

TOWN OF WINCHENDON

Approved: 8/18/2020



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AUG 18 2020

Master Plan Committee

WINCHENDON TOWN CLERK
Telephone (978) 297-5414

Meeting Minutes
July 7, 2020

Meeting held via zoom:

Members Present: Elaine Mroz, Jane LaPointe, Jill Sackett, Art Amenta
Greg Vine

Staff: Tracy Murphy, Director of Planning & Development
Nicole Roberts, Land Use Coordinator

Members of the Public in Attendance: Marc Dorwart
Ed Ford Jr.

Materials: Agenda
Master Plan Draft

Meeting called to order: 2:04pm

Reorganization – Elaine Mroz and Greg Vine volunteers a co-chairs of the Master Plan Committee. A nomination reflecting such was made by Jane LaPointe seconded by Elaine Mroz.

Roll call vote: GV yes, EM yes, JL yes, JS, yes, AA, yes

Plan Chapters: The Draft Master Plan as presented to the committee is attached to these minutes for reference.

The Committee reviewed edits based on comments in red text that included –

Language regarding Solar Arrays incorporated into Land Use and Open Space chapters
Language regarding the reconstruction of Central Street added to Transportation/Circulation
Eliminated strategies that are already complete TR 1.2, 4.1

The committee discussed the organization of the chapters and determined that the order that best suited the content.

The committee focused most discussion on implementation, common themes throughout the document and defining the timelines that included:

- Discuss importance of communication and participation – Where should this be in Plan
- Remove Description & Missions of Boards/Committees in charge to carry out strategies?
- Short/Medium/Long Term – do you want to structure it this way? If so, define what each means

Document Format discussion

- Format Discussion – Focus is on finalizing Volume 1, the narrative portion of the document. Volume 2 will include the supporting data and documents to illustrate the process and can be published once volume 1 is complete.

Meeting times were discussed. After the next meeting (July 29 at 2pm) it was discussed that the committee reserve every Tuesday at 2pm to meet until the draft is released for public comment.

Timeline:

- The committee established an aggressive timeline that will require weekly meetings, preferably on Tuesdays at 2pm.
- The committee agreed to take on various tasks to accomplish timeline

Next Meeting: July 7, 2020 at 2pm via ZOOM format.

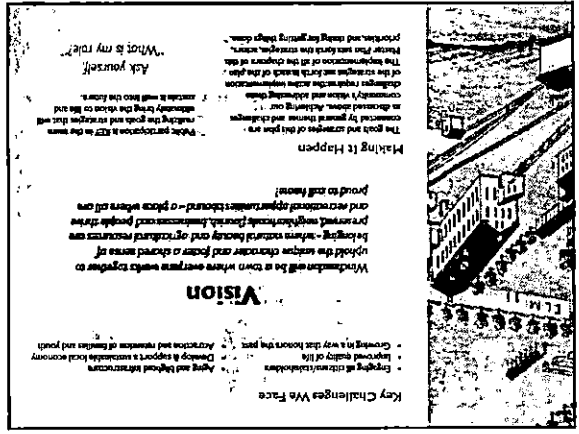
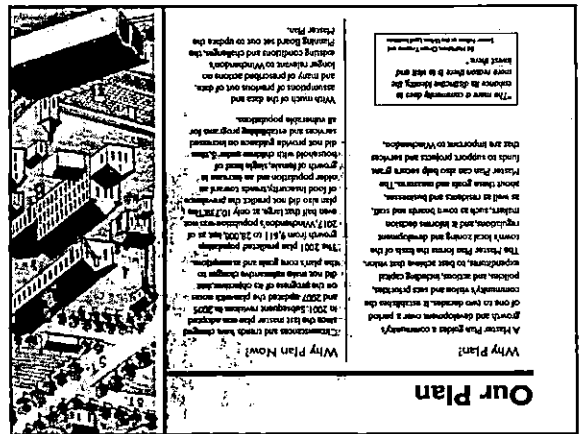
Meeting Adjourned: 4:15pm

Respectfully Submitted:

Tracy Murphy, Director of Planning & Development

8/18/2020- Minutes approved via Zoom meeting


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Our Town

Our Land

The Town of Winchendon encompasses 44 square miles. In the 19th century, Winchendon began to grow as a manufacturing town that relied on water power from mills beginning with the damming of Lake Monomoonic. Development began to cluster in small villages within the Town's borders, each surrounding a mill. At the peak of its industrial prosperity, Winchendon was home to the internationally renowned Converse Toy Company giving the Town its nickname, "Toy Town." It was also during this era that Winchendon's town center moved from the Old Centre vicinity to its present location.

Muz villages, forests, and farm fields still comprise the prevailing pattern of development in Wanchuan. However, the town has experienced sprawling suburban residential development. In recent years, efforts have been made to better develop and protect lands through smart growth, state and private acquisitions and development restrictions.

Our People

As of the most recent American Community Survey (2013-2017) estimates, the Town of Winchendon is home to 10,738 residents. The town's population continues to grow at a faster rate than both Worcester County and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In recent decades, the town's population has been aging steadily. In 1990, the median age in Winchendon was 31.0 years old; the average age has shifted by more than 10 years to 41.3 years old.

There are an estimated 3,889 households in Winchendon, with an average household size of 2.69 persons. Approximately 30.2% of households include children under the age of 18, of which 7.1% are female single head of household, and 40.7% of households have at least one resident over the age of 60.

In 2000, an est. 195 residents identified as Hispanic or Latino. Similarly, residents identifying as African American alone from 77 (0.8%) to 108 (1.0%) from 2000 to 2017.



Our Economy

According to the most recent American Community Survey (2013–2017), the median household income is \$64,539 in Winchendon, placing it between the state (\$74,167) and nation median household income levels (\$57,651).

The top five largest employing industries in towns are educational services (20.5% of total employees), manufacturing (11.1%), health care & social assistance (10.4%), retail trade (10.2%), and accommodation & food services (9.6%).

While the town has experienced sprawling suburban residential development, there are many vacant properties in the business areas that have been left unimproved. Winchendon contains several large tracts of state-owned open space, including the Lake Dartmouth Recreational Area and part of Otter River State Forest, which are open to the public for camping, fishing, and other outdoor recreation activities. There are additional recreational opportunities where one can enjoy the scenic resources throughout Winchendon such as the North Central Parkway and the Winchendon Community Park. These places bring in tourist traffic from surrounding communities that aid in supporting the local economy.

Our Progress

The Winnebago Planning Board appointed a 7-member Master Plan Committee. Members brought with them perspectives shaped by a wide variety of professional and volunteer experience and were able to speak as experts about the strengths and weaknesses of our town. The Committee sought to generate excitement and enthusiasm, provide timely and useful information, and promote broad and diverse public involvement by utilizing surveys, interviews, public meetings, and workshops in an attempt to reach out to people representing all sectors of Winnebago's population.

Each plan chapter includes a summary of the topic and a discussion of the goals and strategies for implementation. The topical chapters are:

- Land Use
- Open Space and Recreation
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Transportation
- Services and Facilities
- Implementation



Land Use

Background

72% of Winchendon's land area is still undeveloped open space and forest. Of this undeveloped land, a relatively small amount is permanently protected from development, like Otter State Forest and the Lake Dennison Recreational Area. This leaves a lot of land open for potential development in the future.

The majority of Winchester's growth in the past ten years has been single-family residential and medium to large scale solar arrays. Only a small portion of the town's land is zoned for commercial or industrial use.

When making decisions about future land use, town officials must balance the need for a commercial tax base large enough to support infrastructure for Windenond's residential areas with the need to protect Windenond from development that its citizens don't find desirable. If Windenond's commercial and industrial sectors do not grow and increase their contribution to the local tax base, it will fall on the homeowners to fund a larger percentage of the Town's annual budget. The right mix of commercial and nonresidential development

Land Use Goals

- LU 1: Identify areas in town suitable for expanded or new commercial or industrial development and encourage compact, mixed-use development in downtown Windham.
- LU 2: Encourage agriculture and green living.
- LU 3: Preserve Windham's existing open space resources.
- LU 4: Encourage and promote new and existing recreational opportunities for residents and



Background

Figure 1

1. Explain the concept of a nation-state and its evolution over time.

2. Discuss the role of the state in the development of the nation-state.

3. Analyze the impact of globalization on the nation-state.

4. Evaluate the effectiveness of international organizations in maintaining world order.

5. Compare and contrast different models of international relations.

6. Identify the key actors in the international system and their interests.

7. Discuss the challenges facing the world today and the role of the state in addressing them.

8. Analyze the impact of technology on international relations.

9. Evaluate the role of the state in the global economy.

10. Discuss the importance of international law and the role of the state in enforcing it.

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Survey ED 1.5: Ensure that personnel provide, reasonable, and consistent

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Survey ED 25: Increase traffic safety

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Transportation and Circulation



Background

The average travel time to work for Winchester is 15.5 minutes. Winchester's average 15.5 minutes travel time is significantly higher than the average travel time for most other cities in the region. Winchester's average travel time is also higher than the average travel time for most other cities in the region. Winchester's average travel time is also higher than the average travel time for most other cities in the region.

Three major roadway projects in Winchester are currently under construction. The first is the reconstruction of the main north-south corridor, which will improve traffic flow and reduce travel time. The second is the reconstruction of the main east-west corridor, which will improve traffic flow and reduce travel time. The third is the reconstruction of the main north-south corridor, which will improve traffic flow and reduce travel time.

Transportation Goals

1.1. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

1.2. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

1.3. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

1.4. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

1.5. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

1.6. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

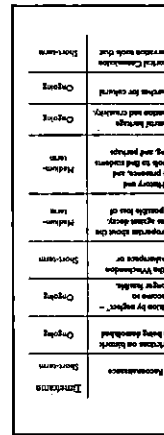
1.7. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

1.8. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

1.9. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

1.10. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

Implementation



Goal

1.1. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

1.2. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

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1.10. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

Historic and Cultural Resources



Background

Winchester has a rich history of industry and commerce. The city was founded in 1782 and has since become a major center of industry and commerce. Winchester has a rich history of industry and commerce. The city was founded in 1782 and has since become a major center of industry and commerce. Winchester has a rich history of industry and commerce. The city was founded in 1782 and has since become a major center of industry and commerce.

Historic and Cultural Resources

1.1. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

1.2. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

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1.10. Provide for safe and efficient travel.

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Implementation continued...

Goal	Strategy	Timeframe
SP 3: Improve financial management, incorporating past review of the town's finances	Strategy SP 3.1: Conduct review and implement the recommendations outlined in Department of Revenue Review to better improve the town's finances.	Medium-term
SP 6: Improve the capacity and knowledge base of all current and future Board and Committee members	Strategy SP 6.1: Each board and committee in Windham's Town Government should establish their purpose, strategies, options to expand participation and prepare a handbook that details their policies and procedures. Offer board-sponsored training similar to before town meetings and promote active participation. Further, each entity should identify ongoing training opportunities for all members.	Medium-term
SP 7: Continue energy conservation measures under the town's Green Community designation	Strategy SP 7.1: Windham should continue exploring conservation measures and strategies for its municipal structures, as well as consider applying for future competitive grant funds through the Green Communities program. This initiative should be led by the Department of Planning & Development working with other town departments and the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources.	Ongoing
SP 8: Identify the town resources needed for the implementation of this plan	Strategy SP 8.1: Establish a Master Plan Implementation Committee	Short-term



Themes moving forward:

Throughout the process to review and update the Town of Windham Master Plan a number of common themes emerged.

It is important that the community of Windham engages its:

- coordinate town and community services and seek to utilize regional resources
- ensure effective communication between businesses and Town offices
- preserve Windham's existing historic and cultural assets
- encourage agriculture & entrepreneurship
- focus on energy conservation measures and green living
- maintain and improve Town services, facilities, programs and capacities
- preserve Windham's existing open spaces
- protect the quality and quantity of water resources

It is important that the community of Windham improve and enhance:

- the value potential of Windham's work force
- transportation infrastructure and traffic safety
- Planned financial management
- Engagement, capacity and knowledge base of all Board and Committee members
- accessibility of services and facilities to all
- the highly visible "green" location, compact, walkable development, in downtown

Rebuild and rebound the legacy of downtown Windham as a business center

It is important that the community of Windham improve:

- recreation and agriculture as catalysts for economic development
- the regional trail network
- connections between open space resources and recreation facilities and economic development opportunities
- connectivity and enhanced access to and enjoyment of open spaces and recreational opportunities
- connectivity for a variety of transportation modes
- traffic safety in downtown Windham
- housing opportunities by stabilizing aging housing, reducing high vacancy rates
- compliance with Chapter 40B's stated goal of 10% affordable housing stock
- areas in town identified as suitable for new commercial or industrial development

Implementation

Town Board, Commission, Committees and citizens should see their Master Plan as a business plan for accomplishing the things that our citizens have expressed as important to their future. Achieving our community's Vision, and the usefulness of this Master Plan, requires the active implementation of the strategies set forth in each of the plan chapters. This section outlines the organization and mission of each Board, Commission and Committee and is organized by each topic's short, medium, and long term strategies and ongoing initiatives. Responsible Actors for implementation including staff where appropriate are identified.

Strategy	Responsible
Strategy IU 3.1: Consider partnerships with conservation organizations such as the Audubon Society.	CONSOB, RC, WPCF
Strategy IU 3.2 IU 4.2: Consider participation in the State Community Preservation Act (SCPA) program for open space, historic preservation, affordable housing and outdoor recreation.	BOE, CONSOB, HC, PC, PWCYF, WMA
Strategy IU 3.3: Enhance the existing walking and/or equestrian trail network.	PL, PRA, Zoning Enforcement
Strategy GP 3.1: Identify and purchase areas and parcels for protection. Examples: the acreage protected under agricultural and forestland preservation programs, and consider the community's options.	AC, CONSOB
Strategy GS 3.4: Identify priority areas for trail and open space benefits, including connecting routes to NH and other communities.	CONSOB, PL, PC
Strategy GS 3.5: Prioritize acquisition needs.	CONSOB, OGC, PC, Town Manager
Strategy ID 1.1: Establish an Economic Development Committee to track and understand the Town's economic growth and opportunities. Implement the Master Plan Economic Development goals.	BOE, WMA, Town Manager
Strategy ID 1.2: Solicit information from existing business owners regarding their level of satisfaction with Wachusett as the location for their operations to help determine future business needs in the community and plan ahead for necessary change or improvements.	ITC, WMA, Town Manager, Planning & Development
Strategy ID 1.6: Adopt Plaqueschemes Chapter 41D allowing for expedited permitting on pre-approved parcels.	PL/WMA
Strategy ID 2.1: Prepare a retail market study to determine the demand for various types of retail business, and determine if the demand is being met locally.	WMA, Planning & Development
Strategy ID 2.3: Strategy ID 2.5: Promote traffic safety and signage in the downtown area.	WMA, DPW, Planning & Development

Strategic Initiative	Responsible Party
Strategy ID 2.3: Enhance Educating communities and the Urban League Foundation's 2004 report, "Opportunity Abounds."	WRA, Town Manager, Planning & Development.
Strategy ID 2.11: Organize stakeholders into task forces or other groups to concentrate efforts into a particular cause or project.	BOI, Town Manager
Strategy ID 2.12: Increase connections between local businesses to increase business retention and support local business.	TTTC, WRA, Town Manager, Planning & Development
Strategy HO 1.1: Create a Housing Production Plan (HPP)	PL, WRA
Strategy HO 1.3: Work with the Safe Routes to School program.	SC
Strategy HC 1.1: Reexamine the Williamson Rejuvenation Report.	HC, Town Manager, Planning & Development
Strategy HC 1.4: Continue efforts to develop the highfields property as a marketplace or similar performance and recreation area.	OC, PC, WGOC
Strategy HC 2.4: Encourage Williamson Historical Commission members to seek out existing or modern preservation tools that are suitable to land and to the Town.	HC
Strategy TR 1.1: Analyze available traffic crash data from at least the past three years, focusing initially on areas with high crash rates.	DPW, Town Manager
Strategy SP 1.1: Create quarterly meetings of all municipal board, commissions and committees to be led by the Board of Selectmen, to help break down cross-agency activities, reduce duplicative efforts, and promote a trans-municipal approach to governance.	BOI, Town Manager
Strategy SP 2.3: Expand Information Technology (IT) capabilities.	Town Manager, IT Department
Strategy SP 4.2: Increase two-way communication between citizens and government and create opportunities for citizens to provide feedback.	BOI, Town Manager
Strategy SP 8.1: Establish a Master Plan Implementation Committee	BOI

Medium Term:

Strategy LU 1.1: Hold a public meeting where boards, commissions, departments and the public get together to brainstorm ideas.	BOI, Town Manager
Strategy ID 4.4 Strategy LU 1.6 Strategy LU 1.5: Conduct a review of Wethersden's current zoning bylaws to determine their adequacy for accommodating desired land use and development density, with similar lot sizes and allowing more than one building per parcel. Propose updated zoning bylaws and regulations to reflect such.	PS
Strategy OS 2.5: Look to adaptive properties to improve downtown open space and recreational opportunities, such as parking garages and highly visible locations for public concerns and events.	BOI, PC, TTCF, WRA
Strategy OS 3.4: Identify long-range funding for maintenance and programs.	FINCOPL, CPC, Town Manager
Strategy OS 4.1: Provide recreational access to water bodies in town.	PC, WOPC
Strategy OS 4.3: Clean up Whiskey Pond and pursue efforts to develop recreational opportunities at the Pond.	CONSCOM, PC, WOPC
Strategy ID 1.3: Encourage establishment of a local business association to give local businesspeople voice in the community.	TTCF, WRA, Planning & Development
Strategy ID 2.1: Address the high cost of rents in downtown.	Town Manager, Planning & Development
Strategy ID 3.1: Explore recreation and Agriculture as a catalyst for economic development in towns similar to Wethersden and identify retail targets and properties for business development.	ACAC, TTCF, WOPC, WRA
Strategy HO 3.1: Improve sidewalks and walkability.	DPW
Strategy HO 3.2: Find ways to promote the use of the Open Space Residential Development (Cluster Development) bylaw in new residential subdivisions.	CONSCOM, PS
Strategy HO 2.3: Encourage development of town-out or outstations in multifamily housing complexes.	WRA

Strategy HO 2.1: Create incentives for landlords to increase accessibility in upper-floor apartments.	WRA, WRA, TH, Planning & Development
Strategy HC 1.5: Educate owners of historic properties about the importance of voluntarily maintaining structures against decay, deterioration, and structural damage to avoid possible loss of historic resources.	HC
Strategy HC 2.1: Encourage the Wethersden History and Cultural Center to work to increase its online presence, and perhaps partner with Wethersden public schools to find students interested in working with research, cataloging, and perhaps even grant writing.	HC
Strategy TR 1.1: Create a Comprehensive Circulation Study/Plan that will help identify major roadway travel routes, safety issues, signage, crosswalks and sidewalks, mode, pavement, parking needs.	Town Manager, DPW, Planning & Development
Strategy TR 2.2: Implement traffic calming measures in downtown Wethersden per the 2014 Revitalization Strategy document.	DPW
Strategy TR 3.1: Complete a Trail Master Plan to inventory existing trails and open space and to create a Town-wide plan for expansion, management and funding, and acquisition of new properties.	CONSCOM, PC, WOPC, Planning & Development
Strategy TR 4.2: Encourage the State to further investigate the condition of key bridges in the Town, and to make these bridges a funding priority.	DPW
Strategy TR 4.3: Conduct and maintain an inventory of culverts and identify a mechanism to clean, repair, and replace structures as needed.	DPW
Strategy SP 1.4: Prepare an updated organizational flow chart that depicts all municipal departments, boards, commissions, committees, and ad hoc committees and outline which entity established them and which entity they report to.	BOI, Town Manager
Strategy SP 1.1: Increase interaction between Book Memorial Library and DM Herdick Senior Center.	Town Manager
Strategy SP 1.2: Create a capital plan for the DM Herdick Senior to meet increased growing demand for senior services (including staffing, equipment, and facility improvements).	CPC, Town Manager

Long Term:

Strategy	Actor/Chairs
Strategy SP 4.1: Each board and committee in Wethersden's Town Government should outline their purpose, programs, options to expand participation and prepare a handbook that details their policies and procedures. Offer board-sponsored training session to inform new members and promote active participation. Further, each entity should identify ongoing training opportunities for all members.	BOI, TH
	PS
Strategy OS 2.7: Expand North Central Parkway and Town trails.	CONSCOM, PC, TTCF, WOPC, WRA, Planning & Development
Strategy ID 7.4: Consider adopting design guidelines for development in town with characteristics worthy of preservation.	HC, PS
Strategy ID 6.1: Identify new areas for business development and consider rezoning land to promote new economic development.	PLWRA, Town Manager, DPW, Planning & Development
Strategy TR 1.3 Strategy HO 3.1: Make neighborhoods, especially downtown, more pedestrian-friendly and improve walkability through construction and rehabilitation of sidewalks.	Town Manager, DPW, Planning & Development

Ongoing Efforts:

Strategy	Actor/Chair
Strategy LU 1.2: Be proactive about preserving historic structures.	HC
Strategy LU 2.1: Strategy SP 1.1: Wethersden should continue exploring conservation measures and strategies for its municipal structures, as well as apply for future competitive grant funds through the Green Communities program.	Planning & Development
Strategy LU 2.2: Encourage agriculture as an industry.	ACTCF, WRA, Planning & Development
Strategy LU 2.3: Promote awareness among town residents about everyday sustainability practices.	BOI, CONSCOM
	BOI, CONSCOM, CPC, PC

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Acknowledgements