



# TOWN OF NORTHBOROUGH Master Plan Steering Committee

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Approved 9.19.19

**Master Plan Steering Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
May 22, 2019  
Northborough Free Library**

**Members Present:** Fran Bakstran, Chairman; Rick Leif, Vice-Chairman; Michelle Gillespie, Dave Putnam, Tom Reardon, Ashley Davies, Amy Poretsky, Jason Perreault, George Pember, Jon Cogswell. Amy Poretsky

**Others Present:** Kathy Joubert, Town Planner; Geoffrey Morrison-Logan, VHB; Donny Goris-Kolb, VHB; Kerri Martinek, 16 Hemlock Drive; Henry P. Squillante, 72 Crestwood Drive; Paul Tagliaferri, 32 Hemlock Drive, Millie Milton, Mark Bashour

**Chairman Bakstran opened the meeting at 7:00pm.**

The members voted on their **Recommendations** for Land Use and Housing, as follows:

## **LAND USE**

**LU1: Prioritize the preservation of all valuable natural resources and open spaces, while still accommodating the social and economic needs of the community.**

**LU1-1:** Conduct a Cost of Community Services Study to prove the economic value of open space and natural lands.

**LU1-2:** Build off the 495/MetroWest Development Compact Plan to inventory local priority development areas (PDAs) and priority preservation areas (PPAs) to guide future development activities in Town, as necessary.

**LU1-3:** Review the existing zoning bylaw and conservation commission regulations for needed revisions to strengthen protection of natural resources.

**LU1-4:** Identify flood hazards (e.g., stormwater inundation, riverine flooding), and dates to land use planning tools such as zoning and subdivision regulations to better define (development?) objectives in these areas. Conserve, through purchase or restriction, properties that would expand and improve flood control/hazard mitigation.

**LU1-5:** Where feasible, seek actions that contribute, to the quality and diversity of wildlife habitat, such as preventing habitat fragmentations and preserving wildlife corridors when large tracts of land are developed, as well as protection of water quality.

**LU1-6:** Develop a stormwater management bylaw to require stormwater management and erosion control permit. Monitor stormwater maintenance plans created for the operations and maintenance phase of real estate developments.

**LU1-7:** Maintain the Town's conservation fund to ensure resources are available to protect open space as opportunities arise.

Mr. Leif motioned to approve the **Recommendations** for **LU1-1 through LU1-7**; Mr. Cogswell seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

**LU2: Enhance Downtown by Promoting a pleasing and welcoming appearance – one that promotes a sense of place – enabling it to become the community's proud central gathering area for residents and visitors alike.**

**LU2-1:** Conduct a design study of the Downtown to help focus ideas and develop a clear vision for the area

**LU2-2:** Conduct a visual preference survey with the community to determine what kinds of developments it prefers in Downtown and update the Town's Zoning Bylaw to accommodate these preferred development types.

**LU2-3:** Update zoning to better plan for mixed-uses in Downtown that can promote and support walkability.

**LU2-4:** Investigate density bonuses and/or density transfer credits in the Town's Zoning Bylaw that promotes reasonably higher densities in the Downtown in exchange for public benefits.

**LU2-5:** Develop a program to promote the planning and sustained growth of street trees, landscaping, and other green infrastructure in Downtown in concert with the development and fostering of partnerships, including with the Northborough Garden Club. As part of the program, undertake a tree inventory along the major corridors in Town.

**LU2-6:** Explore opportunities to create walking paths/routes along brooks/river and connecting historic properties to enhance the beauty of historic downtown.

**LU2-7:** Take advantage of the Department of Housing and Community Development's Massachusetts Downtown Initiative that provides services and technical assistance to communities on revitalizing their towns.

**LU2-8:** Evaluate how Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding and affordable housing funding can be used to support Downtown enhancement.

Mr. Leif motioned to approve the **Recommendations** for **LU2-1 through LU2-8**; Mr. Perreault seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

**LU3:** Ensure Northborough's future land uses support its Vision and established community character.

**LU3-1:** Perform ongoing review of existing design guidelines to ensure a balance between the existing community character with new development and redevelopment, as well as a consistency with the findings of the visual preference survey.

**LU3-2:** Build greater awareness of Chapter 61 programs that provide tax breaks to owners of forest, agricultural, and recreational land, and grow local participation in the program.

**LU3-3:** Develop Town-wide guidelines for commercial and industrial development that promote high quality design and consider building layout and buffer zones in relation to adjacent uses and circulations and allows for a mix of uses.

Mr. Leif motioned to approve the **Recommendations** for **LU3-1 through LU3-4**; Mr. Cogswell seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

**LU4: Continue to support and manage commercial development outside of the Downtown, particularly along Route 20 and Route 9, considering adjacent land use compatibility and the Town’s preservation priorities.**

**LU4-1:** Coordinate land use planning with regional transportation investments.

**LU4-2:** Consider updating and expansion of the existing Highway Business Zone Overlay District for Route 20 and Route 9 and tie it to the development and codification of design standards and guidelines mentioned in LU3.

**LU4-3:** Understand development potential and articulate future needs by reviewing water/sewer capacity, particularly along Route 9 and Route 20.

**LU4-4:** Investigate a hazardous waste facility bylaw.

**LU4-5:** Enhance the cohesive appearance of the Town’s commercial areas through standard and consistent signage regulations.

Mr. Leif motioned to approve the **Recommendations** for **LU4-1 through LU4-3**; Mr. Perreault seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

## **HOUSING**

**H1: Continue to maintain and encourage a diversity of housing options to increase housing affordability and choice for all ages and to ensure that at least 10 percent of the Town’s housing inventory continues to be deemed affordable under state guidelines.**

**H1-1:** Explore residential uses, including affordable housing and affordable senior housing, as a potential future use for previously developed parcels that have the opportunity for redevelopment as they become available. Evaluate the White Cliffs site, the Westborough State Hospital property in Northborough, and the Boundary Street property as potential sites for housing development.

**H1-2:** Develop and adopt an inclusionary housing bylaw which would require a portion of housing units in specified developments to be set aside for low-and-medium-income households.

**H1-3:** Work with local housing partners to identify opportunities for them to develop and own affordable housing, which will allow the Town to proactively guide affordable housing locations.

Mr. Leif motioned to approve the **Recommendations** for **H1-1 through H1-3**; Mr. Cogswell seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

**H2: Promote housing types that accommodate future growth in the community while maintaining and enhancing the existing character of residential neighborhoods.**

**H2-1:** Ensure that the Town's Zoning Bylaws supports the creation of certain types of ownership or rental housing developments that are inherently more affordable to seniors aging in place, first time homeowners, and working professionals.

- Undertake a study to understand housing price points for homeownership and rentals that would reduce the cost burden experienced by Town residents. Determine the types of housing that would meet these price points. Work collaboratively with developers to enable these housing types in target areas.

**H2-2:** Identify appropriate areas for "missing middle" **housing to preserve and provide** transitions from existing residential neighborhoods to the Downtown, and update zoning to accommodate such housing.

**H2-3:** Build awareness around accessory housing units, allowed by-right or by special permit in the Town's residential districts.

**H2-4:** Guided by zoning and design standards, incorporate housing into Downtown to attract a sufficient number of residents that can supplement and support the area's economic viability.

**H2-5:** Determine the need for rental housing and approved such developments at a scale appropriate for the community.

**H2-6:** Update the Town's existing Housing Production Plan.

Mr. Leif motioned to approve the **Recommendations** for **H2-1 through H2-6**; Mr. Pember seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

**H3: Pursue a housing development strategy that balances demand with the Town's capacity to provide services and infrastructure.**

**H3-1:** In coordination with the Public Facilities and Services recommendations, identify the Town's capacity to service increased housing demands with expanded infrastructure. Refer to the Coast of Community Services Study referred in LU1-1.

Mr. Leif motioned to approve the **Recommendations** for **H3-1 through H3-2**; Mr. Perreault seconded the motion and the vote was unanimously in favor of the motion.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Leif made motion to approve the March 7, 2019 minutes, second by Mr. Pember, all in favor.

Votes need to be added to the May 9, 2019 minutes and the minutes will be considered at the June 4, 2019 meeting.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Steering Committee will be held in the **Selectmen's Meeting Room** on June 4, 2019.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Debbie Grampietro  
Administrative Assistant