

*Town Wide Planning –
Comprehensive Plan Update*

Public Forum

January 22, 2018

TWP Committee Members:

Siobhan Bohnson, Selectmen designee

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Richard Simmarano

Anita Scheipers, Town Administrator, Chair

Plan Update Process:

- Town's master plan was last updated in 2005

- Bylaw requires a Town Comprehensive Plan to be updated every 5 yrs

The Town-wide Planning Committee shall encourage, assist and review long and short term planning efforts by boards, committees and officials of the Town and incorporate these plans into a comprehensive Town-wide plan.

The Town-wide plan shall be presented to the Town meeting for approval by the voters. The Comprehensive Town-wide plan shall be reviewed and updated at least every five years.

- TWPC agreed to develop a more concise document with chapters which include only crisply defined content to update the master plan content

Plan Update Process:

- New “leaner” format limits chapter content to:
 - ✓ Overview of the information included
 - ✓ Identifying key finding of current period
 - ✓ Identifying key challenges that need to be addressed
 - ✓ Identify goals to be worked on over next 5 yrs
- Necessary addt'l info placed in appendix

Plan Update Process:

Document includes specific chapters:

- ✓ Land Use and Zoning
- ✓ Population and Housing
- ✓ Economic Development
- ✓ Transportation Network
- ✓ Open Space and Recreation
- ✓ Cultural and Historic Resources
- ✓ Municipal Facilities
- ✓ Finances
- ✓ Schools

- ✓ Implementation Plan

Plan Update Process:

This public forum will focus on the following draft chapters:

- ✓ Population and Housing
- ✓ Schools
- ✓ Transportation Network
- ✓ Economic Development

Review of Draft Chapters:

1. Population and Housing

Population and Housing – Overview

Since 2000, population increased 4.7% to 7,834

Number of children under 5 decreased by 22.2%; children between 5 and 14 dropped by 39.2%

Senior population (65+) grew by 15.9%, and will double from 1,346 to 2,708, for an increase of 1,362 people.

Persons between 55 and 64 grew by 55.8% - will reach retirement age within the next 10 year

Population and Housing – Overview, cont'd

Single family home is primary housing - small number rental units.

Rule of thumb - households should pay no more than 30% of its income on housing

If pay more than 30% = “housing cost burdened”.

Half of renter households are housing cost burdened.

31% of households are eligible for housing assistance.

Elderly households are particularly affected by housing costs - 54% housing cost burdened.

Population and Housing – Key Findings

8.1% of housing qualifies as subsidized housing inventory (SHI), but...

Rapid growth of senior population requires diverse housing stock

More subsidized senior housing needed

Population and Housing – Key Challenges

- Only 7.6 % of land still developable – adaptive re-use of existing stock may be needed.
- More rental units needed
- Rt. 12 commercial area may need to be developed into village style pedestrian friendly zone
- Growth in senior population will increase demand on municipal services (senior center, senior transportation, etc.)

Housing Plan:

Item	What	Why	Goal(s)	Who	When
1	Continue planning for development of senior housing at Orchard Knoll.	The project addresses an urgent need for more affordable senior housing.	1 and 2	AHTF Housing Authority	On-going
2	Conduct community outreach to inform the public of the Town's housing needs and gain support for local initiatives. Host annual housing summits and provide educational opportunities to local officials.	An informed public is more likely to support new affordable housing projects.	2 and 3	AHTF Town Administrator	On-going
2	Analyze undeveloped privately-owned land (7.6% of the Town) to assess its suitability for higher density housing.	As the Town approaches build-out, few opportunities will remain for the private sector to build housing for seniors and young families.	3	AHTF	2018 - 2020
3	Develop a Comprehensive Permit Policy that includes guidelines for developers to design projects to protect the environment and preserve neighborhood quality of life.	Comprehensive permit projects can have negative impacts on the Town unless designed in accordance with local preferences.	3	AHTF Board of Appeals	2018
4	Develop new affordable housing for seniors and families, and monitor existing units for compliance with use restrictions.	West Boylston has many low and moderate income households who will need housing assistance to be able to continue to live in Town.	1	AHTF	2022
5	Promote mixed use development in the Route 12 Corridor. Develop innovative zoning and prepare a design manual to implement desired development patterns.	Allowing mixed use can help to transform the Business district into a desirable place to live and work.	3	Planning Board	2020
6	Apply for housing rehabilitation funds.	The WWII era housing stock is aging, and low income households are unable to afford major repairs.	2	Town Administrator	2018

2. *Schools*

Schools – Overview

The West Boylston Public Schools operates under the following theory of action: If we provide an aligned curriculum, tightly linked to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and infuse that curriculum with high quality personalized instruction aimed at improving student motivation and engagement in learning including the use of 21st century technology, then the West Boylston Public Schools will produce graduates who are ready to achieve in any college or career they choose. Throughout 2017, Superintendent Schaper and a committee including the district leadership team and community stakeholders, developed our Strategic Plan for the next five (5) years.

Schools – Key Findings

WBPS has developed five strategic objectives:

- 1. Align curriculum to Massachusetts framework**
- 2. Promote personalized and responsive instructional approaches**
- 3. Recruit, retain and develop highly qualified staff**
- 4. Develop and enact a communication plan focusing on home/school partnerships**
- 5. Determine options for improvement, repair or replacement of school facilities**

Schools – Key Challenges

- 1. Changing nature of state standardized assessments**
- 2. Addition of significant numbers of residential housing units in Oakdale – creates difficulty in planning for where to place educational resources and balancing school choice slots**

Schools – Strategic Goals

Item	What	Why	Goal(s)	Who	When
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pilot, evaluate and adopt blended online and classroom based learning platforms including Summit Learning at multiple grade levels or subject areas• Follow curriculum revision process for English Language Arts• Follow curriculum revision process for Health and Physical Education.• Follow curriculum revision process for Foreign Language• Follow curriculum revision process for mathematics• Follow curriculum revision process for science and technology• Follow curriculum revision process for social studies• Embed options for the development of 21st century skills into every newly revised curriculum	These actions will keep our district curriculum aligned with the state curriculum. Despite ongoing changes to standardized testing, curriculum alignment will ensure our students are learning what the state expects students to know and be able to do.	Ensure that the curriculum is aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks while integrating the use of blended learning platforms and other 21 st century technology innovations for instruction	School Superintendent, Curriculum Teams, School Administration, Teachers	Scheduled revisions are included in the District's Curriculum Revision Calendar

Schools – Strategic Goals

Item	What	Why	Goal(s)	Who	When
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct a comprehensive review of personalized approaches to learning and meeting social and emotional needs of students• Develop and implement a system wide approach to personalized learning• Provide staff with training and workshops on personalization of the learning environment and meeting social/emotional needs of students <p>Implement new programming in personalized learning including curricular and extracurricular offerings learning including curricular and extracurricular offerings</p>	These actions infuse our curriculum with high quality personalized instruction aimed at improving student motivation and engagement in learning	Promote instructional approaches that are personalized and responsive to the social and emotional needs of students in order to maximize motivation and achievement.	School Superintendent, Principals, Teachers	Sept. 2017-June 2022

Schools – Strategic Goals

Item	What	Why	Goal(s)	Who	When
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a comprehensive district mentoring and induction program guide • Train teacher leaders to offer the three year Teacher Induction Program course that is held in August • EPIC Partnership grant activities with Assumption College • Provide training in specialized literacy instruction including the following Wilson Language Systems programs: Foundations, Just Words, Wilson • Train a Wilson Reading System • Expand opportunities for district wide leadership 	Recruitment and retention of high quality, high potential, high performing staff builds a consistent community of educators with consistently high expectations for our students.	Hire, retain and continually develop high quality staff members.	School Superintendent, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (grant supported programs), Principals, Mentors, Mentoring Coordinator, Partnering organizations (Assumption College, Wilson Language Systems)	September 2017-June 2022

Schools – Strategic Goals

Item	What	Why	Goal(s)	Who	When
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and offer workshops focused on helping parents partner in enhancing academic outcomes and facilitating school engagement. Workshops to include: School Brains, Summit Learning, Naviance, Google Drive, Google Docs, Google Classroom• Develop an online video series through which parents can access video workshops.	Studies show that creating home-school partnerships based on two-way communication enhances the parental involvement critical to children's academic success.	Develop and enact a communication plan that focuses on home/school partnerships for student success and achievement.	Principals, Technology Coordinator, Teachers, Parents	Fall Semesters 2017-2022

Schools – Strategic Goals

Item	What	Why	Goal(s)	Who	When
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinate with key stakeholders including Town Administrator, FISP Board, Capital Planning Board to determine the need for repair or replacement of school facilities within the next decade• Maintain Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority• Prepares long-range enrollment forecasts• Conduct a survey of existing buildings and review district's education program, calculating school capacities in relation to the current and anticipated educational programs	School building quality plays a significant role in academic outcomes. Addressing current and potential future needs through a considered process will help the school department and the community determine the course of action on what these needs may be.	Determine options for improvement, repair or replacement of school facilities.	School Superintendent, School Business Manager, Town Administrator, FISP Board, Town Capital Planning Board, Massachusetts School Building Authority	January 2018-June 2022

3. *Transportation*

Transportation - Overview

- Looks at all forms of transportation within the Town of West Boylston whether it be by motor vehicle, bicycle or on foot.
- The safety of our residents and our transient population is the primary focus.
- We also look at traffic movement through Town and some of the challenges and difficulties this traffic encounters.
- Currently, with the help of the Central Massachusetts Planning Commission (CMRCP) we are applying for grants under the Complete Streets Program and TIP while developing plans to improve our sidewalks and streets to better accommodate the traveling public.
- Once the funds become available we will work to prioritize the most needed areas.

Transportation – Key Findings

Sidewalks:

- Despite recent projects, many sidewalks still are deteriorating and need repair.
- Concern on safety of pedestrian crossings across Rt. 12
- Rt. 12 has sections of sidewalks that are not connected.
- Some large commercial lot street openings make for dangerous pedestrian crossings

Transportation – Key Findings

Local Roads:

- Local roads not eligible for federal funds
- Annual state Chapter 90 allocation is \$290K
- Narrow roads reduce options for bike lanes
- Truck traffic has difficulty traversing town due to sharp corners and discontinued streets
- 2017 Pavement Management Plan

Transportation – Key Findings

2017 Pavement Management Plan shows streets most in need of repair:

Carey Ave

Church Street

Crescent Street (in front of elementary school)

Bowen Street

Bowles Street

Henry Street

Lost Oak Road

“Lower” Newton Street

Transportation – Key Findings

2017 Pavement Management Plan – cont'd:

Maple Street (from Worcester Street south)

Osgood Street

Parker Street

Phelps Street

Pierce Street

Prospect Street (from Shrewsbury St to end)

Tobin Lane

Transportation – Key Challenges

- C90 funds limited so constant balancing act
- State & federal funds limited. Competition.
- Some sidewalks on state property
- Rt. 12 and Rt. 140 intersection needs to be reconfigured
- New sidewalks require design and retaining walls in some areas
- Bike lanes are difficult to incorporate
- Need to re-direct truck traffic

Transportation – Goals

1. Prioritize repair of local roads to maximize use of C90 money
2. Pursue solution to Rt. 12 / Rt. 140 intersection
3. Implement Complete Streets Prioritization Plan

Transportation – Plan

Item	What	Why	Goal(s)	Who	When
1	Prioritize which streets need repair, what type of repair and taking into account the amount of traffic on the street.	The State gives WB a certain amount of money each year under Chapter 90. We need to make the best use of this money.	1	Trans. Committee DPW Director Town Administrator	Ongoing
2	The Rte. 12 / Rte. 140 intersection needs realignment to facilitate traffic movement and to improve safety.	There are many accidents in this area and it is difficult for large trucks to navigate.	2	Trans. Committee DPW Town Administrator	Ongoing

Transportation – Plan

Item	What	Why	Goal(s)	Who	When
3	Continue to submit applications to the Complete Streets program for project funding. Discuss the application process with State program administrators to optimize our plan.	The Town needs the funding to move ahead with the majority of these projects.	3	Trans Committee DPW Director Town Administrator	Ongoing
4	The Town has installed flashing STOP signs some of the 4-way intersections. We need to evaluate the success of this measure and look to see if we need to make more improvements at these and other intersections.	We have had several requests for crosswalks in areas the public feels they are necessary.	4	Trans Committee DPW Director Town Administrator	Ongoing

4. *Economic Development*

Economic Development – Overview

Careful economic development has lasting positive effect on a town:

- ❖ **Creates a stronger and diverse tax revenue stream**
- ❖ **Decreases tax impacts on residential property**
- ❖ **Provides employment opportunities**
- ❖ **Provides needed goods and services for residents**

Economic Development – Key Findings

Strong commercial base along RT. 12

Strong Industrial base on Hartwell Street

West Boylston is part of a regional, state recognized economic development target area

West Boylston attracts businesses due to its low single tax rate, and reasonable utility costs (water, sewer, electric)

The tax incentive program is attracting new businesses to the area

Economic Development – Key Challenges

Lack of sidewalks

Lack of parking

Competition from Worcester and other towns for attracting businesses

Economic Development – Goals

- 1. Preserve small town character and natural resources**
- 2. Look to establish annual funding sources beyond taxes**
- 3. Look to establish cost savings within municipal operations**

(Action plan still needs to be developed)

QUESTIONS?