



# Nantucket, Massachusetts ULI ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL Final Presentation

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October 12 - 17, 2008



# Jim DeFrancia

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Lowe Enterprises

Aspen, CO

# The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is a nonprofit research and education organization

- ULI Mission: *To promote leadership in the responsible use of land to create and sustain thriving communities worldwide*
- ULI is a membership organization with nearly 40,000 members, worldwide representing the spectrum of real estate development, land use planning and financial disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service.
- What the Urban Land Institute does:
  - Conducts Research
  - Provides a forum for sharing of best practices
  - Writes, edits and publishes books and magazines
  - Organizes and conducts meetings
  - Directs outreach programs



# Advisory Panels

- Conducting Panels since 1947
- 20 panels a year on a variety of land use subjects
- Provides independent/objective /candid advice
- Process
  - Review background materials
  - Receive a sponsor presentation & tour
  - Conduct stakeholder interviews
  - Consider data, frame issues and write recommendations
  - Make presentation
  - Produce a final report



# Panelists

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Jim DeFrancia, Chair  
Ford Frick  
Betsy Jackson  
Michael Maxwell  
Ed McMahon  
Alex Notay  
Ross Tilghman  
Greg Weimerskirch  
Stan Zemler

ULI Staff  
Tom Eitler  
Caroline Dietrich



# Thanks

- Remain Nantucket
  - Wendy Schmidt
  - Melissa Philbrick
  - Rachel Hobart
- Town Officials
- Boards and Commissions
- Historical Society
- Business Community
- Property Owners
- Neighborhood Representatives
- Hundreds of Interviewees



# Assignment

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To ensure that downtown Nantucket remains  
the social and economic center of the Island

# Questions

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- What is the appropriate mix of residential, retail, office and municipal uses in downtown? Can the panel identify potential anchor projects or opportunities?
- What strategies can be used to allow local businesses to attain and maintain profitability given high real estate values?
- What role does downtown Nantucket play in relation to the commercial development of the Island generally? In particular, how can downtown Nantucket complement the mid-Island commercial area where many people conduct most of the activities of daily living (and vice versa)?
- Are there ways to capitalize on that influx to enhance the downtown area? Are there ways to manage peak capacity issues? What strategies and opportunities arise from seasonality?
- What new ideas can Nantucket explore to creatively solve transportation issues and concerns in an environmentally sensitive way?
- What role can or should private philanthropy play in enhancing or creating an environmentally sound, socially relevant, and economically sustainable downtown? What are possible public/private partnerships and opportunities for collaborations?

# Ed McMahon

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Senior Fellow

Urban Land Institute

Washington, DC

# Downtown is not an island:

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“Everything is connected to everything else”  
– Aldo Leopold

# Why is Downtown Important?

- It is the heart and soul of the island
- It is essential to community life and vitality
- It defines Nantucket for residents and visitors alike



# Downtowns Have Multiple Functions – Unlike Malls or Shopping Centers

- Governmental, civic and religious center
- Cultural and transportation hub
- Locus for housing and lodging
- Gateway to the Island (Nantucket's front door)
- Epicenter of seasonal economy



# Downtown Looks Healthy

- Great architecture
- World class historic preservation
- Unique ambiance and appearance
- Lots of seasonal activity



# Downtown is Troubled

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- Anxiety and disquiet behind the facades
- Rising rents, thin margins
- Traffic congestion
- Governmental and civic uses are leaving
- Year round residents have dramatically declined
- Number of hotel rooms and inns is declining
- Local serving retail is disappearing
- Abundance of high end seasonal stores

# Ford Frick

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Managing Director

BBC Research & Consulting

Denver, CO

# National Pressures Shape Downtown:

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- ECONOMIC
  - Concentration of Wealth
  - Soaring Real Estate Values
  - National Economy
- COMPETITION
  - Internet
  - Mainland Accessibility
- DEMOGRAPHIC
  - Aging Population
  - Labor Force Availability
- REGULATORY
  - H2B (Visa) policies
  - Environ. regulations

# On-Island Influences also Shape Downtown

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- Access/Congestion
- Land Values
- Housing Affordability
- Parking Chaos
- Lodging Base Changes
- Community Residential Patterns
- Building Ownership Policies
- Club & Privatization of Island Experience
- Relationship with Mid-Island



# Downtown Functions

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- GOVERNMENT & CIVIC USE
  - Public Safety
  - Administration
  - Courts
  - Library
  - Churches
- RETAIL
  - Islanders
  - Seasonal Residents
  - Overnight Guests
  - Day Visitors
  - Harbor/ B to B
- ENTRYWAY
  - Visitors
  - Fuel/Goods
- ATTRACTIONS
  - Historic & Arch. Collections
  - Waterfront
  - Museum, Not-for-Profits
- ACCOMMODATIONS
  - Residents
  - Seasonal
  - Lodging

# Some Functions Are Declining

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- **GOVERNMENT & CIVIC USE**
  - Public Safety
  - Administration
  - Courts
  - Library
  - Churches
- **RETAIL**
  - Islanders
  - Seasonal Residents
  - Overnight Guests
  - Day Visitors
  - Harbor/ B to B
- **ENTRYWAY**
  - Visitors
  - Fuel/Goods
- **ATTRACTIONS**
  - Historic & Arch. Collections
  - Waterfront
  - Museum, Not-for- Profits
- **ACCOMMODATIONS**
  - Residents
  - Seasonal
  - Lodging

# Downtown Trends

## The “Unintended” Future:

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- Retail seasonality will increase
- Retail mix will narrow
- Government and associated uses will diminish
- Services, professionals, even Realtors, will diminish
- Local ownership of stores will decline
- Ultimately self-destructive; rents will fall and a new cycle will begin



# Trends are not destiny...

- Address parking, congestion & circulation
- Interject culture, entertainment, management, community functions
- Retain & expand key civic uses
- Tackle housing affordability
- Integrate Mid-Island commercial
- Make use of off-season capacity
- Intervene in the commercial mix
- Rethink the harbor-side site
- Bed Base Changes



# Michael Maxwell

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MAXWELL + Partners

Miami, FL

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## Question 2 a

‘How can Downtown best compliment the Mid-island area where many people now conduct most of their commercial activities of daily living and vice versa?’

- Like the evolution from whaling to tourism, Nantucket needs to accept that things have changed and islander’s need to rethink their relationship with their Downtown and Mid-Island.

# What is Happening?

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- Migration from Downtown to Mid-Island has been a natural progression and has followed national trends
- Migration from Downtown to Mid-Island has resulted from physical obsolescence, desire for convenience coupled with islander's changing social and economic needs
- Essentially, location, time constraints and convenience have driven Mid-Island growth



# What is Missing?

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- Lack of understanding about the who, what where and why change is occurring has resulted in fears and anxiety that what makes Nantucket special is rapidly being lost.
- No formal studies have been undertaken and no one knows with certainty why, what is happening is happening.
- Everyone loves traditional Nantucket. But the form, design and function of what is new to the island does not look like Traditional Nantucket.



# Missing, cont.

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- Most of all what is missing is the understanding that Downtown & Mid-Island although physically and functionally distinct they are:
- Complementary, not competitive.
- Each serve different economic and community functions
- Both are now essential to the life of the island

# How They Really Work?

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- Mid-Island and Downtown serve distinctive and separate roles
- Mid-Island exists because it what year round islanders need
- It is more convenient to where islanders increasingly live and work
- Relevant retail, services, schools, healthcare and children's activities have followed residents to Mid-Island



# Complementary Not Competitive

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- Downtown and Mid-Island have evolved into specialized places – one serving daily requirements, the other serving occasional needs.
- Downtown complements Mid-Island and Mid-Island complements Downtown
- They do not compete and there is no "Us vs. Them"
- Competition is perception, not reality.

# What are the Issues?

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- Connections - Downtown & Mid-Island is essential
- Barriers – Real & perceptual
- Where islanders live – mid-island, not downtown
- Recognizing that Downtown and Mid-Island are economically and functionally distinct places

# What are Their Roles?

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Mid-Island has evolved to cater primarily to residents and now provides:

- Necessary retail – hammers, nails ...
- Educational – public schools
- Health Care – hospital, doctors
- Services – what residents need
- Housing – Affordable
- Recreation – sports & clubs for families

# Roles, cont.

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Downtown is evolving into a specialty center and now primarily provides:

- Cultural – historic, art, museum, traditions
- Entertainment – venues and events
- Civic – government, community meetings ..
- Specialty retail & restaurants – mostly seasonal
- Gateway access – Where most everyone comes and goes

# What's Missing?

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- Residents are concerned and nostalgic that
- Mid-Island lacks the look and feel of Downtown - the essence of what Nantucket is - its design, organization, density and character.

# How to Fix it

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## Downtown

- Make the Downtown more relevant to islanders – easier connections, access, remove barriers, promote and celebrate it as a special place
- Manage the marketplace – Focus, Define and maintain unique roles

# How to Fix it cont.

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## Mid-Island

- Use the tools Nantucket is famous for – design and planning principals for physical form based on the Islands heritage to integrate Mid-island
- Use municipal and private efforts to achieve a physical form worthy of Nantucket's heritage
- Use Transit and satellite parking as connectors
- Evolve positively and naturally

# Stan Zemler

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Town Manager

Vail, CO

- Given the high real estate values, what strategies can be used to allow local businesses to attain and maintain profitability?

*"We need a quality experience downtown for residents and tourists"*

Island Resident



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Real Estate values, commercial rents, are likely to continue to be market driven, and will determine who is likely to tenant the retail, restaurant and office spaces in the Downtown.

- By improving how Downtown Nantucket currently functions and operates:
  - improvements to parking management and vehicle circulation
  - better pedestrian movement
  - enhanced way finding

You will greatly contribute to an improved business environment for better, business retention and resident and guest experience.



# Manage the Downtown

- Manage parking
- Manage circulation
- Improve pedestrian movement
- Improve Way-Finding
- Invest and maintain the physical environment of the Downtown
- Look to new tools like vertical zoning
- Experiment with targeted retention to maintain the desired mixture of retail



# Manage the Downtown (cont)

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- Develop training and technical support
- Implement community supported enterprises to retain and attract desired businesses
- Introduce workforce housing into the Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods

# Betsy Jackson

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President

The Urban Agenda

Ann Arbor, MI

# What strategies and opportunities arise from seasonality?

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- 8-9 months of “downtown time”
- Re-program downtown during the off-season
- Goals?
  - Give Islanders reasons to come
  - Use downtown in new ways
  - Capitalize on the Island’s talents & strengths

# # 1 - Identify Ways to Diversify the Economy

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- Start small
- Build on existing strengths
- Promote and expand

# Promote Nantucket's arts and crafts 'industry'

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- Few have retail venues
- Downtown as location for art show and sale
- Web-based auction
- Timed for holiday sales

# Create a "Taste of Nantucket"

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- Local produce, prepared foods
- Cooking demonstrations, recipe cards
- On-line sales opportunity ("Nantucket Treats")

# Lifelong Learning

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- Downtown venues make up the 'urban campus'
- Local talent serve as instructors
- Prepare for high-value jobs in traditional trades and current needs
- Preservation carpentry, marine mechanics, traditional boat building
- Sustainable landscaping, organic gardening, Master gardening
- Financial planning
- Culinary training, hospitality training
- Continuing ed. credits

# Create Wintertime Events

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- Don't have to be commercially driven
- Create opportunities for local performers & entrepreneurs

# Ideas...

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- Skating rink (if weather permits)
- Frozen 5-K and Fun Run
- Ice sculpture contest and display
- Kids' scavenger hunts
- Home and Garden Tours/Downtown History Walk ('be a tourist in your own town')

# Partners and Resources

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- Chamber of Commerce (events committees and staff)
- Downtown marketplace management
- Arts organizations
- Like-minded philanthropies
- Funding from BIDs, lodging taxes, public sources
- Sponsorship funds, collateral products, staff
- Entry fees, booth rentals, sales of merchandise

# Ross Tilghman

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Director

Tilghman Group

Seattle, WA

# Barriers to Coming Downtown

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- Parking chaos
- Real and perceived traffic congestion
- Pedestrian/vehicle conflicts
- Bicycle/vehicle conflicts

But too little data on parking patterns!

# Understanding the Barriers

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- Unmanaged parking creates problems:
  - Employees park first, reducing customer capacity
  - Hunting for parking yields extra circulation & congestion
  - Unnecessary congestion compounded by Ferry traffic

# Understanding the Barriers

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- Unsafe & Uncertain Pedestrian & Bicycle Access
  - Narrow, uneven sidewalks
  - Lack of bike paths to/from Downtown
- Some limitations in transit service
  - Few late evening hours
  - Seasonal service

# Understanding the Barriers

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- Poor handicap accessibility
  - Excessively uneven pavement
  - Narrow sections in many sidewalks

The combined result?

- Frustration about going downtown
- Limitation on social & economic potential

# Overcoming the Barriers

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- Developing effective transportation solutions is like developing a business plan:
  - Who are the users/customers?
  - What do they need?
  - How best to meet their needs?
- Gather good data on transportation demand
  - Create profile of population, parking, and traffic across the day, and by season

# No Parking Garage

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- A heavy-duty solution
  - Large structure out of scale on the island
  - Hard to hide – wrapping makes its even larger
  - Necessary for 2-3 months?
  - Expensive to build & expensive to operate
  - Customers tend to avoid garages, if possible
- An inappropriate chunk of urban hardware
- Parking a poor use of waterfront property
- An inelastic solution to an elastic problem?

# Overcoming the Barriers

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- Manage Employee Parking to Free Up Spaces for Customers and Visitors
  - Substantially increases customer accessibility and reduces traffic congestion
  - 1 employee space could serve 6 customer vehicles

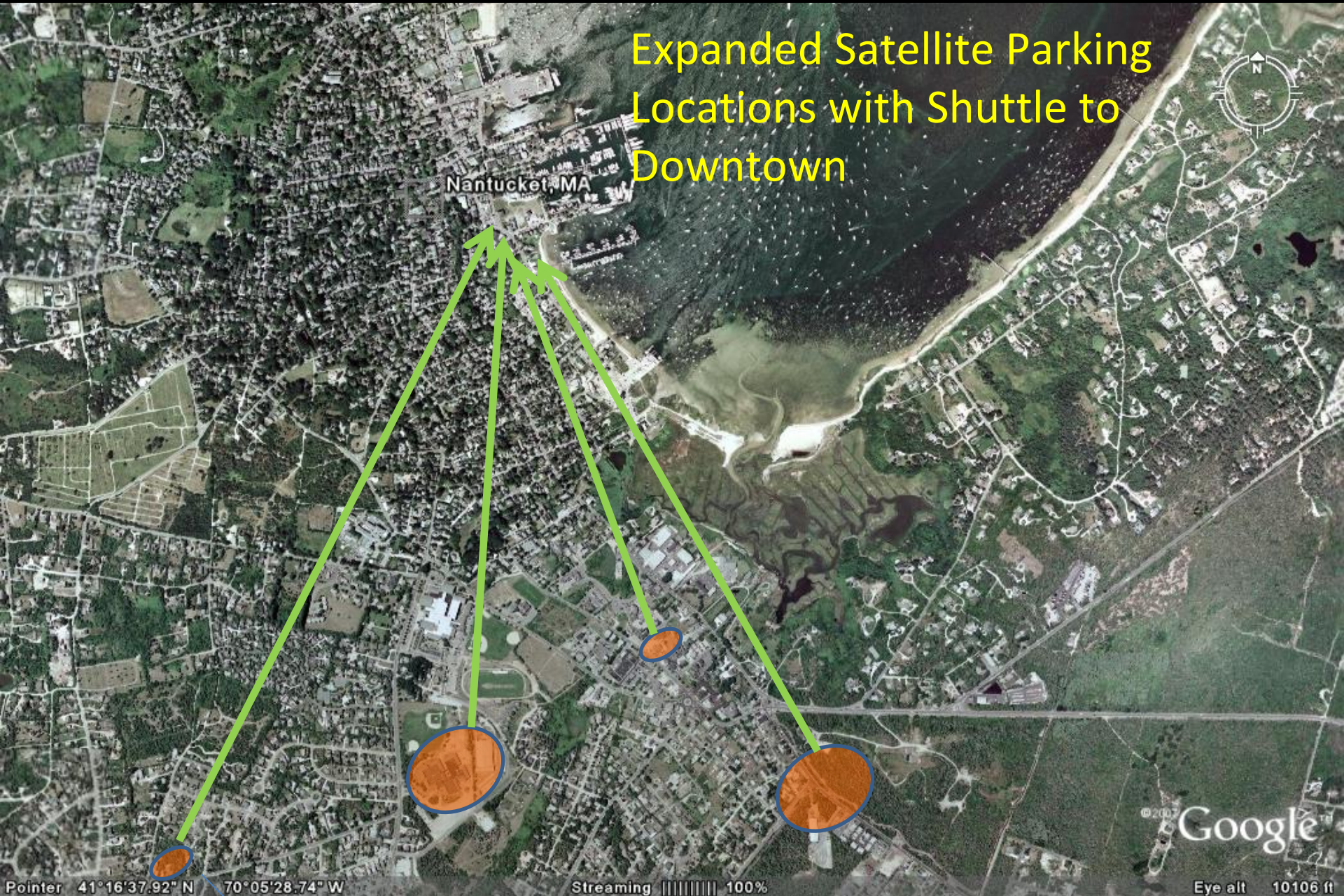
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# Overcoming the Barriers

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- Provide convenient alternative locations for employee parking
  - Satellite lots with frequent shuttles (such as the Elementary School lot, and the Fairground area)
- Review need for designated parking spaces downtown

# Expanded Satellite Parking Locations with Shuttle to Downtown



Nantucket, MA

©2007 Google

Pointer 41°16'37.92" N 70°05'28.74" W

Streaming 100%

Eye alt 10106 ft

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Advisory Services Program

# Overcoming the Barriers

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## Charge for parking

- Peak season
- Proven method to increase turnover
- Compatible with historic character (little or no hardware required)
- Generates new revenue that could support alternative transportation



# Overcoming the Barriers

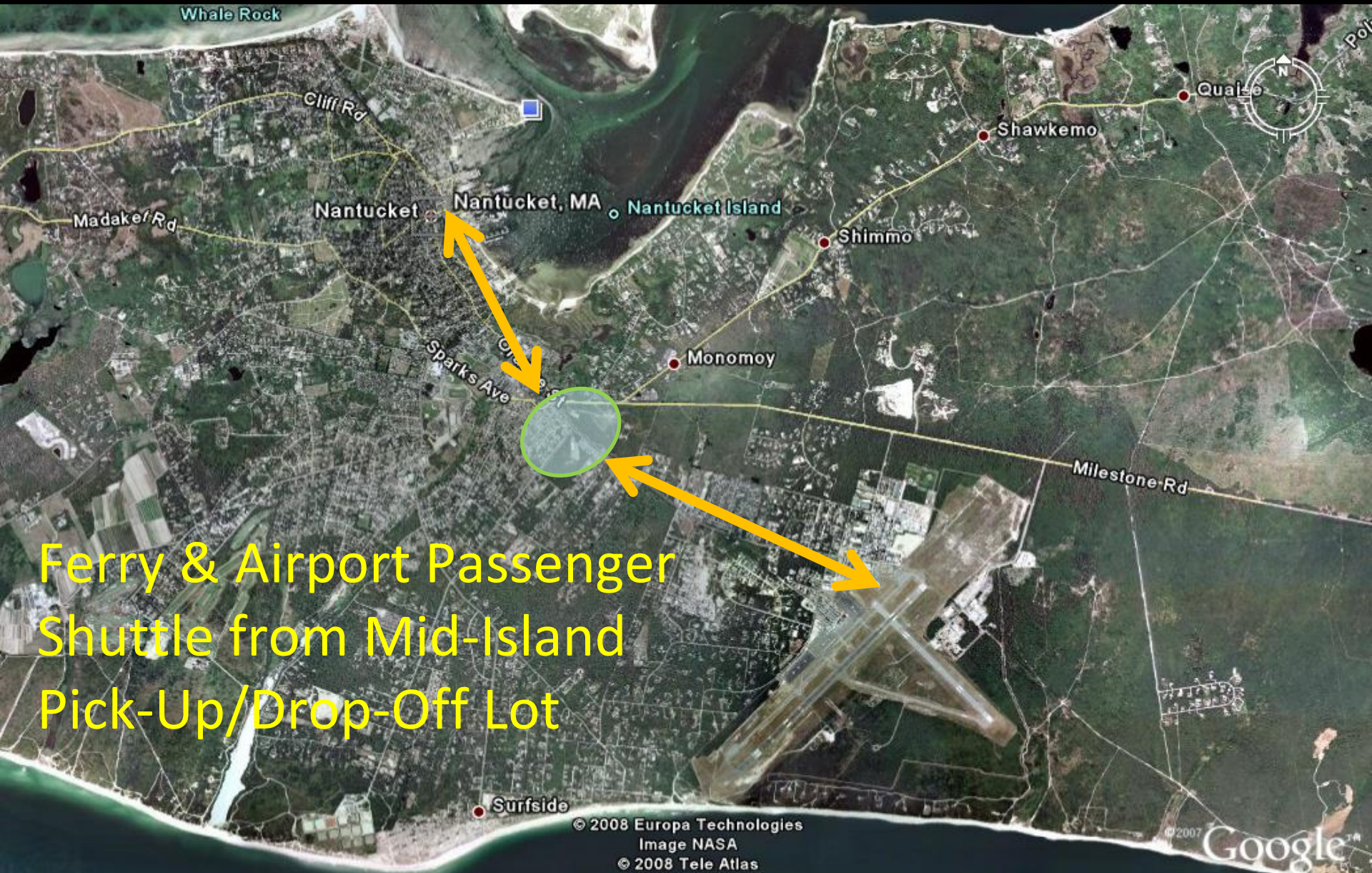
- Increase transit service
  - Boost frequency
  - Serve satellite lots with dedicated shuttle
  - Increase evening service
  - Consider year-round operation
  - Seek distinctive, island-appropriate vehicles



# Overcoming the Barriers

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- Manage ferry passenger pick-up/drop-off
  - Create Mid-Island passenger transfer area
  - Link with shuttle to Greenhound site
  - Support pedestrian access to docks with sidewalk improvements



Ferry & Airport Passenger Shuttle from Mid-Island Pick-Up/Drop-Off Lot

© 2008 Europa Technologies  
Image NASA  
© 2008 Tele Atlas  
Image © 2008 DigitalGlobe

Google

Pointer 41°16'01.81" N 70°04'36.81" W elev 47 ft

Streaming 100%

Eye alt 28370 ft

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NANTUCKET

Advisory Services Program

# Overcoming the Barriers

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- Manage Auto Ferry Traffic
  - Extend manual control to more weeks in summer
  - Create “convoys” to expedite arrivals and departures
  - Implement recommendations from recent Ferry Access Study
- Bike Paths and Pedestrian Facilities
- Implement Car Sharing



Extend Bike Path to Downtown

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Streaming 100%

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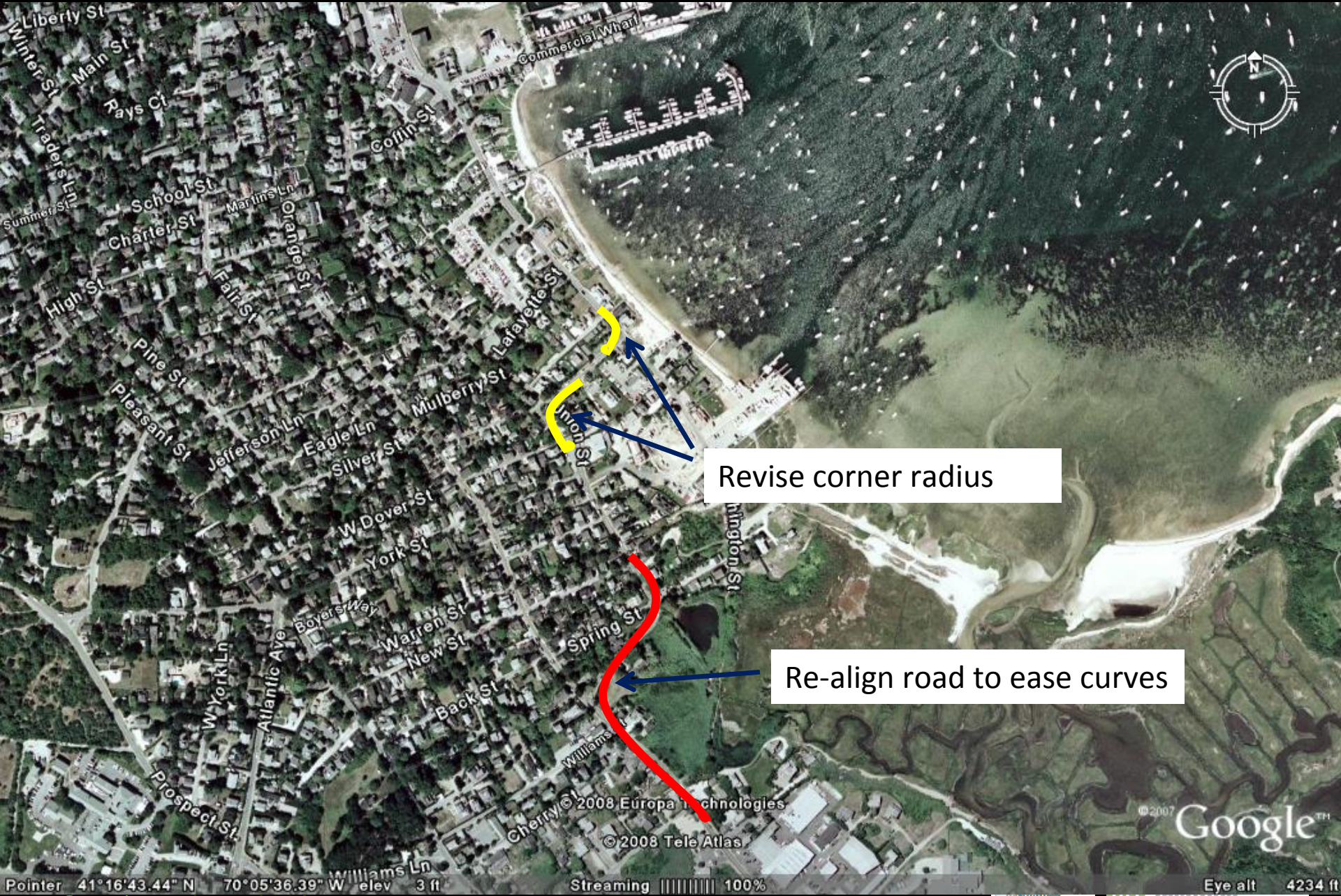
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# Overcoming the Barriers

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- Consider truck access improvements
  - Soften curves on Washington, Orange
  - Use smaller trucks that better fit the island
  - Long-term – look for new opportunities to relocate auto ferry terminal



Revise corner radius

Re-align road to ease curves

# Big Ideas

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# Big Idea 1

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## Invest in the Marketplace

### Downtown Management

- Hire Downtown manager
- Attend to improving and maintaining economic health and vitality
- Develop programs and events to serve guests and residents
- Market the Downtown District
- Manage Downtown infrastructure, parking, and maintenance
- Develop Funding Strategies

# Big Idea 2

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## Evolve the Land Bank

- Broaden the mission of the Land Bank from a sole focus on open space to a broader focus on community preservation

# Big Idea 2

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## Why evolve the Land Bank?

- Land Bank has been successful
- Together with other conservation efforts (e.g., Nantucket Conservation Foundation) the degree of open space preservation is unparalleled.
- 61% of the island is in public ownership
- Only 8.8% of land still open for development
- Open space agenda not finished, but nearly complete
- New issues and threats have arisen since 1983



# Big Idea 2

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What could a new focus be?

- Workforce housing
- Creation of Civic Space
- Downtown Revitalization
- Improved Waterfront Access
- Expansion of Bike Path System
- Creating Public Gathering Place

# Big Idea 3 – Workforce Housing

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- Emphasize Workforce Housing – A Critical Priority

- *“The lack of affordable housing for middle- and low-income residents as well a seasonal workers is arguably the single most critical issue facing Nantucket.”*

- Nantucket Advisory Services Panel Briefing Book

- However, the scale of the problem is much greater than the current solution being pursued



# Big Idea 3 – Workforce Housing

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- Rapidly expand existing programs of the Nantucket Housing Authority and Nantucket Housing Office
- Prioritize these programs with greater immediacy
- More co-ordinated action from town government and the community



# Big Idea 3 – Workforce Housing

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- Finding suitable and affordable sites
- Little hope of **home ownership** for many islanders
- **Intense rent pressures** on young families and professionals working multiple jobs forcing many islanders to leave
- **Skills and talent drain** and the subsequent cost of replacing that workforce



# Big Idea 3 – Workforce Housing

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- A key success factor for vibrant downtowns worldwide is a year-round resident community actively engaged with their surroundings and with one another
- Occupied housing is tied to the success of any commercial area and to the year-round vitality of your Downtown
- Affordable housing produces customers and employees

# Big Idea 3 – Workforce Housing

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- Investment in and support for new **multi-family, income-diverse development** prioritized for year-round islanders
- Stimulate use of **existing, potential housing stock**  
Downtown
- **Data gathering** to allow key decisions to be made based on accurate information

# Big Idea 3 – Workforce Housing

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- Acceleration of existing plans for Community Housing Bank Act
- Consider best practice models
- Co-ordination of the existing seasonal housing owned and managed by employers
- Inclusion of housing in the suggested development of a new Waterfront Neighborhood

# Big Idea 4 – Create the Nantucket Institute

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- Community discussions and 'think tanks'
- Local and global issues
- Based on Nantucket's strengths...and needs
- Convened *all over* Downtown
  - Atheneum
  - Whaling Museum/NHA Properties
  - Coffee Shops, Storefronts, Restaurants
  - In the Streets!

# Big Idea 4 – Create the Nantucket Institute

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## Potential Institute Topics:

- Historic preservation and the “living museum”
- Sustainability and community viability
- Conservation and what is beyond
- Aqua- and agricultural stewardship
- Technology interface with each of these topics

# Big Idea 4 – Create the Nantucket Institute

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## Institute Elements:

- Conferences with on- and off-island experts
- Public forums
- Hands-on workshops
- Social gatherings – thematic or formal
- Reading groups
- Films, exhibitions, performances
- Web-based proceedings and publications

# Big Idea 4 – Create the Nantucket Institute

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Three Outcomes:

1. Reposition Downtown for the off-season
2. Increase islanders' thinking/interacting on Nantucket's future
3. Position Nantucket as the strategic center of thought on these issues

# Greg Weimerskirch

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Principal

Urban Design Associates, Ltd

Pittsburgh, PA

# Big Idea 5 - Waterfront Neighborhood

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# Principles for A New Waterfront Neighborhood

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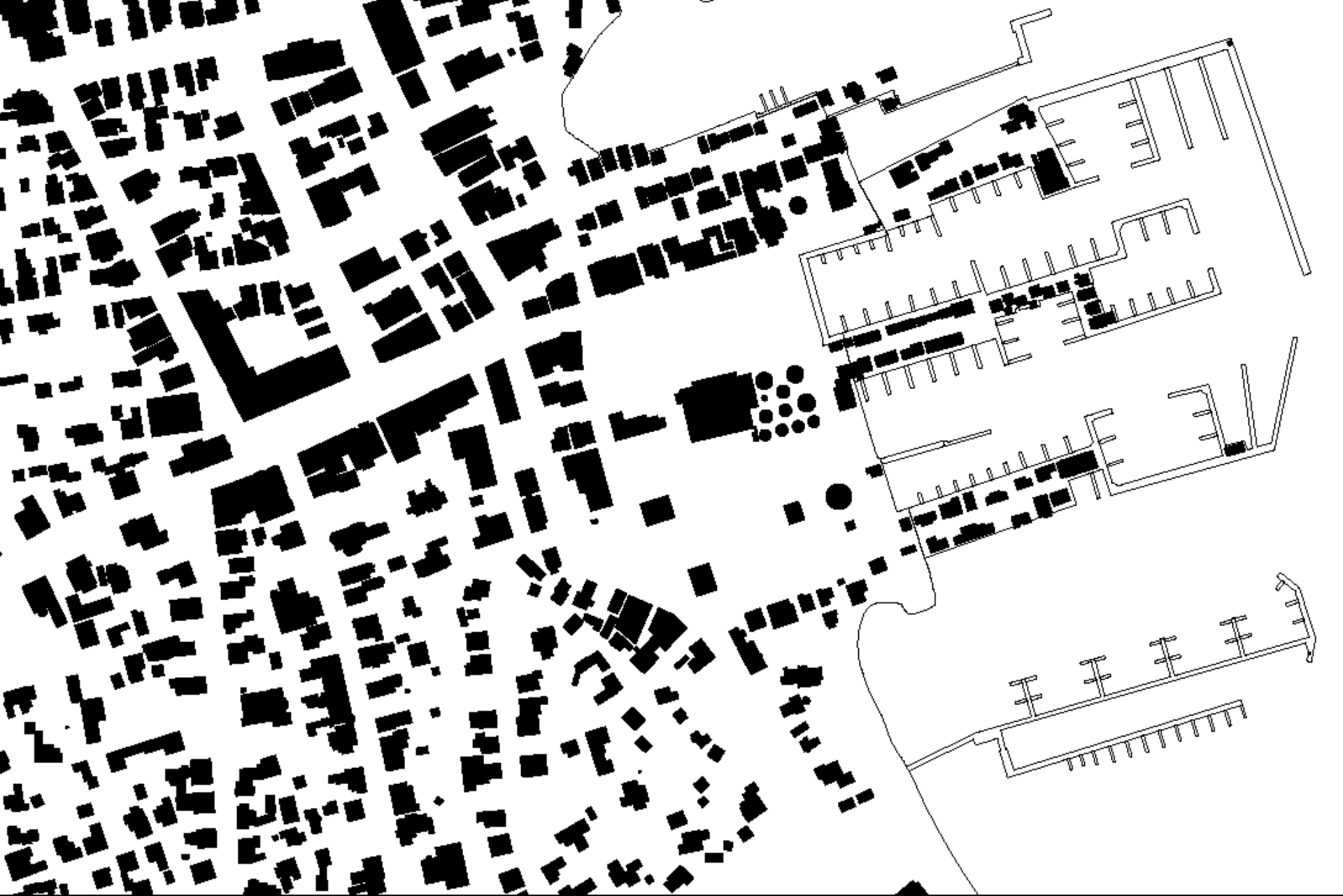
- Expand the civic and commercial uses of Downtown
- Create dedicated outdoor civic space to bring Islanders together
- Provide space for educational and community organizations, such as the Nantucket Institute
- Provide income diverse housing
- Accommodate retail on to serve community needs

# Design Principles for A New Waterfront Neighborhood

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- Strengthen the connection between Downtown and the waterfront
- Respect the historic building fabric of Downtown, especially in regard to building size and block form
- Acknowledge the history of the site, including its seafaring history and industrial past
- Utilize sustainable development practices for new buildings and infrastructure
- Consolidate land ownership to create greater development potential









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200 OUTSIDE OF TOWN.

NEED DEEP-OFF PARKING

300

Downtown

COFFIN ST

COMMERCIAL ST

COMMERCIAL ST

UNION ST

SALEM ST

MAIN ST

NEW WHALE ST

STRAIGHT WF

STILL DOCK

OLD NORTH WF

STRAIGHT WF

BRIDGE ST

IS NOIN N

MA ST

EASY ST

OAK ST

DE ST



COFFIN ST

STONE AL

GARDIERS CT

UNION ST

SALEM ST

CANDLE ST

COMMERCIAL ST

MAIN ST

CAMBRIDGE ST

INDIA ST

OAK ST

EASY ST

STILL DOCK

STRAIGHT W

OLD NORTH W

NEW WHALE ST

STRAIGHT

300 Downtown Park

200 DITTSIDE

NEED PROP-OFF PERMITS

PARK

H ST EXT

OAK ST

WATER ST

E CHESTNUT ST



200 OUTSIDE DOWN.

NEED PROP - OFF PERMITS

300 DOCUMENTATION



COFFIN ST

COMMERCIAL ST

UNION ST

SALEM ST

CANDLE ST

MAIN ST

STRAIGHT WF

STILL DOCK

OLD NORTH WF

STRAIGHT W

CAMBRIDGE ST  
INDIA ST  
N UNION ST

EASY ST

OAK ST



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# Conceptual Building Program

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## A New Waterfront Neighborhood

- **Existing**
  - Consolidated Site 4.3 Acres
  - Parking 130 Spaces
  
- **Proposed**
  - Civic Park 1/2 Acre
  - Income Diverse Housing 200+ Units
  - Civic Space 5,000 sq. ft.
  - Retail and Restaurant 18,000 sq. ft.
  - Grocery Store 12,000 sq. ft.
  - Community Center 12,000 sq. ft.
  - Parking 141 Spaces

# Philanthropy

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- Do not become dependent
- Source of seed money
- Convener to address island issues
- Keeper of the list

# Public Private Partnerships

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- Proven Mechanism for implementing complex projects
- Mechanism for leveraging public assets

# Questions?

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