

Washington St. Workgroup Minutes

Friday, July 11th, 2025 at 11:00am

Hybrid: Zoom and in person at the Land Bank Office

Recording available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSpPbA-rti4&t=28s>

Packet available here:

<https://nantucketma.portal.civicclerk.com/event/17704/files/agenda/27772>

Members present: Alan Reinhart (NLB Commission), Matt Fee (Select Board), Nat Lowell (Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Committee Member), Malcolm MacNab (Select Board)

Members absent: John Stackpole (NLB Commission),

Staff present: Leah Hill (TN), Rachael Freeman (NLB), Liz Phelps (NLB) Vincent Murphy (TN), Cecil Jensen (Remain), Claire Martin (Envision Resilience), Chuck Larson (TN), Bob Bystrowski (TN), Laura Marett (SCAPE), Todd Turcotte (Pare), Joe Famely (WHG)

A. CONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

- No public comments
- Follow-up to prior public question (Mr. Jerry Connick, email dated June 11, 2025):
 - Site Plan Review: Project has not entered formal design; a site plan review may occur per permitting requirements.
 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Town/Land Bank meet with relevant agencies during pre-permitting (including USACE, if applicable).
 - Chapter 139 (Nantucket Code): Design will consider all applicable laws and the scenic exemption section.
 - Harbor views from Francis Street: Wooden stakes set at design height remain onsite to illustrate potential view impacts.
 - Cost & Schedule: Estimates and timeline to be developed and shared as the project enters formal design; permitting and public notice procedures will be followed.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- Approved minutes: December 20, 2024, and January 10, 2025.

3. FRANCIS STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Community Engagement Recap (Open House #2, January 2025)

Inputs combined from two virtual meetings, live polling (Mentimeter), breakout discussions, and an online feedback form.

Alternatives presented:

- Alt 1 — “Dune Swoop”: Curvilinear boardwalk over dune; ADA 5% path from ~El. 4.5 (Washington St) to El. 9 dune crest and to beach.

- Alt 2 — “Beach Overlook”: Wharf-inspired, more angular with seating bump-outs; ADA 5% path achieving same elevations.
- Both alternatives are adaptable for future conditions; inland coordination with stormwater upgrades and parking lot improvements (e.g., Saltmarsh Center).

Community priorities & feedback:

- Top priorities: Reduce flood risk to sustain Washington St.; improve natural systems; manage water; ensure universal access.
- Dune Swoop —
 - Likes: Natural/organic form; native planting area; integrated seating; materials; perceived fit with Nantucket character.
 - Concerns: Harbor sight lines; mixed views on “Nantucket aesthetic”; kayak access/storage; path connectivity; erosion management.
- Beach Overlook
 - Likes: More beach area; more seating and gathering; increased accessibility; maritime aesthetic.
 - Concerns: Potential overuse of boardwalk/paving; angles to soften; desire for more seating and connectivity.
- Cross-cutting characteristics: Stormwater & rising groundwater; long-term durability/adaptability; planting & erosion maintenance; ADA access; kayak access; bike traffic management.
- Public appeal scores (non-binding): Dune Swoop 3.58 vs. Beach Overlook 3.15.

Schedule Status

Loss of quorum shifted schedule outward; summary of status and next steps:

- Completed: abutters focus group (summer 2024); public workshop (Whaling Museum, Aug 2024); pre-design investigations; concepts (Nov–Mar); Open House #2 (Jan).
- Upcoming: feasibility assessment of dune/berm expressions; expanded stormwater & coastal flooding modeling; schematic design (~16 weeks) with pricing set; Benefit–Cost Analysis (FEMA + qualitative benefits); O&M guide (plantings, sand/dune stewardship, replenishment triggers).

Scope Revisions (SCAPE Team)

Added/Expanded:

- Stormwater analysis (drainage area delineation; runoff volumes).
- Integrated stormwater model under multiple climate scenarios.
- Onboarding PAR for waterfront structural engineering; iterate site plan with PAR input.
- Additional coastal modeling to evaluate independent effectiveness, redirected flow, and erosion performance with replenishment planning.

Removed/Deferred:

- Early order-of-magnitude cost check based on older design.
- Lighting and electrical design from schematic design documents.

Workgroup Comments

- Support for expanded stormwater analysis; it's a top concern for neighbors.
- Do-it-right-once emphasis: first phase must enable future phases; avoid measures that constrain the next steps.
- Preference to emulate successful public-realm seating such as Easy Street Park.
- Bike/ped conflicts solvable via width and separated seating zones.

Motions & Votes

Motion: Approve SCAPE revised scope (net +~\$15,000, offset by removals) and approve PARE waterfront engineering scope (funded by Land Bank grant).

Motion passes unanimously.

Next Steps & Assignments

- Prepare PARE contract; finance review; place SCAPE amendment & PARE contract on Select Board agenda for July 23, 2025.
- Provisional project alignment/kickoff: August 1, 2025.
- Decide whether to hold July 25 workgroup meeting (contingent on PARE ramp-up).
- Plan site visit (Todd on-island week of August 4; Laura available).
- PARE to review existing data and coordinate with modelers on effectiveness/redirected flow/erosion.
- SCAPE to advance integrated stormwater model; refine concept with PARE inputs during SD (16-week window).
- Develop BCA (FEMA + qualitative benefits) and O&M guide by end of SD.

Risks / Considerations

- Multi-agency permitting feasibility is critical path; early engagement planned.
- Must demonstrate no adverse redirected flow to adjacent properties.
- Budget alignment with grant cycles; stage near-term work to enable long-term framework.
- Clear communication on views, access (incl. kayak), ADA routes, and bike management.

Adjournment

Adjourned at 11:43 a.m. after roll-call vote to adjourn (all Aye).