or co-ops for the retail sale of their work. Artisan studios should be open to the public and allow visitors to observe and interact with the artists. Some of these studios could be opened in the evening for classes or used by residents whom have interest and skills of the various art professions.

4. Improve pedestrian connections between district attractions.

This district should be improved by making pedestrian paths and sidewalks wider and by closing two street sections: 1) Hull Shore Drive between Nantasket Avenue and George Washington Boulevard, and 2) Wharf Avenue between Nantasket Avenue and George Washington Boulevard. This change would help connect main attractions such as the Carousel, Nantasket Pier, DCR bathhouse, and the beach. Wider paths, places to rest, and art studios with observation areas could be combined to return the district to a pedestrian-orientated destination. The organization and routes of these improved connections should allow pedestrians that come to Hull, disperse to various destinations across the districts instead of taking a direct path to their destination, as shown in the following illustration. The most important function of these paths is to enable easy access between Nantasket Pier and Nantasket Beach and attract visitors to all commercial and cultural uses located between these main destinations. An interim step to support pedestrian traffic would be to remove the fences around the DCR properties.

- Provide alternative routes between Nantasket Pier and Nantasket Beach. Alternative pedestrian routes should be established after Wharf Avenue is closed

and a primary route is created between the pier and the beach. These routes should build upon the success of the cultural uses that have been located around the carousel and they should disperse crowds to new destinations across the district.

5. Address parking and access needs for all areas.

Parking is a significant issue in this area as it supplies access to the beach, supports the local businesses and creates a significant land use issue within the district. Several options can be presented to change the way parking is handled here.

Existing parking areas and underutilized properties provide several opportunities Shared parking and short-term parking during transition of these and other properties are options for use of the DCR lands and parking lots. The courthouse parking lot could also be used for peak periods and transitions.

Signage can redirect cars and parkers. A series of signs removed from the Nantasket area, and even outside of the town, could be used to set up directions and locations for parking so that people do

Cultural Neighborhood – Alternative A

The purpose of Alternative A is to make the cultural neighborhood a center of attraction where visitors can stroll between the beach and attractions without high levels of interference of vehicles that currently occur with pedestrians. This alternative also supports goals of the Harbor Development Plan to redevelop the connection between Nantasket Beach and Nantasket Pier.

Cultural Neighborhood District – Alternative A



Cultural Neighborhood District – Alternative B



Wharf Avenue, which connects George Washington Boulevard with Nantasket Avenue, would be closed. The vehicular traffic would be directed to the north side of this district where the realigned Hull Shore Drive intersects Nantasket Avenue. This closed road would become the main pedestrian walkway and connect the cultural district to the beach, pier, and other districts. A small portion of Hull Shore Drive that connects George Washington Boulevard and Nantasket Avenue would also be closed to make the vehicular travel patterns more efficient.

Redevelopment of the former DCR parcels would begin on the parcels adjacent to the new walkway and would include studios and artist stores. Supporting parking areas would be allowed for both merchants and visitors. Subsequent development would include conversion of the DCR maintenance building for uses by industrial studios such as glass blowing, pottery, and metal smith. This design concept also includes a new building that would have more stores, studios, and offices that support culturally-oriented uses.

Cultural Neighborhood – Alternative B

Alternative B considers the same concepts as Alternative A, but the structures and pedestrian paths are located in different manner. Alternative B has a small pedestrian path along the former Wharf Avenue and provides a pedestrian walkway that runs along the center of the parcels and parallel to Nantasket Avenue. The purpose of this layout is to disperse pedestrians along the businesses in the cultural district and further north to the business district and beach. This pedestrian path would also connect the Carousel to a new building that faces the new intersection on the north side of this district.

At the transition edge between the business and cultural districts, there would be an open plaza with specialty pavers. A more simplified transition edge would occur on the south side of the cultural district and is described in the Neighborhood Village District.

Reusing Nantasket Pier – Area III

The strategies for Nantasket Pier are to change and improve its uses so that it supports multiple activities, especially for water-dependent and water-enhanced uses.

1. Build upon Nantasket Pier’s maritime heritage.

Nantasket Pier has a long history of maritime uses and activities. It once ferried passengers to and between other coastal cities including Boston. There were amusement rides that provided panoramic views of the Town, coast, beach, and points beyond. Past and existing uses include both commercial and recreational boating and a restaurant.

There is an excellent opportunity to build upon this maritime heritage and revitalize the pier as a mixed-use waterfront. It would include a departure and arrival point for passengers on vessels, increased recreational and commercial uses, and support facilities that enhance these uses such as a restaurant and a boat and tackle shop.

One key issue, however, is the need to dredge the inner harbor near the pier and channel. A deeper main channel would allow ferries and other large vessels to access the pier without the danger of grounding.

2. Introduce land uses that are compatible with the maritime image of the pier and harbor.

New land uses at the pier and harbor should have a direct connection with the water and harbor. Both water-dependent uses such as a marina and water-enhanced uses such as a boating or tackle shop should be encouraged to operate on the pier and adjacent properties. These types of uses would be compatible with the maritime image of the pier.

This pier is one of the only access points in the region that provides a

combination uses and resources in the area:

- Access to commercial uses within walking distance,
- Access to recreational areas such as the beach and parks,
- Access to local attractions such as the Carousel, and
- Direct water access to the harbor and points beyond.

The Town has the opportunity to capitalize on these resources and to provide a mix of uses on the pier that support and enhance the local resources.

New land uses would also have to be compatible with the seasonal demand of the local economy. For example, every summer, thousands of people visit the beach and hundreds of boaters use the local waters. Facilities would have to be built and operated so that they can support these types of seasonal patterns and uses.

Nantasket Pier District



There would be a small-scale marina, slips, moorings, and support facilities. Excursion and charter boat operations may also be part of the marina, but located at the west end of the pier. Existing uses that should remain and be part of the pier's redevelopment is the small boat ramp at the dock's end and any of the small commercial fishing boats.

Uses on the pier would be organized to take advantage of its waterfront access, views, and proximity to the main road and recreational and commercial uses across the street. As depicted in the Nantasket Pier District illustration, a new restaurant would be located on the southern side of the pier. Other structures join the restaurant that exists in the pier's southern corner. A building located near the east end of the pier would serve many uses, such as a harbor master office, a small ship's chandlery, and offices for the small marina operation that is shown on both sides of the pier. Other building uses would be oriented towards visitors and include restaurants, seasonal retail, and entertainment venues. Parking would be reorganized to minimize pedestrian conflicts and support only the marina and commercial fishing operations.

3. Bring visitors to the pier with alternative modes of transportation.

The location of Nantasket Pier provides an excellent opportunity to use different modes of transportation including ferries, buses, cars, and bicycles. Aside from direct access to the water, it is located along the main arterial that leads into Hull and is within walking distance to Nantasket Beach, the Carousel, other recreational resources and attractions, and the commercial area. These area uses would be linked with different modes of transportation and supporting facilities such as a bus drop off point, parking area for marina users, ferry terminal facilities, and bicycle racks.

From an operational standpoint, there would be appropriate signage that directs drivers to parking lots and informational signage that directs people to key destinations and attractions.

4. Reconnect pier to adjoining districts.

Nantasket Pier is one of Hull's prominent landmarks, yet is significantly under used. While various uses have occupied the pier in years past (it once was an important transportation ferry hub for visitors and residents), uses today comprise of a restaurant and parking.

The illustrative concept returns the pier to its historic prominence as a central element of the town. Ferry service returns to the pier, shuttling visitors and residents from other destinations in Hingham Bay. These ferries unload and load passengers at the pier's end, where a visitor and informational center is located. This area is built on a boardwalk and is a waypoint on the pedestrian network that lines the pier and connects to the other districts and uses in them.

Protecting the Village District – Area IV

The existing residential neighborhood is surrounded by compatible uses but needs an upgraded status to preserve its character and protect the residents who call it home.

1. Promote a better residential image for the Village Center district.

To protect what remains and keep the residential character of the area, no additional large-scale developments should be built. The housing inventory should be allowed to increase under the conditions that only small-scale townhouses and condominium conversions of existing single-family units can be added to maintain its low-density image.

2. Create better neighborhood resources for the district's residents.

The main objective of this recommendation is to remove parking and traffic away from the beaches to satellite locations on the outside of the study area. Neighborhood amenities, such as a greenway and linking pathways, should be added to improve the recreational qualities of the area. The greenway would traverse the other districts in the study area and provide

connections to the other amenities and attractions. The existing skating rink should be moved from its current location at the intersection of Rockland House and George Washington Boulevard towards the interior of the study area. A visitor's center should be located in its place and would have a bus or trolley stop that could transport visitors to various stops along the beach and in the Cultural Neighborhood.

3. Attract supporting uses to the periphery of the district.

Small neighborhood oriented businesses should be located on the periphery of the Village District along Nantasket Avenue. Permittable uses should serve the local residents. Businesses along Nantasket Avenue should serve the both residents and visitors to the beach area, which is on the other side of the street. These uses could include hotels, drugstores, small hardware stores, and personal services. Existing zoning would permit these types of businesses.

Village Center District



4. A Call for Action

The actions required to proceed with the redevelopment of the Nantasket Focused Area must be completed in stages and with the participation of different agencies and groups. The study lays out the following recommended steps to complete the plan.

Planning and Design

The completion of the Nantasket Focused Area Study is an important milestone in the overall redevelopment process. It provides development recommendations and alternatives as a foundation for all subsequent planning and design work. The next steps are described below.

Review and Prioritize – The Hull Board of Selectmen and the Hull Planning Board should review and prioritize the recommendations and alternatives. They should evaluate the area as whole and determine which pieces would complement each other. A key component of this step is to ensure that all the planning elements, transportation, economic, social and

cultural benefits, neighborhood image and character, are represented and reviewed.

Agreement with Vision and Goals – The Board should determine how all the pieces would support the vision and goals of this study as well as the community’s overall vision of the area.

Refine Draft Phasing Tasks – The responsible party should review the phasing and construction tasks as outlined below.

Phasing and Implementation

We have developed general categories for the phasing and implementation process regarding regulations and agreements that would be initiated after a preliminary plan is completed. This process includes a number of actions and development factors, such as agreement on priorities, availability of public funding and private financing, receptivity of the marketplace, and coordination of existing organizations and groups that will guide and manage a final plan.

Conceptual Phasing and Construction Tasks for the Nantasket Area Improvements

Phase	Public Land	Transportation	Zoning	Public Transit
1	Perform due diligence and initiate negotiations with DCR.	Negotiations with DCR, traffic study, and preparation of roadway design concepts	Explore zoning options with local business owners.	Negotiate with MBTA for full bus service to beach.
2	Set up partnership over land with DCR.	Present options for public approval.	Present zoning options to public.	Put out request for interest in short-term lease for sightseeing boat at Pier (timed for Democratic Nat’l Convention).
3	Advertise and negotiate short-term leases for artists, and vendors.	Initiate changes in town parking (green pavers, gateways, reductions).	Proceed through public hearing and regulatory processes and present to Town Meeting.	Put out request for interest in local shuttle service, or negotiate with local and regional chamber/ businesses for support.
4	Put out requests for developers interest in redevelopment or reuse.	Initiate changes in DCR parking (green pavers, reductions).	Prepare modifications to zoning based on developer proposals.	Create/ negotiate shuttle stops for bus service.
5	Gain public approval for developer initiatives.	Initiate design changes to roadway system.	Proceed through public hearing and regulatory processes and present to Town Meeting.	Determine viability of expanding or continuing land and water services.

We recommend that the initial project implementation occur in five phases, with most of the negotiations with property owners in the early phases and increasing regulatory approvals and design changes toward the later phases. A construction phasing plan should be developed after the final plan is completed.

The realignment of Nantasket Avenue, in particular, is a complicated project that will

require careful planning to implement in order to keep traffic flow throughout construction. The construction periods should recognize the importance of the summer season to residents, businesses, and visitors to the area. The impacts to traffic should be minimal during this time.