



OAK BLUFFS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN



**Prepared in conjunction with the Oak Bluffs Community Development Plan
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Oak Bluffs Community Development Plan

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE

1.1.1 Martha's Vineyard

Oak Bluffs is one of six towns forming the Island of Martha's Vineyard, a 100-square-mile island located nearly four miles off the coast of Cape Cod. The Island is a terminal moraine, marking the southern progression of the last Ice Age. Home to the Wampanoag Native Americans, it was settled by Europeans in the mid 17th century.

Today, year-round residents, seasonal residents – many of whom own second homes – and hundreds of thousands of short-term visitors live on or come to the Island, attracted by the unique natural, historical, and cultural values that define the beauty and character of Martha's Vineyard.

As a coastal island, Martha's Vineyard's climate is influenced by warm Gulf Stream waters that moderate the Island's seasons. Summers are a bit cooler than the mainland, providing refuge from nearby hot and humid metropolitan areas such as Boston and New York. Winters are milder and autumn generally lasts longer than on the mainland, providing a more favorable climate for vacationers year-round.

Each of the Island's towns reflects its origins: Edgartown as the historical home of master seamen during the whaling era and still the seat of County government; Tisbury as the Island's year round gateway and market town, Oak Bluffs as the Island's first summer resort and continued concentration of summer activity, West Tisbury and Chilmark as agricultural villages, Aquinnah (formerly called Gay Head) as the Island's remaining Wampanoag Indian settlement and the site of perhaps the Island's most recognizable feature and only National Natural Landmark – Gay Head Cliffs. Three-quarters of the Island's population is distributed equally among the three "down-Island" towns: Tisbury, Oak Bluffs and Edgartown, each with a busy commercial town center. Vineyard Haven in Tisbury serves as the Island's main port, but is matched by Oak Bluffs in volume of passengers in the summertime. The three "up-Island" towns, West Tisbury, Chilmark and Aquinnah are more rural in character.

From 1900 to 1960, the year-round population of the Vineyard increased a bit more than 30%. The population doubled in the last quarter of the 20th Century, increasing 30% each decade. By comparison, in the 1990s, the year-round population increased only 6% in all of Massachusetts.

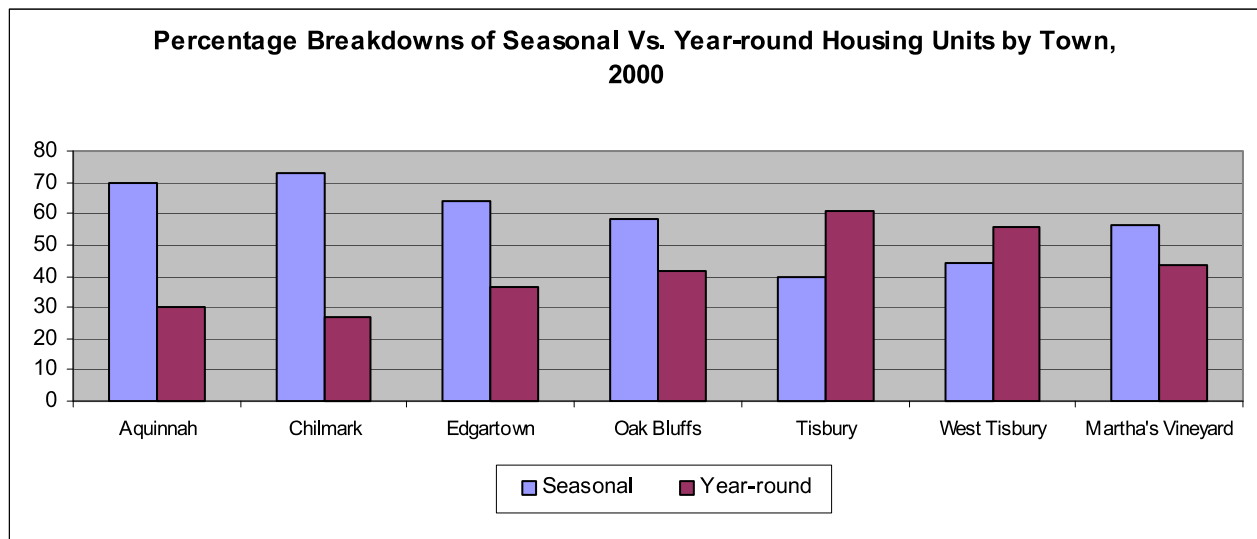
As a seasonal vacation area, the number of people on the Island changes dramatically from one season to the next. The Martha's Vineyard Commission estimates that the nearly 15,000 year-round Vineyard population in 2000 swelled to about 70,000 during the peak summer months of July and August. This summer population is made up of several distinct groups, each with its own influences and needs.

Estimated Average Summer Population – 2000

	Aquinnah	Chilmark	Edgartown	Oak Bluffs	Tisbury	West Tisbury	Total
Year 'round	344	843	3,779	3,713	3,755	2,467	14,901
Guests of Year 'round	141	382	1,582	1,590	1,646	1,034	6,375
Seasonal / Vacationers	1,536	4,894	13,251	10,637	5,123	3,888	39,329
Transients							
lodging rooms	42	158	1,944	1192	860	190	4,386
on boats			408	504	600		1,512
camping					432		432
Day Trippers			500	5,000	2,500		8,000
Cruise Passengers				1,000			1,000
Total	2,063	6,277	21,464	23,636	14,916	7,579	75,035

- Year-round population as reported by 2000 US Census. Some people have estimated that there are as many as 1,000 additional year-round residents and a total of 3,000 additional summer residents who are undocumented aliens. In the absence of clear data, they are not included.
- Guests of Year-round residents estimated as an average of 1 person for each of the 6,375 year-round households
- Seasonal Residents / Vacationers include second-home owners and renters who visit for a week or more. They are estimated as an average of 4.77 people for each of the 8,246 seasonal housing units, based on the results of a survey carried out by the Oak Bluffs Planning Board. It is estimated that about two-thirds of these are seasonal residents.
- Transients stay on-island for less than a week. Estimations assume two people per room and 100% occupancy for July and August in the Island's 2,200 lodging rooms, hotels, inns and B&Bs. The Edgartown, Oak Bluffs and Tisbury Harbor Masters estimated 3 or 4 people per boat and occupancy rates between 80% and 100% for the 468 boats that can be accommodated on slips and moorings in these three harbors. Camping is based on an average of 3 people per tent and 80% summer occupancy for the Island's 180 campsites in the MV Family Campground.
- Day Trippers arrive and leave the Vineyard on the same day. Estimates assume two-thirds of the peak passenger ferry ridership of 12,000 on peak summer days are day-trippers and the others stay for a longer period. Allocation among towns is based upon port of entry.
- Cruise Passengers are day trippers. Assumes one cruise ship with a capacity of 1,000 people in harbor on a peak day; in 2002, most cruise ships came in the spring and fall. Allocation among towns is based upon port of entry.

Source: MVC, 2003



Source: U.S. Census

It is easy to understand why the cornerstone of the Island's economy is providing services to seasonal residents and visitors. Island-wide, there are more seasonal homes – houses not occupied in the winter – than year-round homes. Only two Vineyard towns have more year-round homes than seasonal ones. The tourism and service industry is highly image-conscious, seasonal and labor intensive. Nevertheless, a large majority of the businesses on the Island employs four or fewer workers each. As the year-round population continues to expand, more businesses are needed and supported throughout the year.

Martha's Vineyard is marked by relative seclusion from the mainland, by its highly variable seasonal populations, by its lifestyles and landscapes dominated by the ocean and salt ponds, and by economic constraints unique to island communities.

1.1.2 Oak Bluffs

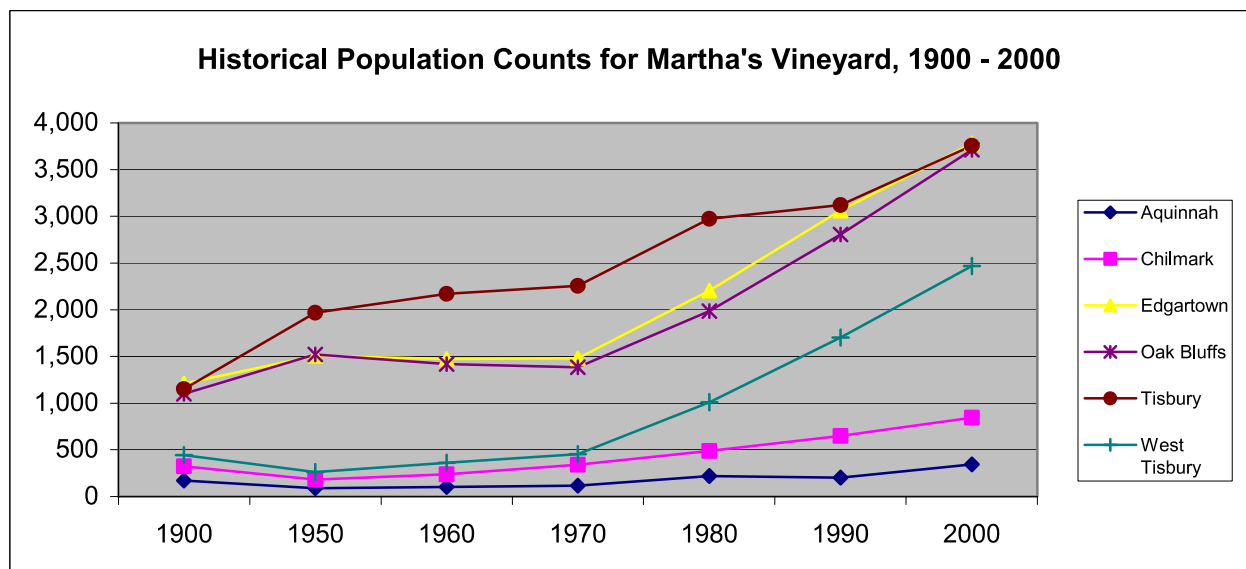
Oak Bluffs occupies a peninsula on the northeastern coast of Martha's Vineyard and comprises approximately 7.37 square miles. Oak Bluffs is a predominantly residential community known for its vibrant town center and harbor, its beautiful beaches, and its Victorian/gingerbread architecture and numerous parks stemming from its history as a popular location for religious camp meetings. The following description is excerpted from the Town's 1996 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Geographically, Oak Bluffs is practically "an island within an island." It is separated from Tisbury, the Island's year-round port of entry, by the Lagoon Pond, which runs along much of Oak Bluffs' western boundary. To the north and east the Town is bounded by the waters of the Nantucket Sound; and to the south, the waters of Sengekontacket Pond and the 5,000-acre State Forest, forming the boundary with Edgartown.

Oak Bluffs' landscape changes as one moves from the harborfront at the north end of the town to the interior of the Island. The downtown landscape is characterized by a densely built bustling "main street" (Circuit Avenue), surrounded by planned neighborhoods built on narrow, gracefully curving parallel roads. To the north, the East Chop bluffs rise above the Nantucket Sound; to the east, the Beach Road passes in between the waters of the same Sound and Sengekontacket Pond, providing long vistas and recreational beachfront opportunities; to the west, Barnes Road provides glimpses of the Lagoon Pond beyond discreetly sited pond-front homes and cottages. Public access to the Lagoon remains limited at present. Moving south and to the interior of the Town, coastal areas give rise to softly rolling hills supporting stands of White and Black Oaks, pine, and Beech. Towards the interior "Southwest Triangle," open farmlands and dense scrub oak forests predominate.

1.1.3 Population and Income

While occupying only 7.3 percent of the Island's landmass, in 2000 Oak Bluffs had just over 25 percent of the Island's population. Since 1970, the year-round population growth of Oak Bluffs has been significant, increasing by 43, 41 and 32 percent, respectively, for each of the last three decades. From 1970 to 2000, Oak Bluffs added 2,328 year round residents; overall, a 168 percent increase.



Source: U.S. Census

According to the US Census 2000, the median age of 39.4 years for Oak Bluffs is higher than the 36.5 years for Massachusetts but slightly lower than the 40.7 years median age for all of Dukes County.

The median household income in Oak Bluffs was \$42,044 and the median family income was \$53,841, placing the town fourth among the other island towns. The area median income, as

reported by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, for a family of four, in fiscal year (FY) 2000 in Dukes County was \$53,200. Approximately 30 percent of owner-occupied households in Oak Bluffs, and 22 percent of renter-occupied households, pay over the recommended threshold of 35 percent of their gross incomes for housing. Eight percent of Oak Bluffs' population lives in poverty, according to the 2000 US Census, compared to 7.3% for Dukes County and 9.3% for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Median Incomes for Dukes County, 2000		
	Median Household	Median Family
Aquinnah	\$45,208	\$45,458
Chilmark	\$41,917	\$63,750
Edgartown	\$50,407	\$55,153
Gosnold	\$22,344	\$27,500
Oak Bluffs	\$42,044	\$53,841
Tisbury	\$37,041	\$53,051
West Tisbury	\$54,077	\$59,514
Dukes County	\$45,559	\$55,018

Source: U.S. Census

1.1.4 Zoning and Land Use

The Town of Oak Bluffs has four residential districts and two business districts. Nearly 60% of the Town has a minimum residential lot size of 60,000 square feet, but another 21% has only a 10,000 square foot minimum. Nearly all of the remainder of the Town is divided roughly equally between 20,000 and 130,000 square-foot residential districts. Less than one-and-a-half percent of the town's land is within its two business districts or health care district, and mixed residential uses are allowed in the business districts.

Oak Bluffs Land Cover/Use (Acres)	1971	1986	1999
Agriculture	151	92	58
Open Undeveloped Land	284	257	239
Natural Land/Undisturbed Vegetation	2,879	2,430	1,918
Commercial	29	29	29
Industrial/Transportation/Mining	117	134	124
Urban Open/Institutional/Recreation	268	372	400
High Density Residential	175	179	179
Medium Density Residential	343	402	482
Low Density Residential	407	790	1,257

Using the interpretation of aerial photography, the University of Massachusetts has tracked land cover or land use data (MacConnell Land Use). The data show that low-density residential acreage in Oak Bluffs was more than tripled between 1971 and 1999, and that medium-density

residential acreage was increased substantially, with concomitant decline in undisturbed land. Agricultural acreage was decreased by two-thirds. Increases were noted in urban open land. Overall, the data show developed land to have been increased by 12% Island-wide during the twenty-eight year period shown. During that time, developed land in Oak Bluffs was increased by 22.7%, more than for any other Island town.

Development Island-wide 1971-1999						
	Change from Undeveloped to Developed Land (acres)			Change as Percent of Total Area		
Town	1971 - 1985	1985 - 1999	1971 - 1999	1971-1985	1985-1999	1971-1999
Aquinnah	56	218	274	1.5%	5.9%	7.4%
Chilmark	371	502	873	2.8%	3.8%	6.7%
Edgartown	1,133	979	2,111	6.2%	5.3%	11.5%
Oak Bluffs	525	555	1,080	11.0%	11.7%	22.7%
Tisbury	465	314	780	11.1%	7.5%	18.5%
West Tisbury	820	1,431	2,251	4.9%	8.5%	13.4%
Vineyard	3,371	3,998	7,369	5.5%	6.6%	12.1%

Using a different methodology, the Massachusetts' Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' 2002 Buildout Study estimated that 48% of Oak Bluffs is already developed and just over 1,400 acres, or 30%, of land in Oak Bluffs is protected as open space or Town-owned. The remaining 22% of the town – 1,014 acres – is potentially available for future development or conservation.

2000 Estimated Protected, Developed and Available Land							
Town	AQ	CH	ED	OB	TI	WT	Island
Total (acres)	3,690	13,553	18,184	4,680	4,142	16,878	61,127
Protected Open Space* (%)	15%	29%	39%	30%	20%	42%	34%
Developed/Built** (%)	53%	36%	35%	48%	51%	30%	37%
"Available" *** (%)	32%	35%	26%	22%	29%	27%	29%
"Available" (acres)	1,177	4,792	4,664	1,014	1,214	4,609	17,470

*Protected Open Space includes municipally owned land not necessarily used for open space.

**Developed/Built includes lands that are prevented from being developed, such as wetland buffers.

***Available is defined as land that is neither Protected Open Space nor Developed/Built.

Source: EOEA Buildout Study, 2002

A 2003 survey of land use by the Oak Bluffs Community Development Plan Steering Committee provided an alternative method for identifying land use among broad use-categories. The Committee identified land use by assessor parcel rather than the Buildout Study's methodology relying upon land cover. The Committee's survey did not include land in roadways, which may account for as much as 300 acres. The Committee's estimate of 1,081 acres is very similar to the Buildout Study's estimate of 1,014 acres. The 2,157 acres of developed or unbuildable land calculated by the Committee is probably closer to 2,450 acres when adding the roadways,

bringing the estimate closer to the 2,224 acres from the Buildout Study. Open space contained the biggest discrepancy between measurements; the Committee identified 923 acres of protected open space, compared to the Buildout's 1,404 acres. Some of the difference is explained by the greater amount the Committee identified as developed/unbuildable and to the Buildout Study's methodology of including municipal-owned land in the open space category.

Within the context of the preparation of this Community Development Plan, the Martha's Vineyard Commission revised and updated the analysis of protected, developed and available land. The following table gives the resulting figures.

- 'Protected' areas are lands that, according to the Island's conservation groups, are either under fee ownership or indicated as having a CR or APR. The wetlands displayed are only those that are not currently 'protected'.
- 'Developed' areas were determined by MAPC during the Buildout Study in 2000 and only those 'developed' areas that do not coincide with 'protected' or 'wetland' areas are displayed.
- 'Available' land is any remaining land.

2003 Estimated Protected, Developed and Available Land							
Town	AQ	CH	ED	OB	TI	WT	Island
Total (acres)	3,510	12,442	17,762	4,735	4,300	16,195	58,963
Protected Open Space (%)	22%	20%	40%	30%	20%	40%	32%
Developed/Built (%)	33%	40%	32%	40%	47%	35%	36%
Wetland (%)	13%	6%	7%	3%	5%	2%	5%
"Available" (%)	31%	33%	22%	33%	29%	22%	26%
"Available" (acres)	1,094	4,079	3,827	1,557	1,245	3,632	15,435

Source: Martha's Vineyard Commission and Conservation Partnership, 2004

1.2 CONSTRAINTS ON DEVELOPMENT

1.2.1 Availability of Land

Many factors contribute to determine the supply of land available to be developed and the demand for land. The combination of these two produces a market price for land. The rising cost of land has been primarily due to the tourist and seasonal nature of the Vineyard. Second-home buyers are able to outbid many year-round residents, causing a sharp increase in real estate values. The potential supply of home lots is also constrained by minimum lot size requirements of 1.5 acres or more. Twenty percent of the Town's available land was zoned for a minimum lot size of three acres (130,000 square feet). State health regulations also pose increased lot size requirements to protect groundwater quality. Successful land conservation during the 1980's and 1990's – while helping to preserve natural and cultural community character and values – has also reduced the supply of land that might be developed. However, the Martha's Vineyard Land

Bank, which is responsible for the majority of land added each year to conservation, is working closely with affordable housing groups to acquire properties that advance both conservation causes and the number of affordable housing units.

A recent example of this occurred in Oak Bluffs. The future of the largest single tract of potentially developable land, the 290-acre Southern Woodlands, was determined, namely a combination of conservation and market housing that will result in an overall density of more than ten acres per residential lot. However, the plan allows for a land swap that will allow development by the Town of alternative to a land-locked 23-acre site for affordable housing.

1.2.2 Drinking Water

Public water service is not a limiting constraint for development. More than 95% of all homes are connected to the Town water system in Oak Bluffs, with only the areas in the northern part of the “triangle” obtaining drinking water from on-site wells. The Town water system is readily expanded and a 2003 MVC study found the water supply system sufficiently sized to accommodate anticipated growth.

According to Martha’s Vineyard Source Water Protection Project, 3,616 residences served by the municipal supply in 2000 consumed 2.39 million gallons per day (mgd) during the peak week. MVC projected at buildout a peak consumption of 3.07 mgd during the peak week, assuming that 100% of the 4,640 residences would be served by the municipal supply at buildout. At the time of the report, the Oak Bluffs system was authorized to withdraw 4.28 mgd, apparently adequate to meet the demand projected at buildout. Nevertheless, the report noted that from an operational standpoint, some redundancy in any system is essential for ensuring adequately meeting consumption and fire protection needs, and recommended the planning and installation of infrastructure for that redundancy.

Regarding water quality issues, the report notes specific land use issues for each Zone II wellhead protection area. There are two Zone II’s in Oak Bluffs for four individual wells.

The Lagoon-State Forest Zone II includes the Lagoon Pond Well, the State Forest Well and Well #4. The Lagoon-State Forest Zone II is treated as a single Zone II, including 2,443 acres. Land use may be described as rural agricultural, with the exception of the NSTAR headquarters and a sand and gravel operation that is also the site of the White Brothers asphalt plant. Farms within the Zone II include Whippoorwill Farm (vegetables), Norton Farm (vegetables), Thimble Farm (small fruits and commercial greenhouse) and Chicama Vineyard (grapes). Much of the Zone II is within Oak Bluffs Water District land, conservation land or the Manuel F. Correllus State Forest. Most of the zone’s 641 houses are located in the Town of West Tisbury.

The Farm Neck Zone II is for the Farm Neck well alone. The Farm Neck Well is located close to the center of Oak Bluffs and includes a variety of high intensity land uses. North of the well site, residential density is high (less than ½ acre per lot). According to the land use base, there are 1,482 houses in the Zone II. A number of automotive uses are located within the Zone II,

including Ben David's Auto Body, Bink's Auto Repair, Buddy's Auto Repair, Leite's Auto Salvage, Jay's Auto Body and Leonardo's Auto Graveyard. The Martha's Vineyard Regional High School is located within the Zone II, as well as a number of other non-residential uses located on high school property, including Martha's Vineyard Ice Arena, a community skateboard park, and Martha's Vineyard Community Services (counseling, child care, etc.). The capped Oak Bluffs Landfill is located within the Zone II. A transfer station is presently located on the site, as well as the Town Barn and abandoned septage lagoons. Also located within the Zone II are: the Catholic Cemetery, a sign maker, White Brothers Gravel Pit, part of Farm Neck Golf Course, and several town ball fields (no fertilizer applied). The residential density is low to the east of County Road and south of the Landfill (between 1 and 3 acre lot sizes). It is important to note that much of the land area of the Lagoon-State Forest Zone II is outside of the boundaries of the Town, and thus outside of the jurisdiction of the Town's land use regulations. Cooperation among the neighboring towns is key to planning for drinking water quality.

1.2.3 Water Quality

The Town installed a sewer system within the downtown commercial and harbor area as well as the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association and part of the primarily residential Copeland Historic District, in 2002. Moreover, although the system's capacity is designed for an annual increase in sewerage from the service area of three percent for twenty years, most of Oak Bluffs is not served by any sewer system and relies upon individual septic systems. Nitrogen loading from septic systems is a serious concern, particularly in watersheds of nitrogen-sensitive coastal ponds. Many of these ponds are already at their nitrogen-loading limit, yet contain land for additional home lots. In Oak Bluffs, 60 percent of the potentially developable land identified by the Buildout Study lies within one of three nitrogen threatened great ponds; 93% of this potentially developable land lies within the Lagoon Pond watershed.

Potential Development in Watersheds of Nitrogen-Sensitive Great Ponds					
Pond	Percentage of Entire Watershed "Available" for Development	Percentage of Watershed's "Available" Land Within Town	Percentage of Town's "Available" Land Within Watershed	Proportion of Town's Potential Additional Lots Within Watershed Number	%
Farm Pond	22.6	100.0	2.2	27	3.3
Lagoon Pond	24.8	59.3	56.0	436	53.2
Oak Bluffs Harbor/Sunset Lake	10.9	100.0	3.9	72	8.8

Source: 2002 EOE Buildout Study; MVC

Future residential development of land is limited by the lack of access to town sewer services within Oak Bluffs. All new homes, and all existing homes when they are sold to new owners, have to adhere to the State's Title 5 regulations, which for individual septic systems are enforced by the Town Board of Health. This restricts many developable lots to a development density of one bedroom per 10,000 square feet of lot area, despite the zoning for much of these areas

allowing a minimum lot size for an entire house of 10,000 or 20,000 square feet. If developable lots are located within wetlands or nitrogen-sensitive areas, there are further limits to the development's size and density. In addition to stricter regulations that could require advanced denitrification systems, the installation cost and maintenance of these systems can be a financial constraint to the development of affordable housing. Should the Town consider allowing increased density of development – for the purposes of affordable housing, for example – nitrogen loading will be a development constraint.

1.3 PLANNING CONTEXT

1.3.1 The Island Plan - Martha's Vineyard Regional Plan

In 1991, the MVC published the Regional Island Plan, the result of several years of concerted community effort. It sets out a series of policies for growth management. Following the publication of the Island Plan, the MVC published a series of action plans outlining specific policies and a series of actions for implementing them. These plans are:

- Island Transportation Plan – 2003
- Martha's Vineyard Housing Report – 1994
- Economic Base Study – 1994
- Open Space Action Plan – 1991

The goals and strategies of the Island Plan have continued to guide the MVC, both in pursuing planning activities and in deciding on development proposals.

1.3.2 The Oak Bluffs Master Plan

Oak Bluffs' current Master Plan was adopted on June 3, 1998. It is an update of the Town's first Master Plan written in 1985. The current plan is the result of a planning exercise initiated by the Planning Board in 1996. It is based in part on a survey mailed to all Oak Bluffs property owners, post office box holders and rural route customers, which resulted in 590 responses, as well as a series of master planning sessions focusing on growth and lifestyle issues. The plan was the basis for a major rewriting of the Town's zoning bylaws adopted in 2003.

1.3.3 The Oak Bluffs Open Space Plan

The current Oak Bluffs Open Space plan was prepared in 1996. Two of the goals from the plan dealt specifically with the largest contiguous undeveloped area of town – the Southern Woodlands / Webbs / Featherstone area. The goals called for a well-developed plan preserving as much of the area as possible as open space and providing preservation of large wooded tracts with continuous walking trails, a picnic area, and modest, non-intrusive recreational elements. The final plan for this area as approved by the Martha's Vineyard Commission in April 2004 corresponds almost completely with this vision with preservation of two-thirds of the property as an open space by the Land Bank and with limited development on the remainder of the property. The Town's Open Space Plan is being updated for 2004.

1.3.4 The Buildout Study

In 2002, the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Environmental Affairs released its studies of each town's potential capacity to accommodate additional growth and development. The 'Buildout' study categorized all of the towns' land as developed, permanently protected open space, or developable – potentially available for development. EOEA relied on the MacConnell Land Use identification of land cover from aerial photography to determine developed areas and used the Division of Conservation Services records of permanently conserved lands. Land neither developed nor conserved was considered potentially 'developable.' From the towns' existing land use zoning codes underlying the developable lands, and considering the lot density of properties subdivided over the 1990s, EOEA calculated the number of additional homes that could theoretically be built on the remaining developable land in each town. The towns' zoning bylaws were also used to identify areas that had partial constraints on the development of lands, such as buffers to wetlands. Once the number of new residential units was estimated, projections of the increases in year round and seasonal populations – and their impacts upon schools, roads and solid waste – were also calculated.

Buildout Study Projections							
Town	AQ	CH	ED	OB	TI	WT	Island
Households (seasonal & year-round)							
1990	82	953	3,053	3,172	2,387	1,320	10,967
2000	141	1,409	4,360	3,820	2,720	1,849	14,299
Additional Projected	265	1,341	2,316	820	1,001	1,289	7,032
Buildout Total	406	2,750	6,676	4,640	3,721	3,138	21,331
Population (year-round)							
1990	201	650	3,062	2,804	3,120	1,704	11,541
2000	344	843	3,779	3,713	3,755	2,467	14,901
Additional Projected	194	889	1,937	768	1,370	1,692	6,850
Buildout Total	538	1,732	5,716	4,481	5,125	4,159	21,751
Students							
1990	37	53	473	422	440	432	1,857
2000	48	120	569	664	571	483	2,455
Additional Projected	27	126	292	172	475	331	1,423
Buildout Total	75	246	861	836	1,046	814	3,878
Water Use (thousands of gallons/day)							
2000	25,800	63,225	789,000	857,000	609,000	185,025	2,529,050
Additional Projected	25,835	117,846	821,960	86,137	780,805	385,759	2,218,342
Buildout Total	51,635	181,071	1,610,960	943,137	780,805	570,784	4,138,392

Source: EOEA Buildout Studies, 2002, adjusted for corrected calculations by MVC, 2004

The purpose of the Buildout study was to prompt each of the Commonwealth's municipalities into re-evaluating whether its current zoning controls give the kind of direction to its pattern of development that is appropriate and to assess whether the town wishes to take steps to better directing future development and conservation of open space. While there may be questions about some of the specific assumptions and methodology of the Buildout studies, the premise of the community taking stock of the lands that remain open to either development or conservation and to determine what are the best uses of those lands from a community standpoint, is sound. This was the impetus to conduct this Community Development Plan.

1.4 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS

In April 2003, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts awarded grants – under Executive Order 418, the Community Development Planning Program – to each of the six towns of Martha's Vineyard. The grants allowed the towns to prepare Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping to aid in the evaluation of land suitability that will help to plan for appropriate growth management within each town. The Martha's Vineyard Commission worked with the towns to obtain these grants and was selected by each town as its consultant to conduct the planning work and assist in completing its Community Development Plan. Working with all six Island towns simultaneously, the MVC staff was able to develop a single methodology for determining land suitability, thereby facilitating comparable analysis on lands adjacent to another town's boundaries as well as coordination of future Island-wide planning efforts.

In evaluating the best or most appropriate uses of the town's remaining land that is not yet either developed or protected as open space, the Community Development Plan is required to address three areas:

1. Open Space and Natural Resource Protection,
2. Housing, and
3. Economic Development.

The housing and economic development elements are required to specifically address improving the conditions and opportunities of low, moderate and middle-income families and individuals. A fourth required area, transportation, was waived for all Island towns due to the MVC's 2003 updating of the Regional Transportation Plan for Martha's Vineyard.

The breadth of issues addressed in developing a Community Development Plan also provides materials the Town can apply to other planning efforts such as the Town's Affordable Housing Strategy and the update of the Town's Open Space & Recreation Plan and the Town's Master Plan, as well as for economic analysis for planning and development and updating the Martha's Vineyard Commission's Regional Island Plan. Towns with approved CD plans receive bonus points for competitive state grant programs, including the popular self-help grants. In addition, the process allows the updating of town records and the provision of digital maps and a database available to all town departments.

In the early Fall of 2003 a Steering Committee of Oak Bluffs officials and residents was established to work with the MVC on the Community Development Plan. At the initial meeting of

the MVC staff and the Steering Committee, the Committee reviewed land use/development goals and policies from existing town plans, affirming the majority of them to still be appropriate enough to proceed with the CD planning effort. The Committee met bi-monthly with the MVC staff and more frequently by itself. Committee members reviewed all of the Town's land parcels to verify their use and access and they compiled additional data layers for the computer-generated suitability analysis models. The Steering Committee identified project goals, assumptions and suitability criteria.

In addition, the planning effort benefited from a series of meetings of All-Island Planning Boards at which various aspects of the plans were discussed. On May 5, 2004, On May 5, 2004 the Steering Committee held a public meeting and accomplished the following goals:

- Presented to the public an overview of the 418 project, including the GIS mapping accomplishments & a preview of the preliminary planning goals that resulted from the 418 process
- Members of the public broke into three groups & each group met with MVC & Steering Committee members to discuss & apply values to three sets of land use suitability criteria (open space & natural resource protection, economic development & affordable housing); the discussion & "land use values" worksheets provided valuable feedback and triggered insightful conversations
- A public comment session provided additional feedback on general land use concerns & priorities

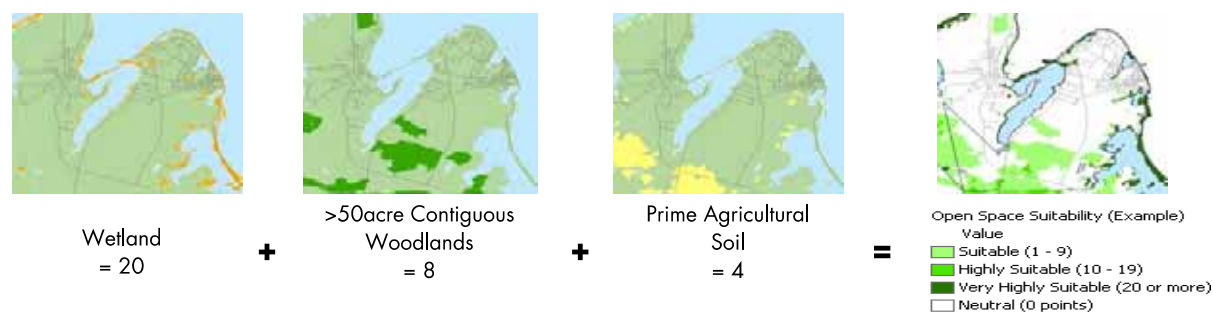
The public meeting was covered by the two island newspapers, the *Vineyard Gazette* and the *Martha's Vineyard Times*.

1.5 METHODOLOGY FOR DETERMINING SUITABILITY

The basis of the Community Development Planning effort was organizing and, particularly in the case of the Oak Bluffs Steering Committee, updating pre-existing information for the town in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) format, that is, as computerized maps reflecting information that is easily revised and updated. Existing maps were compiled and reformatted. They were also checked for accuracy as much as possible. For example, the Steering Committee performed a parcel level analysis and identified the current status (i.e. built, un-built, open space, Town-owned, etc.) of each parcel within Oak Bluffs using the Town assessor's maps and anecdotal information given from each committee member. In addition, a limited amount of data gathering was carried out, notably the preparation of a Scenic Value layer for each town.

A major focus of the effort was a series of suitability analyses, i.e. the preparation of a series of maps that indicate the suitability of various areas for each of the three functions – open space and natural resource conservation, housing, and economic development – based on a number of criteria chosen by the Steering Committees and at several joint meetings of the Island's planning boards. All the Steering Committees agreed to use the same set of criteria for all Island towns, in order to facilitate getting an Island-wide analysis and perspective. Thus, some criteria do not apply or are of less importance to some towns (e.g. "served by Town sewer" in Aquinnah or "working farm" in Oak Bluffs) but are retained for all towns, to maintain consistency.

Each of the criteria was given a point value between 2 and 20, based on how significant it was in determining the suitability of a given piece of land for the land use function under consideration. For example, a working farm was given a value of 20 for open space preservation, whereas being within 1000' from year-round shopping was given a value of 8 for housing development.



The next step was to prepare a map for each land use function, which compiled the overall rating, combining all the criteria that applied to that function. The result was the overall suitability of using land for that function, based on those criteria and weightings. The specific criteria and weightings are described in their respective chapters.

Subsequently, the housing and economic development maps were combined to give an overall "development" map and then this map was combined with the open space preservation map to indicate which parts of the Island are most suitable for preservation, for development, or for both. This synthesis is described in more detail in section 6.

It is important to note that each of the suitability maps does not take into consideration the present zoning, the present ownership, or how the land rates for other types of suitability. For example, an area may be indicated as "suitable for economic development" merely because it is close to an existing commercial area, even though it is not presently zoned for business and it might also be very highly suitable for open space preservation. This does not suggest that the Town should change its policy to allow for commercial development in this area.

Note that the suitability maps and the plan itself are not zoning maps nor do they impose any restriction on either landowners or Town decision-makers. The plan and maps are one assessment of the suitability of land for different uses based upon certain assumptions and goals. As any of these assumptions or goals change, likely so would the conclusions. Indeed, as the Island communities continue to work with the mapped data and increase their understanding of the implications and potential limitations of the information, the weighting of individual data layers is expected to change. It is even likely that, over time, whole data layers may be dropped or added to the suitability analysis.

With that said, it is also important to underline the limits of this kind of planning effort.

- On Martha's Vineyard, available land is so scarce and property values are so high that decisions on acquisition, say for open space preservation or the creation of affordable

housing, will probably depend more on opportunity than on suitability. That is, if a piece of land is available, it might well make sense for a town or another entity to use it for open space or for affordable housing, even if it does not rate in the highest category in the suitability analysis.

- This large-scale analysis is very useful to give an overview for the towns and the Island for planning purposes; however, it is not accurate enough to provide specific information about a particular parcel of land.

Notwithstanding the limitations of the methodology for evaluating the suitability of land on Martha's Vineyard for different land activities, the suitability maps provide an additional tool available to citizens and decision makers when evaluating existing circumstances in their communities.

1.6 MAPS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section is completed with a series of maps of existing conditions in Oak Bluffs, specifically:

- Existing Settlement
- Land Use Cover
- Parcel Classification (results of Steering Committee's inventorying)
- Water Resources
- Wetlands
- Habitat
- Soils
- Slopes
- Cultural Resource
- Developed, Protected and Available Land

**OAK BLUFFS
Community
Development Plan**

**Existing
Settlement**

- Road
- Primary Road
 - Secondary Road
 - Tertiary Road
- Oak Bluffs Parcels (2003)
- Oak Bluffs Buildings (2003)

NOTES:
Map prepared by the Morla's Vineyard Commission for the Oak Bluffs Community Development Plan under Commonwealth Executive Order 418.

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p. 508-695-3453, www.morlasvineyardcommission.org
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Settlement - MHD/Morla's, 2003
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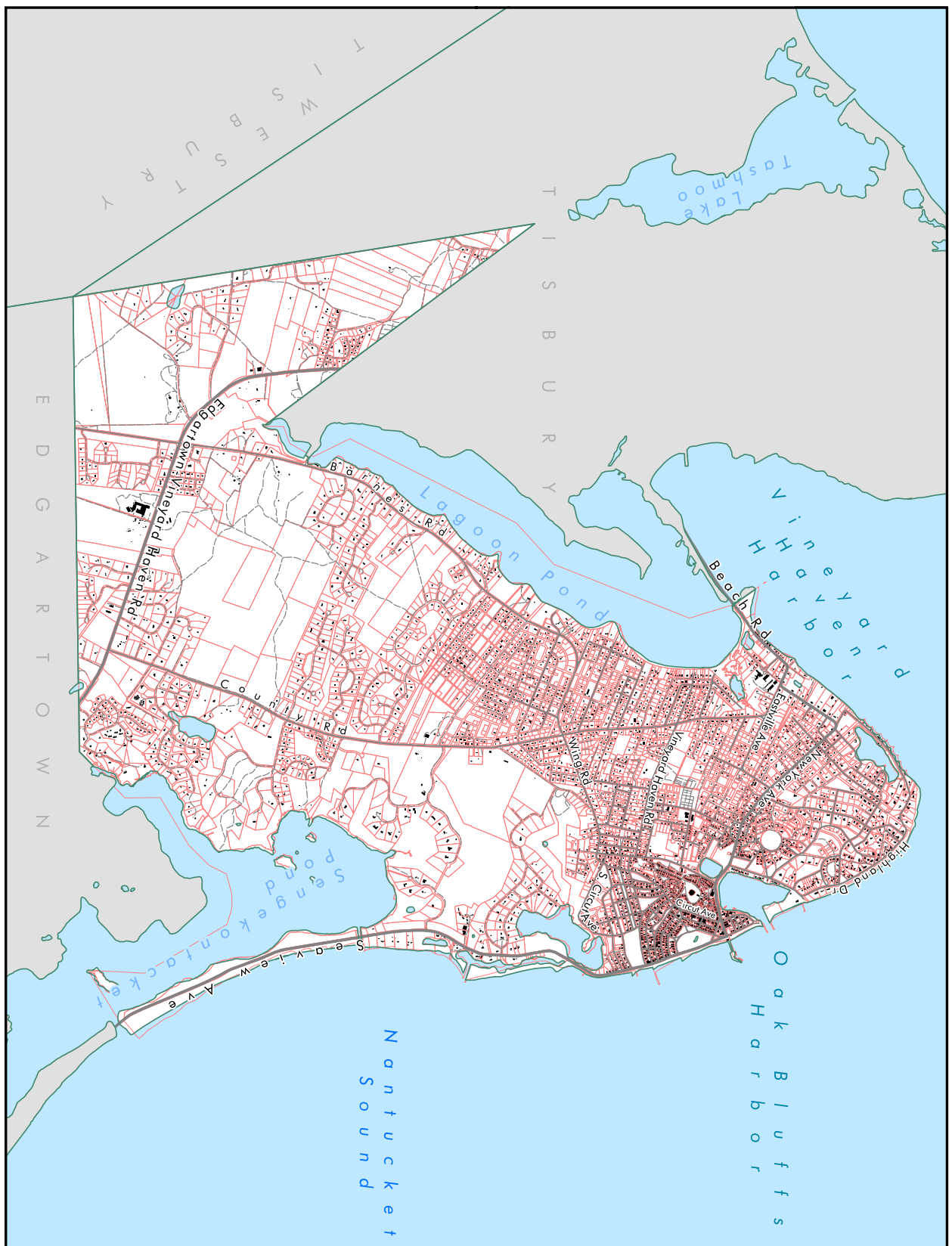
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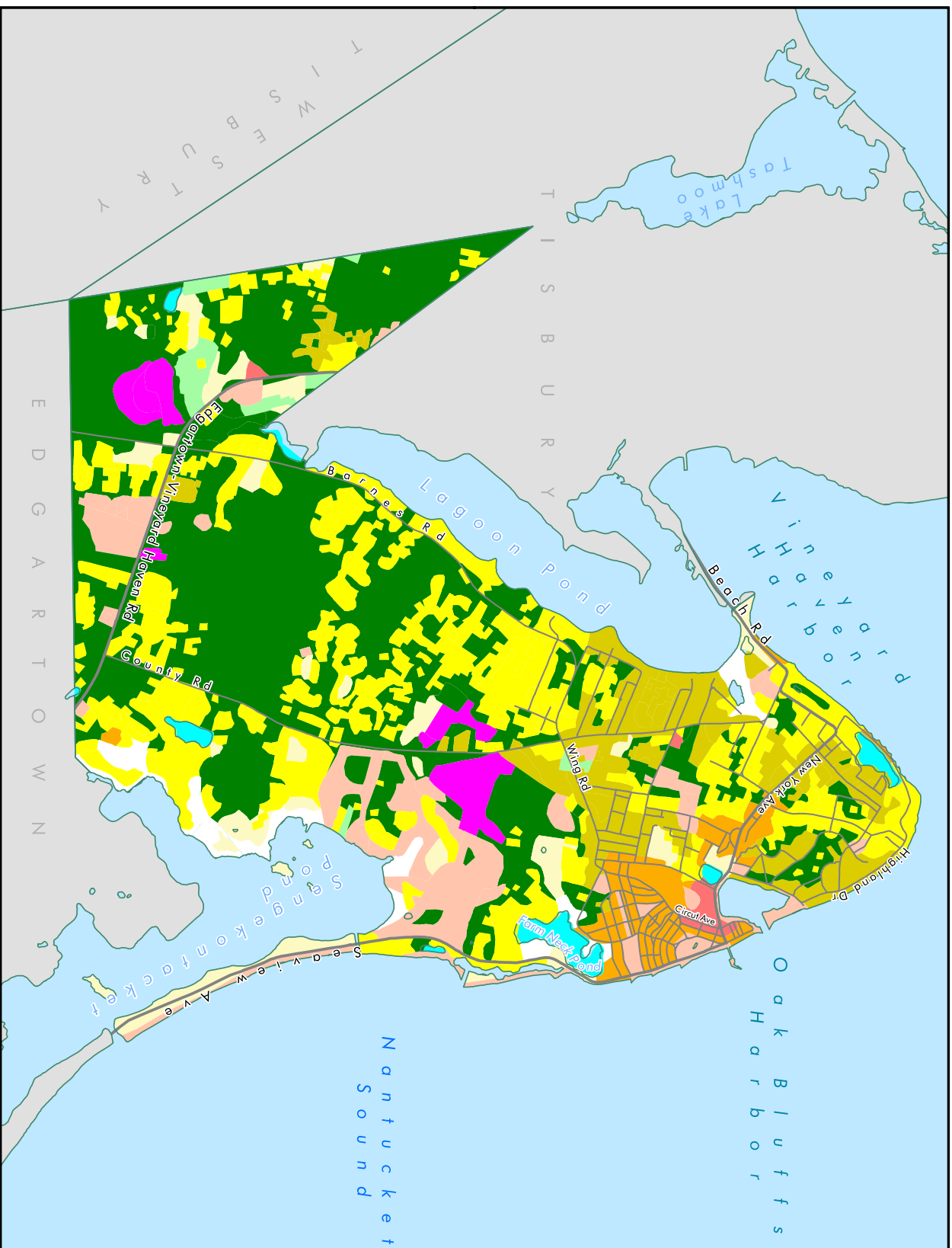
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Feet

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Department of
Transportation
Office of Environmental Affairs - 2004

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Department of
Transportation
Office of Environmental Affairs - 2004





OAK BLUFFS Community Development Plan

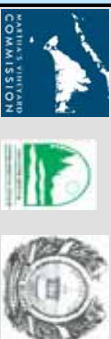
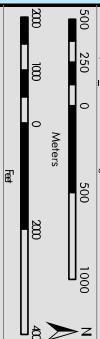
Land Use Cover

Oak Bluffs Land Use Cover

- Agriculture
 - Natural land/undisturbed vegetation
 - Industrial/transportation/mining
 - Open land
 - Urban open/institutional/recreation
 - HDR(higher density residential)
 - MDR(medium density residential)
 - LDR(low density residential)
 - Commercial
 - Water
- Road**
- Primary Road
 - Secondary Road

NOTES:
The land use cover classifications were determined from aerial photographs acquired in 1999.
Map prepared by the Martha's Vineyard Commission for the Oak Bluffs Community Development Plan under Commonwealth Executive Order 418.

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MDC/MSGIS 12003 Use - Modified 1997 Roads - Projection: Stereographic, MA Modified NAD83, Meters
File: 1151 col_undisturbed - Original in color



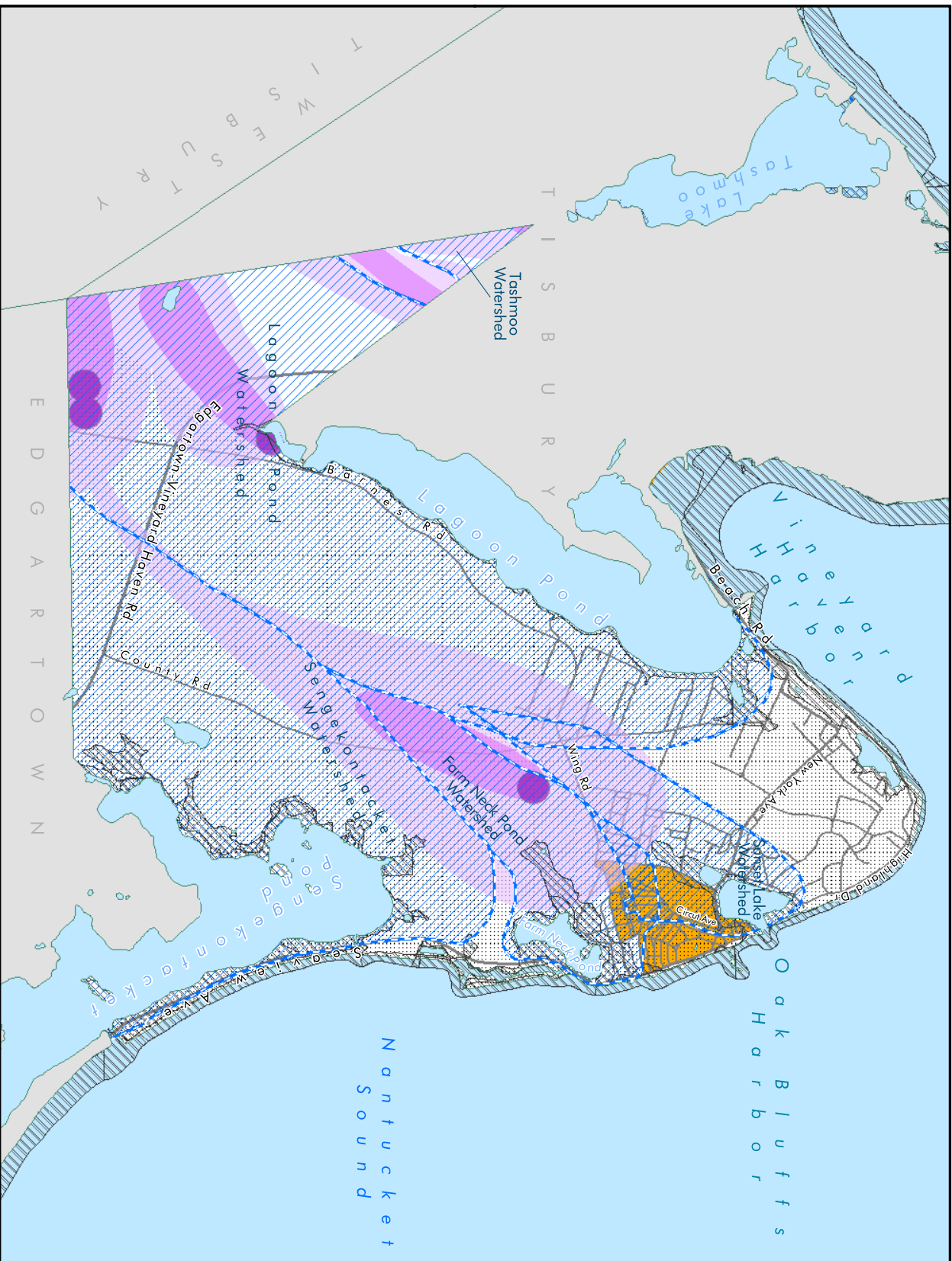
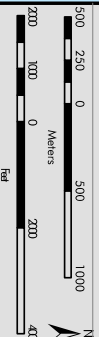
OAK BLUFFS Community Development Plan

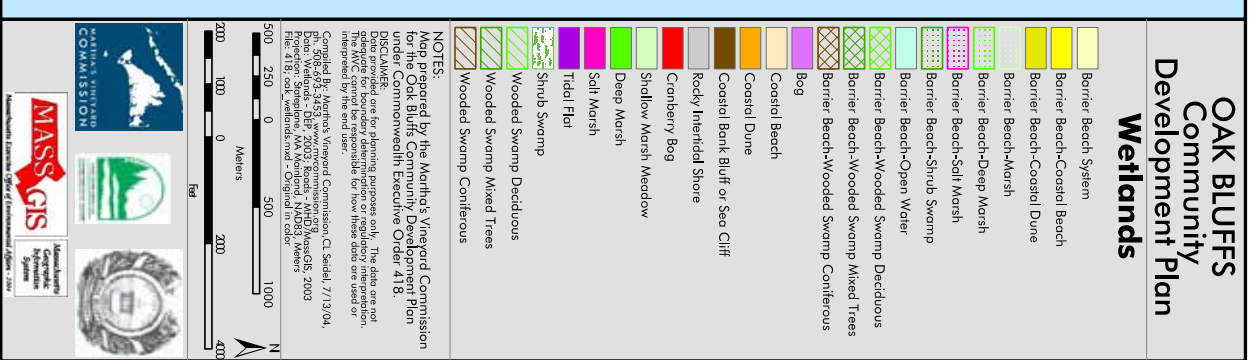
Water Resources

- Public Well
- Zone I
- Operational Zone of Influence
- Zone II
- Watershed Boundary
- Pond Watershed
- Coastal Watershed
- Flood Hazard Area
- Served by Town Sewer
- Served by Town Water
- Road
 - Primary Road
 - Secondary Road

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p. 508-695,3453 www.mvccommission.org
Date: Watershed - MVC 2003; Flood Hazard Area - FEMA 1997;
Avenue - MVC 2004; Road - MHD/Marcis 2003
File: 418; oak_12resources.mxd - Original in color





OAK BLUFFS
Community Development Plan
Wetlands

Barrier Beach System
 Barrier Beach-Coastal Beach
 Barrier Beach-Coastal Dune
 Barrier Beach-Marsh
 Barrier Beach-Deep Marsh
 Barrier Beach-Salt Marsh
 Barrier Beach-Shrub Swamp
 Barrier Beach-Open Water
 Barrier Beach-Wooded Swamp Deciduous
 Barrier Beach-Wooded Swamp Mixed Trees
 Barrier Beach-Wooded Swamp Coniferous
 Bog
 Coastal Beach
 Coastal Dune
 Coastal Bank Bluff or Sea Cliff
 Rocky Intertidal Shore
 Cranberry Bog
 Shallow Marsh Meadow
 Deep Marsh
 Salt Marsh
 Tidal Flat
 Shrub Swamp
 Wooded Swamp Deciduous
 Wooded Swamp Mixed Trees
 Wooded Swamp Coniferous

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Scale: 0 100 200 400 Feet
 North Arrow

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 Massachusetts Geographic Information System
 2003

- OAK BLUFFS**
Community Development Plan
Wetlands

Barrier Beach System
 Barrier Beach-Coastal Beach
 Barrier Beach-Coastal Dune
 Barrier Beach-Marsh
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 Shrub Swamp
 Wooded Swamp Deciduous
 Wooded Swamp Mixed Trees
 Wooded Swamp Coniferous

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Scale: 0 100 200 400 Feet
 North Arrow

MASS GIS
 Massachusetts Geographic Information System
 2003

OAK BLUFFS
Community Development Plan
Wetlands

Barrier Beach System
 Barrier Beach-Coastal Beach
 Barrier Beach-Coastal Dune
 Barrier Beach-Marsh
 Barrier Beach-Deep Marsh
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 Tidal Flat
 Shrub Swamp
 Wooded Swamp Deciduous
 Wooded Swamp Mixed Trees
 Wooded Swamp Coniferous

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Scale: 0 100 200 400 Feet
 North Arrow

MASS GIS
 Massachusetts Geographic Information System
 2003

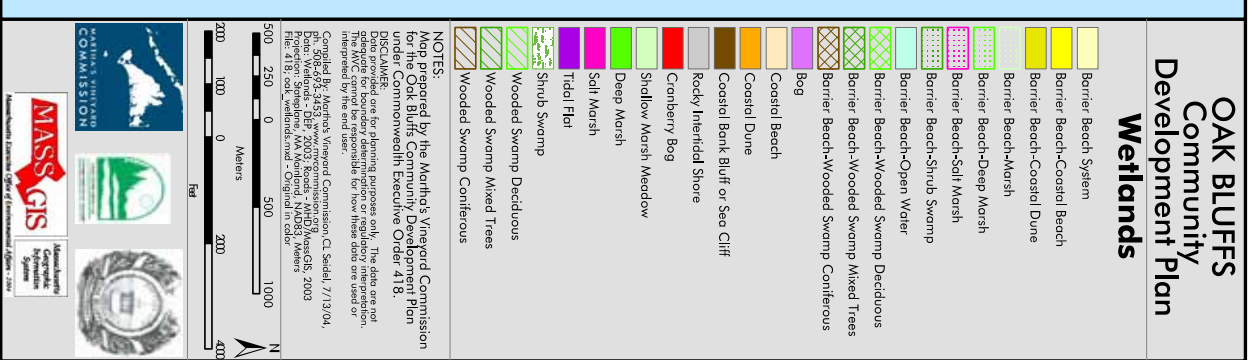
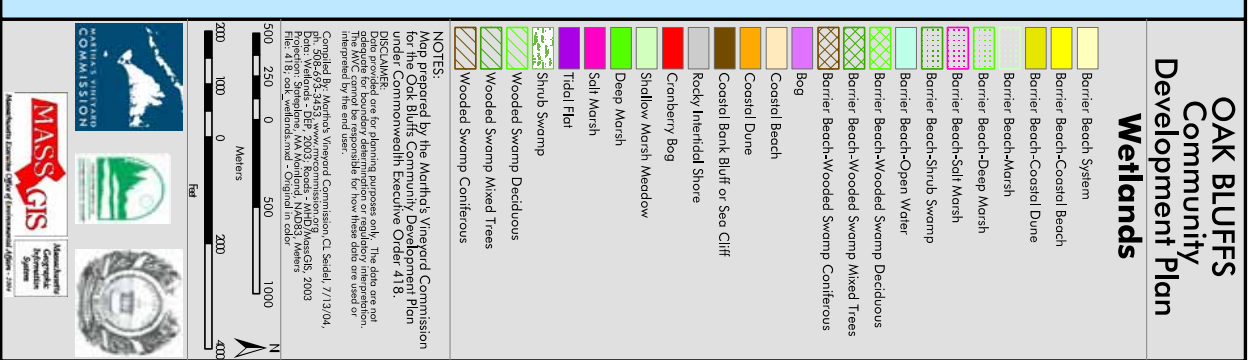
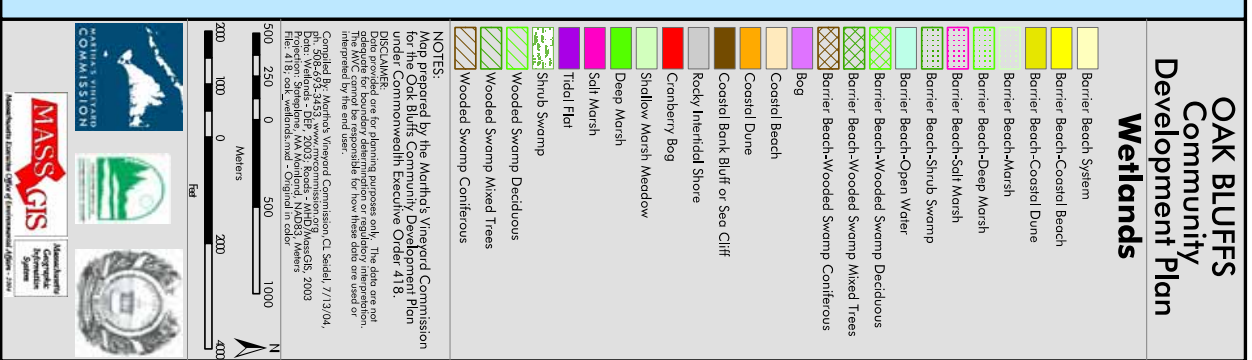
OAK BLUFFS
Community Development Plan
Wetlands

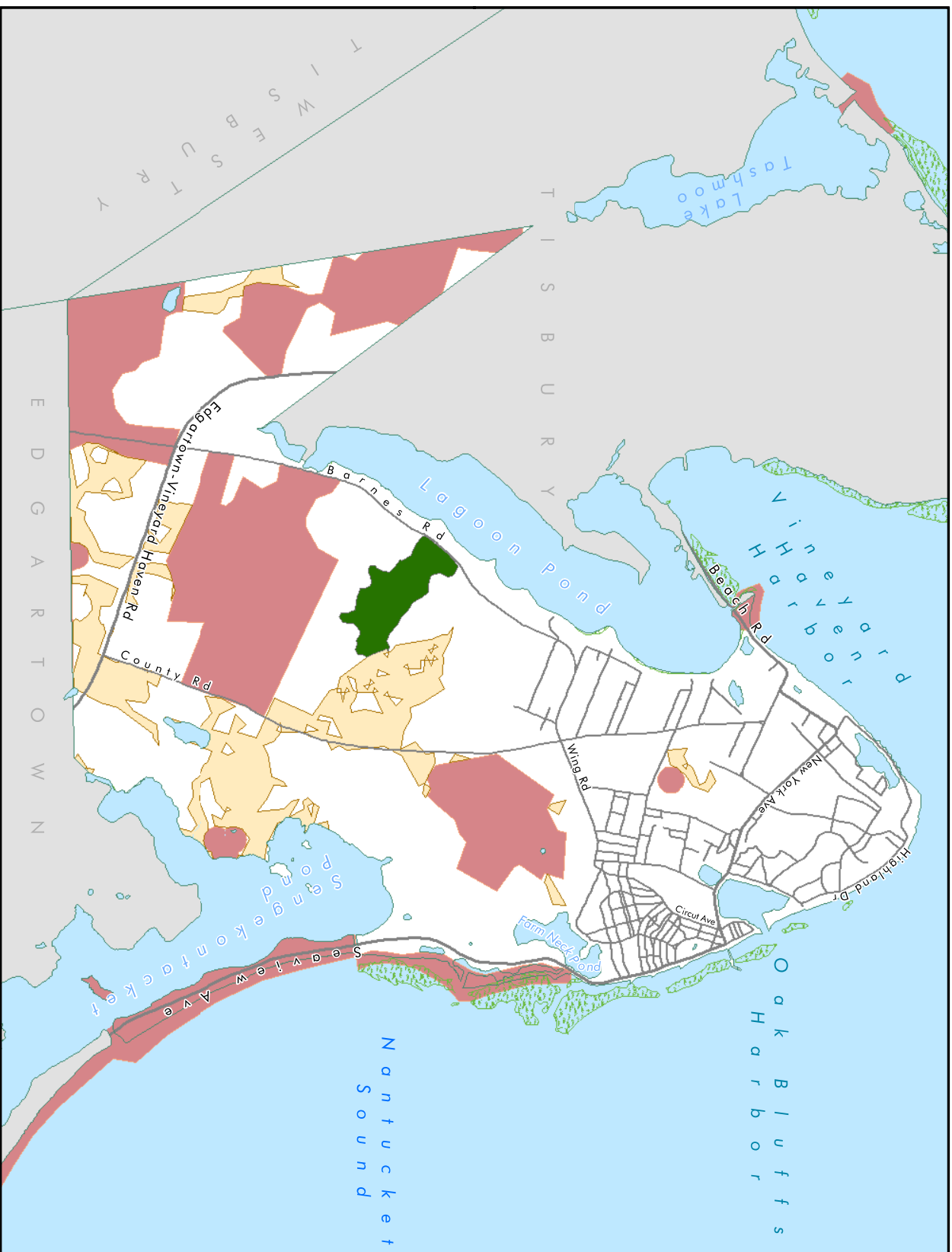
Barrier Beach System
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 Barrier Beach-Coastal Dune
 Barrier Beach-Marsh
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 File: 418; ocb_wetlands.mxd - Original in color

Scale: 0 100 200 400 Feet
 North Arrow

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 Massachusetts Geographic Information System
 2003





OAK BLUFFS Community Development Plan

Habitat Areas

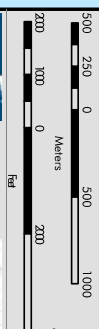
- NHESP BioMap Core Habitat
- NHESP BioMap Supporting Natural Landscape
- Contiguous Woodland >50 Acres
- Elagrass (1994)
- Road
 - Primary Road
 - Secondary Road

NOTES:

Core habitat depicts the most viable habitat for rare species and natural communities. Supporting natural landscape buffers and connects core habitat areas and provides a network of lands that are relatively free from the impact of roads and other development. Contiguous woodlands were identified from the 1999 McConnell land use for only those areas outside the core and supporting areas. Map prepared by the Morphis Vineyard Commission for the Oak Bluffs Community Development Plan under Commonwealth Executive Order 418.

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Compiled by: Morphis Vineyard Commission C.I. Serial: 7/13/04.
Data: Elagrass - DE/MassGIS 1994, BioMap Data - NHESP 2002;
Contiguous Woodlands - 1999 McConnell Land Use Data; NHESP 2002;
Projection: NAD83, Massachusetts State Plane, NAD83, NAD83;
Fig. 4.19, Oak Bluffs, MA - Original in color



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Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Office of Environmental Affairs - 2004

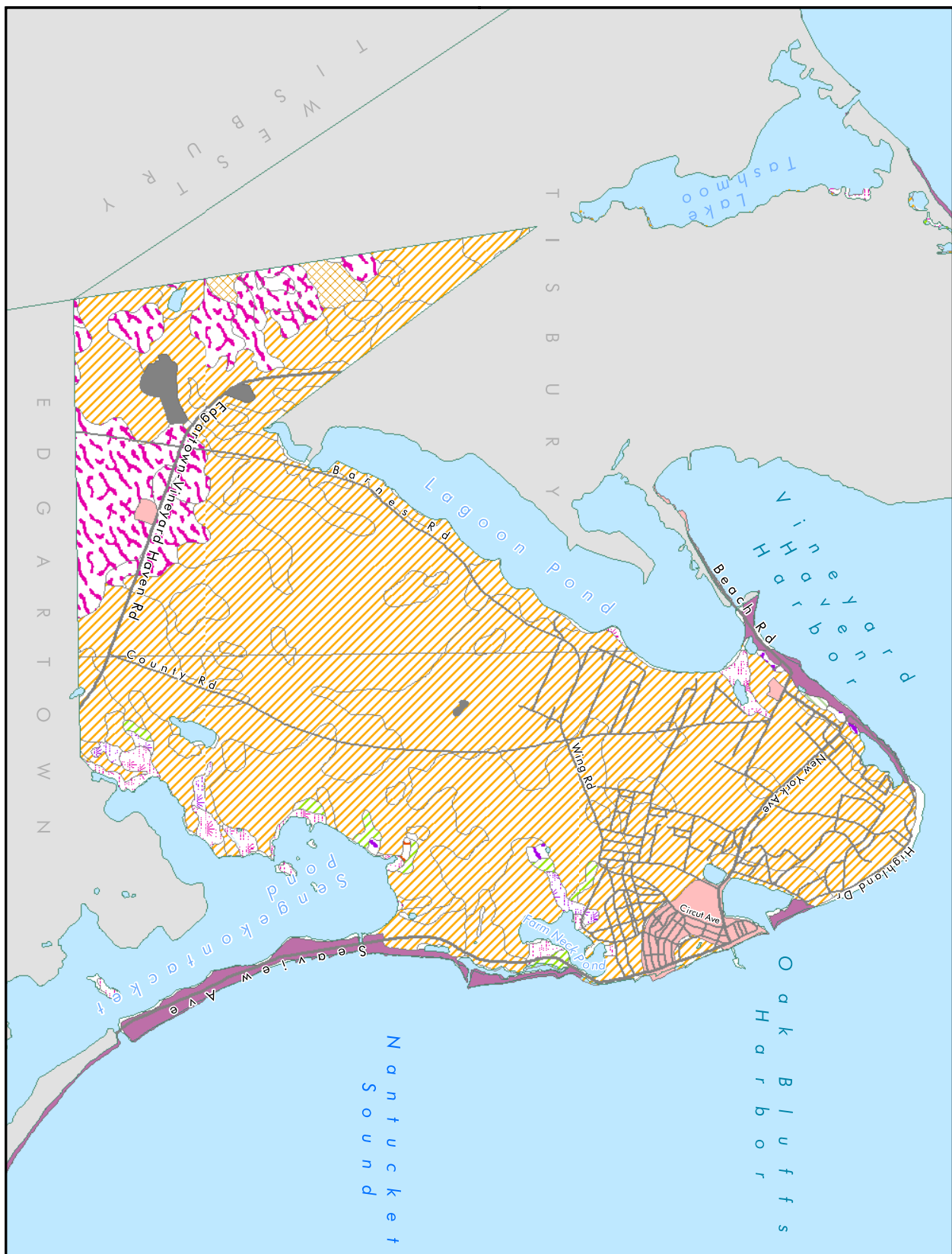
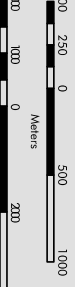
OAK BLUFFS
Community
Development Plan

Soils

- Whitman Variant silt loam
- Mashup loam
- Berryland loamy sand
- Eastchop loamy sand
- Carver loamy coarse sand
- Kel loamy coarse sand
- Haven very fine sandy loam
- Tisbury very fine sandy loam
- Ridgebury Variant fine sandy loam
- Chilmark sandy loam
- Kalama sandy loam
- Nantucket sandy loam
- Pompton sandy loam
- Riverhead sandy loam
- Freeborn and Swansee mucks
- Powcutuck and Matunuck mucky peats
- Nantucket-Plymouth complex
- Udipsamments
- Beaches
- Pits, sand and gravel
- Urban land

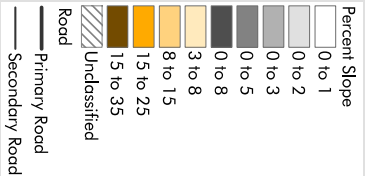
NOTES:

Map prepared by the Martha's Vineyard Commission for the Oak Bluffs Community Development Plan. The map is a general representation of the soil types and does not constitute a warranty or guarantee of accuracy. The map is for informational purposes only and should not be used for any other purpose. The map is the property of the Martha's Vineyard Commission and is loaned to the Oak Bluffs Community Development Plan. The map is to be used for informational purposes only and should not be used for any other purpose. The map is the property of the Martha's Vineyard Commission and is loaned to the Oak Bluffs Community Development Plan.



OAK BLUFFS
Community
Development Plan

Slope



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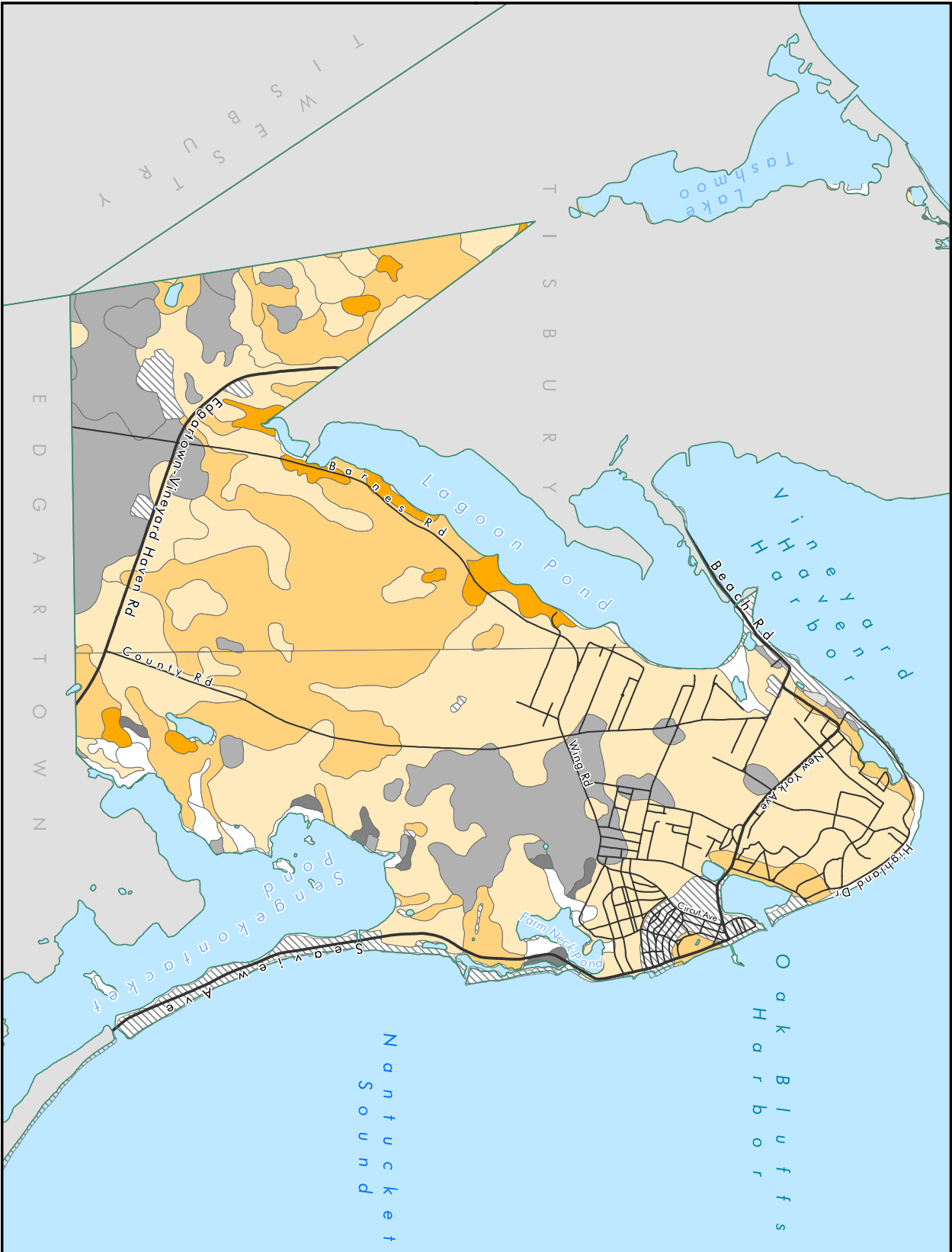
Copyright by: Martha's Vineyard Commission, CL Seidel, 7/13/04, PL 508-695-3453, www.mvcommission.org, MVD/N/MS/CL/5, 2003
Projection: StatePlane, MA Northrup, NAD83, Meters
File: 1181 con_1181spread - Original in color

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MASS GIS
Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Martha's Vineyard Office of Environmental Affairs - 2004



Cultural Resources

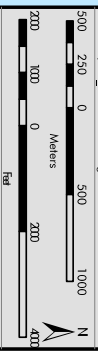
- State Register of Historic Places
- School
- ▲ Public
- ▲ Private
- Landmarks
- * Auditorium
- Library
- Cemetery
- ▨ Special Ways/Trails
- ▤ Special Places
- Primary Scenic Area
- Secondary Scenic Area
- Road
 - Primary Road
 - Secondary Road
 - - - Tertiary Road

NOTES:
Historic Districts - Massachusetts Historical Commission: This is a beta version and does not reflect listings past 1997. Users should consult the most recent State Register of Historic Places (available at the State House Bookstore) for updates. Listings are regularly updated in the weekly State Register.

Map prepared by the Martha's Vineyard Commission for the Oak Bluffs Community Development Plan under Commonwealth Executive Order 418.

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Compiled by: Martha's Vineyard Commission, CL Seidel, 7/15/04,
ph. 508-693-3453. www.mvcommission.org
Date: Historic Places - Mass Historical Commission, 2000; School
- DEP/MassGIS, 2002; Landmarks - US Census/MassGIS, 1990
& WVC 2004; Cemetery - WVC 2003; Special Areas - WVC 2004;
Roads - MHD/MassGIS, 2003; Special Places & Special Ways -
WVC, 2004
Projection: Stateplane, MA Mainland, NAD83, Meters
File: 418;.cok cultural.mxd - Original in color



Parcel Classification

Map prepared by the Marlboro Vineyard Commission
for the Oak Bluffs Community Development Plan
under Commonwealth Executive Order 418.