

Winchester Master Plan MPSC Kickoff Meeting Summary of Results

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community preservation
+ planning

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

Members of the Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) hope that the master plan will include measurable goals, clear priorities, and a cohesive vision.

Winchester's talented pool of residents are one of the town's greatest assets. MPSC members hope that this process will generate excitement, increase awareness, and lead to meaningful involvement from a broad spectrum of the community.

Many of Winchester's identified challenges—high cost of housing, lack of commercial tax base, traffic, and limited developable land—fall within the individual elements—housing, economic development, transportation, and land use—which will be addressed in the master plan.

SUMMARY

On Thursday, September 6th, 2018, the Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) held a kickoff meeting. Thirteen of the eighteen-person committee were in attendance. A presentation on the project overview and schedule preceded a discussion exercise on project aspirations, and Winchester's greatest opportunities and greatest challenges.

PROJECT ASPIRATIONS

Some of the hopes that participants had for the Winchester Master Plan included the following:

- A completed plan
- Measurable goals of success, and realistic actions and priorities
- A clear implementation road map for next steps
- Concrete recommendations/strategies to protect historic resources
- Meaningful and consistent engagement with the entire community
- A sense of purpose
- Generate excitement and awareness of challenges facing the town
- Addresses the town's lack of commercial tax revenue
- Comprehensive transportation plan
- Includes updates to zoning
- Become a model for achieving small-scale affordable housing (rather than large developments)

EXERCISE FORMAT

The Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) members were asked to describe their top three hopes for the project, and Winchester's greatest opportunities and challenges. The appendix includes the group's full answers, but below is an overview of some commonly identified hopes, opportunities, and challenges.

WINCHESTER'S GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES

Some of greatest opportunities that participants identified for Winchester in regards to the Master Plan process included the following:

- Improving commercial and light industrial, particularly along North Main Street.
- Engaged, talented, and educated residents
- Active and caring community
- Great school system
- Close to Boston and the highway system
- Beautiful natural space, particularly the town's rivers, lakes and other open spaces.
- Close to good employers
- Improving design standards for new construction
- Diversity across age, income, and race

WINCHESTER'S GREATEST CHALLENGES

Some of greatest challenges that participants identified for Winchester in regards to the Master Plan process included the following:

- Resistance to change
- Traffic
- School overcrowding
- Creating and maintaining diversity across age, income, and race
- Money
- High cost of housing and resistance to affordable housing
- Regulations
- Limited developable land--leading to high land costs
- Not enough bike lanes and alternative transportation options

Winchester Master Plan MPSC Kickoff Meeting Appendix (Full Results)

PROJECT ASPIRATIONS

- Come up with actions that will be implemented
- Coordinate individual elements e.g. housing with open space and economic development
- Overcome resistance to change
- Develop a broad base consensus
- Develop Preservation Planning Strategies by including tools and policies to preserve the town's historic/cultural resources
- Comprehensive transportation plan
- Updated zoning to allow for more density
- Commercial Tax Revenue
- Community conversation/education
- Direction forward
- Priority Setting
- Plan is finalized with a minimum of revisions
- Addresses the housing needs
- Downtown retains its village quality
- Unify the town's priorities
- Clarify opportunities for community to engage in town's evolution
- Define solutions to biggest conundrums
- Clear/Discernible plan for whole community
- Vision to stimulate potential
- Think outside the box
- Consistent engagement with community
- Engage the community to actually participate in the project
- Actually execute recommendations
- Become an even better community as a result
- Long ranging, achievable plan for the town
- Lots of community involvement and outreach
- Create a sense of purpose for the town
- Instill excitement in the community for what it can be
- Plan that has realistic actions with priorities
- It is successfully used
- Pushes Winchester forward
- Everyone has a voice in forging forward
- Develop a long-term plan for Winchester than can be adjusted to Winchester's needs as time goes on—focusing on housing transportation and commercial uses
- Produce a cohesive vision which will be embraced by Town residents
- Bring awareness of the challenges facing the town and invigorates resident's participation in solving them
- Leads to actions being taken
- Entire town participation – give voices to all who need it
- Measurable goals of success related to economic/housing development in areas of town needing attention
- FUN

Winchester Master Plan MPSC Kickoff Meeting Appendix (Full Results)

WINCHESTER'S GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES

- Booming growth to capture employment and population growth now occurring
- Positively engage a broad spectrum of the population
- Become more diverse (age, income, and race)
- Develop a lively mixed-use commercial and residential center
- River/lakes as recreational amenity
- Better bus service
- Preserve mature trees
- Preserve historic homes
- Better design for new construction
- More commercial/light industrial
- Better mix of incomes
- Better mix of housing types
- Engaged residents
- Amazingly talented people
- Beautiful physical space
- Economic Success
- Closeness to Boston and highways
- Close to really good employers
- Diversify Living Opportunities
- Enhance natural strengths and environmental areas
- Invite Economic development to foster economic sustainability
- Enhance commercial
- Embrace housing
- Invigorate downtown
- Get even better
- Stay wonderful
- Good Schools
- Great Residents
- Make Downtown Awesome
- Environmental Sustainability
- Volunteers
- Schools
- Active Community
- Caring Community
- Organizations, Government and LOT
- Residents
- History
- Land
- Education
- Community involvement
- Close to Boston and Highway system
- North Main Street
- The IL District Conversion to walkable business friendly area
- More commercial tax base
- Invigorate Commercial districts
- Embrace housing diversity
- Become a model for achieving affordable housing on the small scale rather than large developments

Winchester Master Plan MPSC Kickoff Meeting Appendix (Full Results)

WINCHESTER'S GREATEST CHALLENGES

- Overcoming regulations and resistance to change
- Getting the government to actually take implementation action
- Productively address economic development
- Managing traffic and finding transportation alternatives
- Residents not wanting to change adding on to historic downtown
- Not enough children walking or biking to school
- Not enough bike lanes
- Some roads are too wide-need wider sidewalks/bump outs at crossings
- Intolerance
- Gap between haves and have-nots
- School overcrowding
- Overbuilding
- Same sections of town feel left out or even abused
- Inequalities among elementary schools
Since so much funding comes from parents
- Low commercial tax base
- Loss of civility
- Selfishness
- Money
- High cost of housing
- Little underdeveloped land
- Transportation from periphery of town to downtown
- Making downtown relevant to outlying residents
- Changes are needs and often funded by families/individuals, but a large number of voters are seniors
- Fragments of population (and competing priorities)
- Resistance to change
- Our deliberative nature
- Need to define solutions to the problems we identify
- Affordable housing
- Increased density
- Traffic
- Burst of population of young families 2010-2018
- Staying diverse
- Staying multi-generational and socioeconomically diverse town rather than becoming more wealthy community
- Sustaining growth
- Affordable Housing
- Business Development Opportunities
- Creating a diverse community (economic/ social)
- Aging in place
- Retaining young people
- Money
- Land
- Circulation
- The state and federal regulations
- 40B law
- Real estate market – maintain value
- Maintain the character of Winchester
- Maintain an affordable tax base
- Blending the new and the old together so they can improve
- Small amount of land left
- Land is expensive and therefore inhibits certain types of development
- Lack of Housing Diversity
- Lack of Commercial development
- Lack of economic diversity