

**'Sconset Area Plan**  
**February 2007**

**' S C O N S E T   A R E A   P L A N**

Prepared through the work of the 'Sconset Planning Committee with the support of the Siasconset Civic Association and the 'Sconset Trust:

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The 'Sconset Area Plan (SAP) has been re-drafted to fit the Commonwealth of Massachusetts statute 41-81D for town comprehensive master plans, and as required for the Town of Nantucket. The sections of the SAP therefore conform to the 41-81D plan headings.

**'Sconset Area Plan Boundary Map**

**The 'Sconset Area Plan covers the area of 'Sconset included within the solid boundary marked on the attached map as Exhibit 1.**

**1. GOALS AND POLICIES**

**The goals and policies statement identifies the goals and policies of the municipality for its future growth and development. Each community shall conduct an interactive public process to determine community values, goals and to identify patterns of development that will be consistent with these goals.**

The goals and policy of the 'Sconset Area Plan are to articulate a vision for the 'Sconset area as *a unique neighborhood and village of Nantucket*, within the overall structure of the Nantucket Comprehensive Master Plan. The "'Sconset Planning Committee," sponsored by the 'Sconset Trust and the Siasconset Civic Association and in cooperation with the NP&EDC, started work on this plan in 1998. After five special community meetings, two surveys, ten Civic Association meetings and innumerable meetings of committees and subcommittees, the Planning Committee produced a "Composite of Actions" articulated by eleven different subcommittees on topics ranging from Peace & Quiet and Traffic to Sewage and Affordable Housing. Those reports, which have been circulated around the community and at Civic Association Meetings, are eloquent evidence of the special character of the village, and the dedication of the people who care for it.

A new planning committee convened in 2006 to restructure the Area Plan and revisit issues and opportunities important to the community of 'Sconset. The resulting revised 'Sconset Area Plan has been distributed to the citizens of 'Sconset, both year round and seasonal, for review and comment. Feedback has been tabulated and carefully considered before writing this final (eighth) draft of the 'Sconset Area Plan.

There remains a general concern about potential growth in 'Sconset and this document aims to address the best plans and procedures to address the future of the community in

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the context of the 41-81D priorities. The intentions of the planning committee have been to work within the scope and perspective of an island-wide initiative to examine growth and development. Many 'Sconseters favor housing caps and other limits to growth on the island. The 'Sconset Area Plan aims to protect the 'Sconset community as best it can within the conditions established for the whole island. Further, 'Sconset is committed to being a contributing and caring group of Nantucketers who intend to provide solutions within our village boundaries to help improve the quality of life for all island residents.

*Our primary goal is to preserve the unique nature of 'Sconset for future generations of residents and visitors.*

### **2. LAND USE**

**The Land Use plan element identifies present land use and designates the proposed distribution, location and inter-relationship of public and private land uses. This element shall relate the proposed standards of population density and building intensity to the capacity of land available or planned facilities and services. A land use plan map illustrating the land use policies of the municipality shall be included.**

**'Sconset land use can be found in Exhibit 2 (zoning code) on the attached map.**

**Land use recommendations for 'Sconset – for purposes of zoning, see the zoning definitions for 'Sconset at the end of the report.**

2.1 A zoning change for Main Street was completed as proposed by the 'Sconset Planning Committee in 2004 by vote of Town Meeting, resulting in a special variation from SR2 zoning to a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet.

2.2 SAP recommends making other smaller zoning changes that more accurately reflect the reality of the village today.

2.3 SAP recommends the clean up and “rationalizing” of the places where the maps show the zoning boundaries to be inconsistent with boundaries of legal parcels i.e., different zoning rules applying on the same parcel of land.

2.4 SAP recommends cleaning up zoning boundary issues in SOH specifically on Broadway, Front Street and in Codfish Park.

### **3. HOUSING**

**The Housing element identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted housing needs and objectives including programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing. This element shall identify policies and strategies to provide a balance of local housing opportunities for all citizens.**

**Architectural neighborhoods and housing use recommendations for 'Sconset**

3.1 'Sconset has unique architectural characteristics based on different historical and economic origins. Those characteristics are best evidenced

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in five different architectural neighborhoods as defined by The 'Sconset Planning Committee. These "neighborhoods" will delineate areas where houses are similar in style, mass and height, and in some cases, history. SAP recommends the establishment of standards to be used as a guideline for determining appropriate residential development within the defined areas. SAP recommends the creation of a study team in 'Sconset to identify the unique characteristics of each of the neighborhoods and to set standards of comparability and permissible deviations in architectural plans by area. SAP believes the best way to protect 'Sconset's unique architectural qualities is through zoning which recognizes each of the architectural neighborhoods.

3.2 SAP recommends that the standards for determining development patterns with regard to these neighborhoods be codified in a neighborhood by neighborhood "architectural database" by the study group. The findings would be reported to the 'Sconset Planning Committee, which will work in concert with the HDC to finalize the standards.

3.3 SAP encourages the use of selected town-owned lands for affordable housing as a joint venture between the town and the 'Sconset Planning Committee. In some cases the town can offer existing town-owned land with high value "in trade" for privately owned land to accomplish the creation of pockets of affordable housing within the village. The details and implementation plans will be coordinated with the 'Sconset Planning Committee.

3.4 SAP recommends the consideration of using the current town-owned water tower land located on New Street for affordable housing units once the tower is removed.

3.5 SAP recommends evaluating opportunities for the use of existing housing for public benefit at the Loran Low Beach property now owned by the federal government. The portions of this land now providing housing for federal government employees (USCG) could be converted to affordable housing when vacated. SAP envisions using the rest of the property for conservation and recreational purposes – see section 6.2.

### **4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**The Economic Development element identifies policies and strategies for the expansion or stabilization of the local economic base and the promotion of employment opportunities.**

#### **Economic development comments and recommendations for 'Sconset**

4.1 SAP is not in favor of the creation of a specific commercial area in 'Sconset, although some pre-existing non-conforming commercial activity exists in the village in three segments on New Street, at and/or near the rotary and on Ocean Avenue at the Summer House Restaurant location. In addition, while SAP accepts these pre-existing non-conforming

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commercial uses, we do not favor an expansion of these uses in the village.

4.2 Due to the seasonal nature of the 'Sconset area, we do not foresee a need for additional commercial development.

4.3 SAP reiterates the need to preserve and keep the uniqueness of 'Sconset's center in order to protect the stability of the local village economic base.

### **5. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

**The Natural and Cultural Resources element provides an inventory of the significant natural, cultural and historic resource areas of the municipality, and policies and strategies for the protection and management of such areas.**

#### **Natural and Cultural Resources recommendations for 'Sconset**

5.1 SAP recognizes the contribution made to the village by its cultural institutions, in particular, the Siasconset Union Chapel and On the Isle. We urge support of these entities as they provide continuing community involvement and help maintain the sense of community unique to this mainly summer village.

5.2 SAP encourages the continued support of the 'Sconset Trust to secure historic preservation restrictions on historic homes and structures, including the Siasconset Union Chapel, the fire house and the Siasconset Casino.

5.3 SAP encourages the maintenance of other well-known sites in the village such as the rotary, Pump Square, the foot bridge and the post office.

5.4 SAP supports the continuing use of the Siasconset Casino building as a community center for the village.

5.5 SAP encourages clubs, associations and the chapel based in 'Sconset to continue time-honored outreach to the island community through direct funding and events supporting local charities, families and individuals in need. These efforts include direct outreach funding distributed annually across the island by the Siasconset Union Chapel, ongoing charitable activities at the golf clubs (including the caddie camp at Sankaty Head Golf and Beach Club and the Children's fund raising events at Nantucket Golf Club) and annual scholarship gifts from the 'Sconset Civic Association.

5.6 SAP supports research to abate the erosion of the easternmost coast line of the island.

5.7 SAP supports the efforts of the 'Sconset Trust to protect and preserve Sankaty Head Lighthouse, including its relocation to a safe location inland from the original 1850 site, along with the creation of an educational and passive recreational facility (non-structural) in the open land associated with the lighthouse station.

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### **6. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION**

**The Open Space and Recreation element provides an inventory of recreational resources and open space areas of the municipality, and policies and strategies for the management and protection of such resources and areas.**

#### **Open space and recreation recommendations for 'Sconset**

- 6.1 SAP supports the protection and conservation of the greenbelt surrounding 'Sconset to the southwest, west and north of the village and supports the role of the 'Sconset Trust as a custodian of lands in conservation.
- 6.2 SAP encourages the use of conservation restrictions and other conservation tools where applicable as a means to conserve open land and provide recreational use on lands in and around the greenbelt including the current open land at the Loran Low Beach location.
- 6.3 SAP supports other island conservation groups to continue to hold lands previously deeded to these organizations as conservation land.
- 6.4 SAP encourages the continued maintenance of and life guard service at the public beach at Codfish Park.
- 6.5 SAP supports the continued maintenance and upkeep of the Codfish Park swing area by the Town Park and Recreation Commission for the benefit of the families of residents and visitors.
- 6.6 SAP encourages the Nantucket Conservation Foundation to maintain Larsen Park adjacent to the market as a gathering place.
- 6.7 SAP supports the continued and permanent operation of the historic Siasconset Golf Club off the Milestone Road as a public golf course.

### **7. SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

**The Services and Facilities element identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted needs for facilities and services used by the public.**

#### **Services and facilities recommendations for 'Sconset**

- 7.1 SAP encourages the effective enforcement of parking rules with the clear delineation of parking spaces with lines and signage and the maximizing of parking capabilities on public streets.
- 7.2 SAP supports the construction of a new water tower at the old ball Field as well as the installation of a water metering system throughout 'Sconset. SAP recommends continued enhancement of water pressure for public safety and water conservation.
- 7.3 SAP supports the protection of the quality and quantity of water in the aquifer.
- 7.4 SAP supports the periodic monitoring of water quality at Tom Nevers Pond.

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- 7.5 SAP supports the continuing presence of a Fire Department substation within the village.
- 7.6 SAP supports the continued presence of a U.S. Post Office facility in the village.
- 7.7 SAP supports the maintenance and periodic updating of the public comfort station located on New Street.

### **8. CIRCULATION**

**The Circulation element provides an inventory of existing and proposed circulation and transportation systems.**

#### **Circulation recommendations for 'Sconset**

- 8.1 Because traffic and circulation are reaching a saturation point in the village during the summer months, SAP recommends that any further economic development must be evaluated in connection with this congestion.
- 8.2 SAP supports the preservation of public safety in vehicular and pedestrian areas through improved police enforcement activities.
- 8.3 SAP recommends the preparation and passage of a home rule bill to enable the village to set its own speed limit below the current 30 MPH limit.
- 8.4 SAP supports the review of extended NRTA services, including consideration for year round service as the village becomes more of a year round residential location.
- 8.5 SAP recommends the retention of the town-owned parcel of land at the north end of Shell Street as a public parking area throughout the year.

### **9. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

**The Implementation Program element defines and schedules the specific municipal actions necessary to achieve the objectives of each element of the master or study plan. Scheduled expansion or replacement of public facilities or circulation system components and the anticipated costs and revenues associated with accomplishment of such activities shall be detailed in this element. This element shall specify the process by which the municipality's regulatory structures shall be amended so as to be consistent with the master plan.**

#### **Implementation recommendations for 'Sconset**

- 9.1 SAP recognizes that planning is an ongoing process, and recommends that NP&EDC work with a 'Sconset Planning Committee, which will be appointed by the Siasconset Civic Association in conjunction with The 'Sconset Trust, to remain involved in the implementation and updates of the 'Sconset portions of the Nantucket Master Plan.

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**Siasconset Zoning**

The current zoning standards are:

SOH = Sconset Old Historic  
Minimum lot size is 5,000 sq. ft.  
Minimum frontage is 50 feet  
Ground cover ratio is 50%  
Front yard setback is 0 feet  
Side and rear setbacks are 5 feet

SR-1 = Sconset Residential 1  
Minimum lot size is 5,000 sq. ft.  
Minimum frontage is 50 feet  
Ground cover ratio is 30%  
Front yard setback is 10 feet  
Side and rear setbacks are 5 feet

SR-2 = Sconset Residential 2  
Minimum lot size is 20,000 sq. ft.  
Minimum frontage is 75 feet  
Ground cover ratio is 12.5%  
Front yard setback is 30 feet  
Side and rear setbacks are 10 feet