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## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Thomas Earley, Planning Board; Kristi St. Laurent, Economic Development Committee; Wendy Williams, Historic District/Heritage Commission, David Curto, Conservation Commission; Michael Caron, Police Chief; Thomas McPherson, Fire Chief; Dennis Senibaldi, General Services Director; Wanda Rice, Forestry Committee; Cynthia Finn, School Board; Mark Kovacs, Local Energy Committee; Cheryl Hass, Recreation; Kathleen DiFruscia and Peter Griffin, Town Center Beautification Subcommittee; Wayne Morris, Trails Committee; Tanya Donnelly, Canobie Lake Protective Association; Brett Nigro, Cobbetts Pond Improvement Association

**From:** Alexander Mello, Director

**Cc:** Town Administrator; Board of Selectmen; Master Plan Process Subcommittee

**Date:** June 27, 2022

**Re:** **Master Plan Implementation**

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On Wednesday, April 13, 2022, the Windham Planning Board established a Master Plan Process Subcommittee (MPPC) to develop a process for updating the Master Plan.

A master plan is a planning document that serves to guide the overall character, physical form, growth and development of a community. It is the basis in which a municipality's land use regulations come from. It describes how, why, where and when to build or rebuild a city or town. It provides guidance to local officials making decisions on budgets, ordinances, capital improvements, zoning and subdivision matters, and other growth-related issues. A master plan provides an opportunity for community leaders to look ahead, establish new visions and directions, set goals, and map out plans for the future. Properly done, a master plan should describe where, how, and at what pace a community desires to develop physically, economically, and socially. In short, a master plan functions much like a roadmap or a blueprint; it is a guide to the future. This language typically translates into a format common to most master plans: inventory of current conditions; recommendations for future land use in the community; set of policy goals and recommendations to achieve the future land use recommendations.

The MPPC was chaired by Matthew Rounds and included Shannon Ulery, Roger Hohenberger, and Christopher Sullivan. Over four meetings, the MPCC reviewed prior two-wide planning efforts and other recently completed New Hampshire master plans. The MPPC ultimately decided on utilizing the strong volunteer network of the various Board and Commissions in Town to help complete each master plan chapter. This format allows each Board/Commission to add their expertise and engage with the community for input into their respective chapters. The MPPC will then compile the drafts into one comprehensive document for additional public input.

In order to help the supporting Boards/Commissions assemble their chapter, the MPPC created the following manual to help provide a timeline and a set of guidelines. Please share this with your respective Board/Committee members. The Community Development Department is committed to answer any questions and assist your board/commission. Please visit the Master Plan webpage at: <https://www.windhamnh.gov/333/Master-Plan> to view prior planning efforts. I suggest reviewing the prior efforts to determine what revisions to previous goal and strategies are necessary today.

# Master Plan Implementation

## Timeline

- JUNE 24th 2022 Steering Committee adopts Master Plan Implementation
- JUNE 27<sup>th</sup> CDD initiates invitations/provides information to the Section authors
- JUL 1<sup>st</sup> CDD confirms Section author acceptance of participation
- JUL 1<sup>st</sup>- SEP 30<sup>th</sup> 90 days to complete 1<sup>st</sup> Drafts of Sections
- SEP 30<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Drafts of Sections completed
- OCT 1<sup>st</sup>-OCT 31<sup>st</sup> 30 days for Steering Committee to review 1<sup>st</sup> Drafts
- OCT 31<sup>st</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Draft Reviews Completed
- NOV 1<sup>st</sup>-NOV 30<sup>th</sup> 30 days to complete 2<sup>nd</sup> Drafts of Sections (if needed)
- NOV 30<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Drafts Completed
- DEC 1<sup>st</sup>-JAN 31<sup>st</sup> 60 days to complete 1<sup>st</sup> Compilation Draft
- JAN 31<sup>st</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Compilation Draft completed
- FEB 1<sup>st</sup>-FEB 14<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee review of 1<sup>st</sup> Compilation Draft
- FEB 14<sup>th</sup>-MAR 15<sup>th</sup> 30 days to complete Final Draft
- MAR 1<sup>st</sup> 2023 Present Master Plan to Planning Board for Publication

## Guidelines

### Controlling Documents

#### Vision and Land Use Sections

The Vision Section [adopted by the Planning Board in March 2021](#) is the strategic vision and controlling document of the Master Plan. All sections authorized by RSA 674:2 III must adhere to the spirit and tactical directives of the Land Use Section. The Land Use Section and all subsequent sections must adhere to the spirit of the Vision Section.

### Community Input

#### Town Survey

Appropriate weight should be given to the Town Survey conducted by the Planning Board in 2020.

#### Charrettes

Section authors may at their discretion conduct charrettes. If charrettes are held, they must be publicly noticed and ensure all stakeholders are able to participate (including the general public). Stakeholders must either reside in, own property in, or have a registered business with a legal address in the town of Windham.

#### Section Specific Surveys

Section authors may at their discretion conduct surveys of stakeholders. If surveys are conducted, they must be publicly available with the ability to verify participants' residential status. Survey takers must either reside in, own property in, or have a registered business with a legal address in the town of Windham.

## Stakeholders Selected by Steering Committee

Stakeholders identified by the Steering Committee as having a vested interest in a given section (for example the Ponds & Lakes Association under the Natural Resources Section) must be allowed to participate in authoring the Section 1<sup>st</sup> Drafts.

## Style & Content

### Master Plan Template

The Steering Committee has determined the [2018 Auburn NH Master Plan](#) should serve as the template for the Windham Master Plan. Section authors should look to this document as a guide to style and structure.

### Content Brevity

The Steering Committee has determined a “less is more” approach will serve the purpose of the Master Plan better than lengthy chapters. Adherence to authoring succinct points and clear directives should be favored over flowery speech and overly complex descriptions. Repetitive points and language should be avoided whenever possible.

### Politically Neutral

Sections should avoid politically disputed or subjective statements.

### Charts, Graphs, and Data Sets

Visual Data Sets that assist in telling the high-level stories of the section should be included within the section themselves. Detailed and comprehensive data sets will be included within the Master Plan’s appendix.

### Regional Concerns

The Steering Committee determined it was prudent to remove the Regional Concerns section. In place of this, each section should utilize regional concerns if applicable for the specific section.

### Prior Knowledge

If prior content is utilized, sections should link and include prior documentation.

## Master Plan Sections

### Vision Section – Adopted in 2021

**RSA 674:2 II(a)** A vision section that serves to direct the other sections of the plan. This section shall contain a set of statements which articulate the desires of the citizens affected by the master plan, not only for their locality but for the region and the whole state. It shall contain a set of guiding principles and priorities to implement that vision.

### Guiding Principles

- Conserve the town’s remaining natural resources
- Preserve the character and integrity of existing neighborhoods
- Enrich residents’ environmental and recreational quality of life

### Conservation Directives

- Protect lakes, ponds, streams, watersheds & wetlands
- Protect forests & open spaces

- Increase conservation land
- Protect & replenish the aquifer

#### Preservation Directives

- Maintain neighborhood integrity
- Remove residential development incentives
- Enact buffers between light industrial/commercial and rural zones
- Protect historic sites

#### Enrichment Directives

- Promote and develop new and existing recreational resources
- Solve traffic flow and pedestrian connectivity issues
- Steer commercial development towards entertainment, destination dining, and education

## II: Land Use Section

**1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: PLANNING BOARD** (Vision Section translated into Physical Terms)

**1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT** (Demographics)

**RSA 674:2 II(b)** A land use section upon which all the following sections shall be based. This section shall translate the vision statements into physical terms. Based on a study of population, economic activity, and natural, historic, and cultural resources, it shall show existing conditions and the proposed location, extent, and intensity of future land use.

#### Notes

- The Land Use section should layout ~~out~~ actionable directives and guidelines to implement the strategic aspirations of the Vision Section.
- The Land Use section should point towards specific subsequent sections for additional detail where applicable (for example housing or natural resource directives)
- High level zoning concepts should be addressed in the Land Use section (including creation and/or removal of existing zones)

## Community Design Section

**1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: PLANNING BOARD**

**RSA 674:2 III(k)** A community design section to identify positive physical attributes in a municipality and provide for design goals and policies for planning in specific areas to guide private and public development.

**RSA 674:2 III(j)** A neighborhood plan section which focuses on a specific geographical area of local government that includes substantial residential development. This section is a part of the local master plan and shall be consistent with it. No neighborhood plan shall be adopted until a local master plan is adopted.

#### Notes

- This section should flush out any zoning guidelines from the Land Use section if applicable and subsequent effects

- This section should address, with a map, the central areas designated for development (commercial, recreational, etc). ~~These areas should clearly be indicated on a map or maps, as development areas; i.e. commercial development along routes 28/111 and Range, Town offices in the Town Common area and Fellows Road, designated Recreation areas such as Griffin Park, and conservation areas.~~

## Infrastructure Section

### **1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: PLANNING BOARD**

**RSA 674:2 III(a)** A transportation section which considers all pertinent modes of transportation and provides a framework for both adequate local needs and for coordination with regional and state transportation plans. Suggested items to be considered may include but are not limited to public transportation, park and ride facilities, and bicycle routes, or paths, or both.

**RSA 674:2 III(g)** A utility and public service section analyzing the need for and showing the present and future general location of existing and anticipated public and private utilities, both local and regional, including telecommunications utilities, their supplies, and facilities for distribution and storage.

#### Notes

- It was determined the Transportation and Infrastructure Sections should be combined into one unified section.
- This section should have specific emphasis regarding the aquifer. Guidelines to determine the current status of the aquifer, whether the aquifer can support and sustain current and future demands that will be placed on it. Guidelines addressing the water quality within the aquifer should also be addressed.

## Housing Section

### **1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: PLANNING BOARD / CDD / ASSESSING**

**RSA 674:2 III(L)** A housing section which assesses local housing conditions and projects future housing needs of residents of all levels of income and ages in the municipality and the region as identified in the regional housing needs assessment performed by the regional planning commission pursuant to RSA 36:47, II, and which integrates the availability of human services with other planning undertaken by the community.

#### Notes

- Workforce Housing legislative mandates and how those mandates conflict with local voter mandates should be addressed and resolved.

## Community Facilities Section

### **1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**RSA 674:2 III(b)** A community facilities section which identifies facilities to support the future land use pattern of subparagraph II(b), meets the projected needs of the community, and coordinates with other local governments' special districts and school districts, as well as with state and federal agencies that have multi-jurisdictional impacts.

## Natural Hazards Section

**1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

- **PUBLIC SAFETY (including FIRE & POLICE)**

**RSA 674:2 III(e)** A natural hazards section which documents the physical characteristics, severity, frequency, and extent of any potential natural hazards to the community. It should identify those elements of the built environment at risk from natural hazards as well as extent of current and future vulnerability that may result from current zoning and development policies.

## Natural Resources Section

**1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

- **PONDS & LAKES ASSOCIATION, FORESTRY COMMISSION, TRAILS COMMITTEE**

**RSA 674:2 III(d)** A natural resources section which identifies and inventories any critical or sensitive areas or resources, not only those in the local community, but also those shared with abutting communities. This section, which may specifically include a water resources management and protection plan, shall provide a factual basis for any land development regulations that may be enacted to protect water resources and other identified natural areas. A key component in preparing this section is to identify any conflicts between other elements of the master plan and natural resources, as well as conflicts with plans of abutting communities. Nothing in this subparagraph shall be construed to permit municipalities to regulate surface or groundwater withdrawals that they are explicitly prohibited from regulating.

### Notes

- A comprehensive survey of dams in Town should be included

## Economic Development Section

**1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: WINDHAM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**RSA 674:2 III(c)** An economic development section which proposes actions to suit the community's economic goals, given its economic strengths and weaknesses in the region.

## Schools Section

**1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: SCHOOL BOARD**

### Notes

- This section is intended to assist the Town in working in concert with the School District

## Cultural & Historic Section

**1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: HISTORIC COMMITTEE**

- **BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE**

**RSA 674:2 III(h)** A section which identifies cultural, archeological, and historic resources and protects them for rehabilitation or preservation from the impact of other land use tools such as land use regulations, housing, or transportation. Such section may encourage the preservation or restoration of stone walls, provided agricultural practices, as defined in RSA 21:34-a, are not impeded.

## Recreation Section

**1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: RECREATION COMMITTEE**

- **TRAILS COMMITTEE, SCHOOL BOARD, BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE**

**RSA 674:2 III(f)** A recreation section which shows existing recreation areas and addresses future recreation needs.

## Energy Section

**1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: LOCAL ENERGY COMMITTEE**

**RSA 674:2 III(n)** An energy section, which includes an analysis of energy and fuel resources, needs, scarcities, costs, and problems affecting the municipality and a statement of policy on the conservation of energy.

## Implementation Section

**1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: MASTER PLAN SUBCOMMITTEE**

**RSA 674:2 III(m)** An implementation section, which is a long-range action program of specific actions, time frames, allocation of responsibility for actions, description of land development regulations to be adopted, and procedures which the municipality may use to monitor and measure the effectiveness of each section of the plan.

## Appendix

**1<sup>ST</sup> DRAFT RESPONSIBLE PARTY: N/A**

Will be composed of charts, graphs, reference materials from various sections as determined by the steering committee/editorial staff during the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft/final draft process.