

# Town of Nantucket Master Plan Update

## Six Word Story Activity with the Nantucket Atheneum Response Summary

### Overview

As part of the public engagement opportunities for Nantucket's Master Plan update, the Town partnered with the Nantucket Atheneum for a Six Word Story activity to encourage creative community participation. Library patrons and any other interested party could participate from August 15, 2025 through September 30, 2025. Atheneum staff placed a poster with instructions, notecards and pens, and a submission box at the Athenaeum entrance (Figure 1). The Atheneum also shared an advertisement for the activity in their monthly newsletter while the activity ran, and information about the activity was available on the project website (<https://nantucket-ma.gov/masterplan>).



Figure 1: Six Word Story activity at the Nantucket Atheneum

The activity collected over one hundred Six Word Stories, and responses varied considerably: some participants described what they love about Nantucket, some described concerns and issues they have or see in daily life, some described what they would like to see in the future, and others more creatively responded with true “short story.”

### *What is a Six Word Story?*

Six Word Stories are a creative way for community members to tell us about what Nantucket means to them, about their life on Nantucket, or about what they want Nantucket to be in the future. Participants were free to interpret the instructions and respond as they choose, barring the directive to keep responses to six words only.

*Why do a Six Word Story activity?*

Providing a variety of ways for people to participate in the master planning process encourages a diversity of voices to weigh in on and be represented in the Master Plan. In addition to more formal engagement efforts, such as interviews and public meetings, the Six Word Story activity offered a short, asynchronous engagement opportunity for people of all ages to participate in the master planning process.

**Summary of Responses**

The town received over one hundred Six Word Stories from community members. Although participants did not need to offer any identifying information, some chose to. Consequently, we know that Nantucket community members ranging in age from 4 to over 80 participated in this activity.

Table 1 categorizes the responses received thematically into four groups. Each group contains several sub-groups. Deeply personal six word stories are not included. The process of thematic coding used to interpret responses for the purposes of this summary is an inherently subjective exercise. These same responses could be grouped into countless other themes by different parties. To support other interpretations, Table 2 lists the responses uncategorized.

<b>Table 1. Thematically Coded Six Word Stories</b>	
<p><b>Positive Descriptions</b> This category captures the many positive descriptions of the island submitted by participants, ranging from the natural beauty of Nantucket and the ocean to the peace and relaxation felt on the island. Others mention summer, ice cream, and how life on Nantucket is or appears perfect. Others speak more generally about how much they enjoy their time on Nantucket.</p>	
<p><b>Natural Landscape &amp; Ocean</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sunsets, clams, beach walks, ocean swims</li> <li>● Natural beauty ocean, moors creatures. Save!</li> <li>● Flew by tidal waves and smiles.</li> <li>● At ocean’s edge, you saw infinity.</li> <li>● Ocean horizons, un-cluttered, let imagination soar.</li> <li>● Waves, splash water bash clash royal</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summer, Relaxation, Enjoyment, Perfection</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Summer’s rhythm, preppy charm, eternal escape</li> <li>● Summer, pink, plants, loafers, boats, dogs</li> <li>● Here: an otherwise unattainable peace.</li> <li>● Summer love. Distance. Emotions. Freedom. Liberalism.</li> <li>● I could learn to relax here</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Life in Nantucket is disarmingly perfect</li> <li>● Stay as you are, Nantucket...perfection.</li> <li>● Imposter but love knows no such thing. Change - I cannot condone perfect as it is. Change - I can't condone it perfect as it is. Stay as you are...perfection is yours</li> </ul>
<p><b>General</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rain or shine...we have fun.</li> <li>● Our stunning get-a-way forever</li> <li>● History, charm, friends, beauty, peace overflowing!</li> <li>● Having the best time in Nantucket!</li> <li>● Relaxed charm, unchanged, always changing me!</li> <li>● First time in Nantucket, love it!</li> <li>● Biggest ferry ice cream ocean waves</li> <li>● Lighthouse. Beach. Wheezies. Barnaby's. Ice cream. Ferry. Nantucket through the eyes of my daughter.</li> <li>● Patrick's six word story. Ice cream, library, and the beach!!!!</li> <li>● Helena's story. Nantucket is the best island ever!</li> <li>● 1. In a moment, it is home. 2. A collection of moments makes Nantucket. 3. Since glacial formation, and beyond climate change. 4. Surrounded by water on island oasis</li> <li>● Very educated, very expensive, very welcoming</li> <li>● Mainland serious meets Nantucket, playful wins.</li> <li>● Lovely fun place, hope to visit again</li> <li>● All things were possible for many.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Assets &amp; Desires</b> This category captures the six word stories wherein people describe things they have and love in their community or what they desire to have in the future.</p>	
<p><b>Conservation &amp; Preservation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Don't take away conservation land</li> <li>● Beautiful nature preserves protected in perpetuity.</li> <li>● Preserve the integrity of old houses</li> <li>● The past, protected; the future, luscious.</li> <li>● Natural beauty architecture has survived hope</li> <li>● Change - but keep the same values.</li> </ul>
<p><b>People Power</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Power to the locals, platform them.</li> <li>● I don't want year-rounders to leave</li> <li>● Town needs to consider all citizens opinions</li> <li>● Homogenication; loss of unique local culture!</li> <li>● Limit consultants use citizens institutional knowledge</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspired by the women of Nantucket</li> </ul>
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs affordable housing cross-cultural events</li> <li>Affordable housing needed for workers now!</li> <li>Long term, fair housing for all!</li> </ul>
<b>Building/Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put a stop on building houses</li> <li>Moratorium on building pause + reset</li> <li>Building big is not always better</li> <li>Stop the urbanization We aren't the mainland</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome free the Wave Bus</li> <li>Enforce traffic, bicycle rules + regulations</li> <li>Fewer cars fewer cars fewer cars!</li> <li>No electric vehicles on bike paths!</li> <li>Please fix the dangerous sidewalks. Thanks! - an octogenarian</li> <li>Yes, the traffic circles are brilliant.</li> </ul>
<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental awareness community support. Therapist training.</li> <li>Weight management daily classes free yoga</li> <li>Walking. Sidewalks. Cars. Pharmacy. Pleasantness.</li> <li>Tennis wall solo practice warm up.</li> <li>More kids more activities. Languages, sports.</li> <li>Real estate ownership for labor force.</li> <li>More Vineyard Vines stores pretty please!</li> <li>Enforcement of local bylaws, boat washing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Concerns &amp; Issues</b></p> <p>This category captures a range of concerns and issues presented in people's responses, ranging from critiques of tourists to environmental concerns and personal hardship.</p>	
<b>Hardship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My Nantucket workcamp survival mode dreams deferred</li> <li>Nowhere to live. Where's my future?</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism/Summer People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rampant tourism ruining everything iconic Nantucket.</li> <li>Keep the charm influencers be gone</li> <li>Gross display of wealth = summer</li> <li>Fewer entitled people, keep the natural (world) #7!</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have enough mice ruining crops</li> <li>Engineered mice will multiply - don't allow.</li> <li>Our water is not safe!</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I hope Nantucket stop single plastic</li> <li>● I hope Nantucket stops plastic cups</li> <li>● Single use plastic destroying the island</li> <li>● Our water is not safe yet so necessary (sorry more than 6 words!)</li> <li>● Million of plastic cups - a danger -</li> </ul>
<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fragile sublimity encased in commerce.</li> <li>● Can't believe it's free! It's not.</li> <li>● Out of control &amp; circling the drain</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personal</b> This category includes more personal six word stories that speak to specific experiences and more creative writing-style responses.</p>	
<b>Personal Storytelling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Love is finding the right partner.</li> <li>● Today is my birthday, it's great!</li> <li>● Elin helped me appreciate it more</li> <li>● Ian and Sydney got to relax.</li> <li>● Got sick, fell down, got up</li> <li>● My memories red pants green flash. Old people macy portraits my ancestors</li> <li>● Waitressing and singing, meeting true love.</li> <li>● My dream starts here. My seed</li> </ul>
<b>Arrival/Travel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I left N.H. I live Nantucket. I love it.</li> <li>● I came I saw I impressed!</li> <li>● I came, left, came back, stayed.</li> <li>● I came I saw I learned before I left</li> <li>● Sailed to Nantucket gladly never left.</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Responsibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Please let's all do out part</li> <li>● Support what matters most to you</li> <li>● We need to each take responsibility, yes?</li> </ul>
<b>Creative Storytelling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● He did not have enough words</li> <li>● For sale baby shoes never worn - Hemingway</li> <li>● Skipper singer returns with Dreamland feature.</li> <li>● I arrived home to a note.</li> <li>● All at once I slowly died</li> <li>● They desperately longed to meet anew</li> <li>● Once upon a time happened once</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Uncategorized Six Word Stories**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The past, protected; the future, luscious.</li> <li>● I left N.H. I live Nantucket. I love it.</li> <li>● We have enough mice ruining crops</li> <li>● Town needs to consider all citizens opinions</li> <li>● Enforce traffic, bicycle rules + regulations</li> <li>● Engineered mice will multiply - don't allow.</li> <li>● Ocean horizons, un-cluttered, let imagination soar.</li> <li>● Rampant tourism ruining everything iconic Nantucket.</li> <li>● Fragile sublimity encased in commerce.</li> <li>● All things were possible for many.</li> <li>● Rain or shine...we have fun.</li> <li>● Sunsets, clams, beach walks, ocean swims</li> <li>● Fewer entitled people, keep the natural (world) #7!</li> <li>● I came I saw I impressed!</li> <li>● Love is finding the right partner.</li> <li>● Today is my birthday, it's great!</li> <li>● I came, left, came back, stayed.</li> <li>● Here: an otherwise unattainable peace.</li> <li>● I came I saw I learned before I left,</li> <li>● Got sick, fell down, got up</li> <li>● Support what matters most to you</li> <li>● Summer love. Distance. Emotions. Freedom. Liberalism.</li> <li>● He did not have enough words</li> <li>● Walking. Sidewalks. Cars. Pharmacy. Pleasantness.</li> <li>● Tennis wall solo practice warm up.</li> <li>● Imposter but love knows no such thing. Change - I cannot condone perfect as it is. Change - I can't condone it perfect as it is. Stay as you are...perfection is yours</li> <li>● Keep the charm influencers be gone</li> <li>● My Nantucket workcamp survival mode dreams deferred</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More kids more activities. Languages, sports.</li> <li>● Mainland serious meets Nantucket, Playful wins.</li> <li>● Needs affordable housing cross-cultural events</li> <li>● Very educated, very expensive, very welcoming</li> <li>● Affordable housing needed for workers now!</li> <li>● Change - but keep the same values.</li> <li>● Lighthouse. Beach. Wheezies. Barnaby's. Ice cream. Ferry. Nantucket through the eyes of my daughter.</li> <li>● Ian and Sydney got to relax.</li> <li>● Put a stop on building houses</li> <li>● Yes, the traffic circles are brilliant.</li> <li>● Enforcement of local bylaws, boat washing</li> <li>● Fewer cars fewer cars fewer cars!</li> <li>● Lovely fun place, hope to visit again</li> <li>● No electric vehicles on bike paths!</li> <li>● Mental awareness community support. Therapist training.</li> <li>● Weight management daily classes free yoga</li> <li>● Moratorium on building pause + reset</li> <li>● Don't take away conservation land</li> <li>● Inspired by the women of Nantucket</li> <li>● Biggest ferry ice cream ocean waves</li> <li>● Stop the urbanization We aren't the mainland</li> <li>● Limit consultants use citizens institutional knowledge</li> <li>● Please let's all do our part</li> <li>● My memories. Red pants. Green flash. Old people. Macy portraits. My ancestors</li> <li>● Life in Nantucket is disarmingly perfect</li> <li>● My dream starts here. My seed</li> </ul>
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