

Winchendon 2025 – Building a Master Plan

Building a master plan provides residents of Winchendon an opportunity to consider what kind of community we are going to be and to make choices about the place that we live. It is important that people come forward and say what is important to them.

On April 28, 2015, the first public master plan vision session was held at Murdock High School. People assembled into seven topic areas, each corresponding to a chapter in our Town's most current master plan. These are: economic development, housing, circulation and transportation, services and facilities, natural and cultural resources, open space and recreation, and land use.

They were asked to consider the future and what they would like the Town of Winchendon to be in 2025. The responses and ideas of these groups of citizens are on the following pages. These pages are a work in progress. You may see contradictions; you may have questions. Please speak up. You will see that ideas under one topic often relate to another topic and that these relationships need to be considered as we make decisions and plans for our Town.

This is just the first step in building a master plan. There will be many opportunities to add your ideas and experiences to this work. We encourage you to stay informed, get involved and to spread the word to other people you know. Our master plan and our Town will be stronger and more viable if it reflects the ideas and voices of the many different people who live in Winchendon.

What do you want for Winchendon and for the people who live, work or play in our Town ...?

Winchendon 2025 - Economic Development

Economic development identifies policies, strategies and actions for the expansion or stabilization of the Town's economic base and the promotion of employment opportunities.

- Meetings of town officials with business owners
- Image of town (*relates to Natural & Cultural Resources; Outdoor Space & Recreation*)
- Tax incentives for property owners re downtown beautification
- Review environmental restrictions (*relates to Land Use*)
- Revisit Town by-laws

- Special events
 - Attract townspeople and outsiders to local events
 - Tie events together

- Winchendon Business Alliance (moribund). Business Roundtable, Local Chamber. Need the vision of local business people
 - What benefits?
 - Host events
 - Coop ads
 - Customer outreach
 - Social media – businesses need help

- Cost of rent for businesses
- Workforce (education)

- Research business grants

- Better accessibility; drive traffic, our residents and visitors, into town; get people from Route 2 and southern NH to Winchendon. (*relates to Circulation & Transportation*)

Winchendon 2025 - Housing

Housing identifies and analyzes housing needs and objectives including programs for preservation, improvement and development of housing. It identifies policies, strategies and actions to provide a balance of local housing opportunities for all the Town's citizens.

- Housing quality and appearance
- Home preservation (older homes)

- Energy efficient homes (more green building codes)

- More apartments above businesses on Central Street or downtown

- Age appropriate housing
 - Elderly
 - Middle Age (over 55 community-gated)
 - Congregate senior communities (AI4??)

- Veterans congregate housing
- Single parent homes and neighborhood
- Home zoning to match neighborhoods (*relates to Land Use*)
- More single family affordable homes/neighborhoods to attract younger families
- More and creative condo living

- Improved sidewalks and walkability (*relates to Circulation & Transportation*)

Winchendon 2025 - Services & Facilities

Services & Facilities identifies and analyzes needs for facilities and services used by the public and provided by the Town. It identifies policies, strategies and actions to meet these existing and future needs.

Public Safety

<p><u>Police</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Police station: to meet the needs of the police and provide service to the public; a public presence that shows pride• Civil Defense and emergency management – a place and plan to house and mobilize resources. A place for Town Manager and BOS to oversee events.• Do we plan for a public safety complex or for substations close to users?• More visibility in the community, starting with the Chief; a Community Resource Officer (the Chief) for community-police education
<p><u>Fire Department/Ambulance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep infrastructure, equipment and training up-to-date; need capital plan and budget• Keep up with/expand mutual aid across towns in the region
<p><u>Emergency Dispatch</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technology is up-to-date and able to track the town's geography; Emergency medical personnel are up-to-date• Build collaboration and partnering inside and outside of the town• As population ages, the needs increase

Public Works

<p><u>Trash disposal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessible and affordable disposal and recycling options for the various people/demographics who live here.• What are best options: privatize; increase transfer station usage; curb-side pick up as town service? How promote?
<p><u>Water & Wastewater</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Money/capital plan for water infrastructure repair, modernizing, expansion This has impact on making this a good place to live and do business• Wastewater system stays up to code/requirements• Evaluate cost/charge of enterprise fund; institute a percentage increase each year for enterprise fund services. Be sure money is available to sustain the investments already made• Evaluate where, geographically, we provide service and where we do not; what's the rationale
<p><u>Dams</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capital planning to fix and/or maintain what we have• Use town dams for hydro power/energy, recreation (water level); fix dam by bike path (<i>relates to Open Space & Recreation</i>)

Education

Schools

- Winchendon is a place kids want to stay. What will this take? Why do they leave? (bullying, behavior, curriculum, perception/pride?)
- Our schools (and our whole community) is a safe and nurturing environment
- Revisit the relationship with Monty-Tech. What is the best focus for Winchendon Public Schools and its students? Consider vocational-technical in town; develop a rationale and plan.
- Birth to age 5 – recognize the importance of early childhood education and act on this for future success in our schools (*Relates to Community Health*)

Library

- Accessibility; library becomes an important resource to everyone in Town; a community center
- Users are connected to technology
- Lots of interaction with senior center
- Critical role in birth to 5

Community Health (and wellness programs)

Overall

- We need goals and a plan (*relates to Open Space & Recreation*)
- Coordinate more community resources, groups, area colleges to make a difference (Winchendon working together for community health and wellbeing)
- Overcome/address issues of access, stigma, exclusion

Senior Center

- Has a master plan, start with this
- Seniors are a growing demographic. Increase staff in order to expand services to meet the growing demand.
- Capital plan for building

Health Care & Mental Health

- Services are accessible; address mobility of our seniors and broader transportation needs (*relates to Circulation & Transportation*)
- Services are currently in Gardner – how expand to here?

Substance Abuse/Drugs Abuse

- A growing problem
- Resources to address this

Winchendon 2025 – Circulation & Transportation

Circulation & Transportation identifies and analyzes the Town's circulation and transportation needs and objectives. It identifies policies, strategies and actions to meet these needs.

- 3 Areas: Downtown, Suburban, Rural
- Circulation characteristic for all 3 areas
 - Safety
 - Aesthetics
 - Road conditions - accessibility
 - Sidewalks
 - Accommodate multi-modes/users of transportation, public transportation
 - Crossroads to NH and Central MA
- Downtown
 - Slow down/safety/vehicular respect for other transportation modes; welcoming; foot traffic
 - Blair Square – safety and aesthetics
- Suburban
 - Get folks to downtown instead of out of town (*relates to Economic Development*)
- Rural
 - Scenic
- Connect areas, i.e.
 - Dennison to Downtown
 - Neighborhoods
 - Access to recreation
- Bridges
 - Functional
 - Aesthetically pleasing
- Recreation
 - Bike trails
- Public Transportation
 - Buses
 - Commuter rail
- Accommodations for handicap

Winchendon 2025 - Open Space & Recreation

Open Space & Recreation provides and inventory of recreational resources and open space areas of the Town and identifies policies, strategies and actions for the management, protection and best use of these resources and areas.

- Recreation, the new industry. Use recreation as a catalyst for economic development/arts *(relates to Economic Development)*
 - Rental shops
 - Related flagship
 - Identify parcels and property, i.e. Glenallen Mills reuse
- Use and/or develop resources we have to draw people *(relates to Economic Development, Natural & Cultural Resources)*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Free picnic areas ○ Disc Golf Course ○ Exercise park ○ Town beach ○ Canoe and kayak ○ Skate park ○ Outside movies ○ Recreation area for youth ○ More activities for seniors ○ Ball Room dancing ○ Bike path connection from downtown to NH, Rindge/Troy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hub for bike paths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dams for water based recreation, i.e. Whitney Pond repaired <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Paddle boats ○ Picnic Areas ○ 7 acre parcel along Whitney Pond/NCP ○ Parcel behind Rite Aid ○ Ingleside ○ Development of Converse Gardens; Town owns entrance 36 River Street
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- Work with private property owners to protect land - Mount Grace
- Map old roads and existing trail systems for mountain biking, hiking *(relates to Natural & Cultural Resources)*
- Advertise what we have
 - Use local cable channel and mass media class at the high school to publicize OS&R and other Town efforts
 - Promote outdoor recreation for children through schools, Clark/YMCA *(relates to Community Health)*

Winchendon 2025 – Natural & Cultural Resources

Natural and Cultures Resources provides an inventory of the Town’s significant natural, cultural and historic resources and identifies policies, strategies and actions for the management, protection and best use of these resources.

Winchendon is a wealthy community in terms of its natural, cultural and historic resources. *(relates to Open Space & Recreation; Economic Development; Land Use; Circulation & Transportation; Services & Facilities)*

1. Use historic buildings (town hall, library) and churches for cultural concerts, public/civic events (3)
2. Access grants, NIA to National, for cultural resource (2)
3. Develop historic and natural tours of the town with guides (2)
4. Make use of Winchendon’s location in Central NE as a jumping off spot (2)
5. Capitalize on the use Ingleside and its potential as a makerspace (2)
6. Restoration of boating; public boating access (2)
7. Intentional inclusion of churches in civic life (1)
8. Tour guide program with publicity (1)
9. Statewide publicity of natural and cultural resources
10. Develop 4-H-ish program/organization
11. [Develop or promote] berry and orchard farms
12. Promote and build on existing tree farms

What do we have (Resources identified at vision session)

1. Farms	17. Town histories written
2. Farmers Market	18. Historical society
3. Fishing	19. Historical commission
4. Cranberry bogs	20. Historic Districts/Ingleside
5. Edible plants/berries	21. Olde Centre
6. Wildlife	22. Old documented cemetery
7. Sand & gravel	23. Civil War Reenactments
8. Whitney Pond	24. Old factories/buildings
9. Lake Dennison	25. Town schools
10. Monomonac	26. Winchendon School
11. Millers River	27. Church buildings
12. Stoddard Pond	28. Churches
13. Springs	29. Toy Town Horse
14. Hill 19, Indian Ground	30. VA Cemetery
15. Bike Trail	31. Location in NE
16. Forestall snowmobile trails	

Winchendon 2025 - Land Use

Land use identifies current land use and analyzes the proposed distribution, location and inter-relationship of public and private land uses. It identifies policies, strategies and actions that reinforce how the Town wants its land to be best used.

- Top 3 ideas
 1. Zoning to promote the land use we want
 2. Green living
 3. Recreational Tourism -- Commerce
- Zoning changes to entice commerce (*relates to Economic Development*)
 - Overly restrictive; loosen uses of Industrial land
 - Keep bedroom community
 - Limit industrialization; attract commerce
 - Encourage green development
- Residential (*relates to Housing*)
 - Large lots
 - Denser residential areas with access
 - Congregate housing; communal living
 - Incentives
 - Develop plan to get to 10% affordable housing
- Agriculture (*relates to Natural & Cultural Resources*)
 - Free community farms; encourage agriculture
 - Farm to School; Greenhouses
 - Encourage agriculture as industry
 - Encourage green living
 - Promote Winchendon as Agricultural Community
 - Pursue Green Community Status
- New England Character/Patterns of Villages (*relates to Economic Development; Natural & Cultural Resources; Circulation & Transportation*)
 - Through zoning and incentives
 - Proactive preservation of historic structures
 - Christmas in Toy Town for tourism
 - Investigate how others have done it
 - Support and encourage small business
- Recreation (*relates to Open Space & Recreation; Circulation & Transportation; Natural & Cultural Resources*)
 - Minimize regulation on recreation: ice racing, biking, snowmobiling etc.
 - Encourage traditional recreation
 - Basketball Courts, Skate Parks etc. easily accessible, no cost
 - Promote recreation for tourists
 - Green Recreation
 - All centrally located
 - Sidewalks
 - Swimming in Whitney's pond, swan boats, boat rental
- Wildlife Ecology Preservation

- o Outdoor Museums, Audubon
- o Identify, promote and protect what we have