

# **Dunstable Master Plan**

## **Visioning Session 2**

**September 20, 2016**

**7:00 - 9:00 p.m.**

**Dunstable Town Hall**

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### **Program**

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Overview of the Master Plan Process and Status Update
- III. Land Use and Zoning Discussion
- IV. Housing Discussion
- V. Economic Development Discussion
- VI. Summary of Session and Future Opportunities for Public Input

## **DRAFT VISION STATEMENT (revised 8/2016)**

In 2026, Dunstable is a tranquil community with a high quality of life, reflective of the town's commitment to protecting the community character and its historic heritage. The bucolic rural landscape is the result of the town's efforts to promote and protect agricultural resources and enterprises. Planning and development regulations include design guidance that preserves and safeguards the historic and architectural quality of Dunstable historic buildings and landscapes.

The town's economy is strong, providing services and employment opportunities for town residents, as well as the revenues needed to fund municipal services. The town enjoys a quality school system and a well-run municipal government. Housing options are available for residents of all age groups and incomes.

Dunstable has an excellent and fully interconnected transportation system for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motor vehicles. Traffic calming measures have been implemented to manage vehicle speeds and "pass through" traffic in the Town Center and neighborhoods.

Dunstable residents embrace the concept of sustainability whereby natural resources and manmade features are well managed and wisely used so that they will be available for future generations. The Town has improved and developed its municipal water infrastructure. Renewable energy sources are available for governmental, residential and business users. The preservation of open space, water resources and wildlife habitat has resulted in high environmental quality, and allowed the town to maintain its rural character. Open Space and recreation facilities and programs serve the fitness and social needs of the entire community, and are well distributed, maintained, and accessible to everyone.

A "sense of community" is prevalent, and includes participation at community events, volunteerism, a cooperative spirit, and a strong sense of social connectedness. Residents and visitors enjoy and support the Town Center as an attractive, vibrant focal point where people gather and socialize.

# Master Plan Goals

## Land Use

- Maintain Dunstable's rural character and landscape by preserving trees, stone walls, agricultural fields and pastures, and historic architecture.
- Strengthen and maintain the Town Center as the civic and cultural heart of the community.
- Examine the zoning options to allow for small business enterprises that are compatible with the character and needs of the community.

## Open Space and Recreation

- Continue to acquire open space, as opportunities arise and financial resources allow.
- Connect Dunstable's open space and recreation lands through a network of trails and pathways.
- Continue to institute policies and practices that protect and enhance water resources, wildlife habitat, farmland, forests and scenic landscapes.
- Develop a town energy plan and policy focused on renewable energy.

## Housing

- Create housing opportunities that meet the needs of the community, as outlined in the Dunstable Housing Production Plan.
- Develop a design guidance document to ensure that future development projects are well-designed, consistent with local needs, respectful of the town's character, and compatible with the goals outlined in the policies documents, including the Master Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, and the Housing Production Plan.

## Economic Development

- Encourage businesses that are consistent with Dunstable's rural character.
- Identify appropriate development opportunities that will attract private investment to appropriately zoned districts.
- Create policies and regulations that allow entrepreneurial activities that are compatible with local neighborhoods.
- Promote local agricultural enterprises, as well as the work of local artists and craftsmen.
- Improve communication among local businesses and town government.
- Reconsider the town's position relative to alcohol sales.

### **Cultural Resources**

- Preserve, maintain and continue to document Dunstable's legacy of historic farmsteads, buildings and landmarks.
- Preserve Dunstable's historical artifacts and documents.

### **Transportation**

- Study the feasibility of establishing interconnected pathways and trails as an alternative to motorized transportation.
- Continue designating scenic roads as a means of protecting the town's rural character.
- Develop an asset management program for the town's transportation infrastructure.
- Work with NMCOG and MassDOT to study potential traffic calming measures along Route 113 within the Town Center and in neighborhoods.
- Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in future transportation improvement projects, whenever possible.

### **Municipal Services and Facilities**

- Evaluate options for generating additional revenue to support town services, including education, and to address infrastructure and facility needs.
- Develop a community building and engagement program to educate residents on town issues, improve communication between residents and town government, and build trust among community members and local government decision-makers.
- Advocate for a stronger regional school system and improve communication between the Town and the regional school district.
- Improve and develop the Town's municipal water infrastructure to address necessary maintenance and meet future needs.

## **Initial Goal Statement and Questions for Land Use and Zoning**

*Manage and direct growth in a manner consistent with the community's character, and ensure that the Town's zoning and land use policies and practices are consistent with the approved Master Plan.*

- What revisions to the Town's land use regulations, policies and procedures will be needed to ensure that the rural character is preserved?
- Can you identify modifications to the town's zoning regulations that would allow for small business enterprises that are compatible with community character? Is the Town's B-3 zone appropriately located? Are office and high tech uses still appropriate for the B-3 zone? Should specific locations be identified for the B-1 and B-2 districts?
- What can be done to strengthen and enhance the Town Center as the civic and cultural heart of the community? Should mixed use be allowed within the Town Center?
- Are revisions or modifications needed for the existing MUD district?
- Can you identify specific locations that would be suitable for future development? Would any changes need to be made to the zoning bylaws to manage such future growth in order to ensure that the impacts are mitigated and community character is preserved?
- Should the town revise the density requirements for residential zoning to allow slightly higher density as a means of retaining available open space?
- The Town currently has a Wind Energy bylaw and a Solar Bylaw. Are changes to these bylaws in order to encourage the increased use of renewable energy?
- What can the Town do to help support its agricultural enterprises and preserve its agrarian landscape? Should uses that are supportive of agricultural production, such as a farm-to-table restaurant or food processing facility, be allowed?

## **Initial Goal Statement and Questions for Housing**

*Create housing opportunities that meet the needs of the community, while also addressing the housing needs of the elderly, young families, low- and moderate-income residents, veterans and the disabled as outlined in the DHCD-approved Housing Production Plan (HPP).*

- How can the Affordable Housing Committee and Town move forward to develop affordable housing opportunities? Which priority development sites should be focused upon and what funding sources should be utilized? Should funds from the Community Preservation Act (CPA) be utilized to encourage the development of affordable housing?
- How should the Affordable Housing Committee move forward in implementing the Housing Feasibility Study for the town-owned properties at 160 Pleasant Street? What development constraints need to be addressed in order to develop housing on these two parcels? What other uses could be considered for the site?
- What specific groups are still having trouble finding affording housing in town (younger families, seniors, the disabled, local workers, low and moderate income families and individuals)? How should their housing needs be met?
- What elements are most important to you in a housing development project (scale, density, architectural character, mix of units, developer's commitment to community engagement and the public process, site location)?
- What infrastructure improvements will be needed to accommodate housing production in town (water, public transit, etc.)?
- What changes to the zoning bylaw should be made to encourage the development of additional market-rate and affordable housing units? Should affordable housing development be included under the Open Space Development Bylaw and should an Inclusionary Housing Bylaw be approved?
- What types of homebuyer/homeowner education programs would be valuable to residents (foreclosure prevention, home improvement, energy conservation and green building/LID practices, first-time home buying and financing tutorials)?
- Should there be an effort to support the development of "workforce" housing" to address the needs of those households at 80-120% of the area median income (AMI)?

## **Initial Goal Statement and Questions for Economic Development**

*Identify appropriate development opportunities for commercial zones that will attract private investment suitable for Dunstable's rural character. Address the commercial needs of Dunstable residents and businesses, while maintaining the current quality of life.*

- What should the town do to retain and attract businesses? What specific types of businesses should be targeted?
- Does the retail and commercial mix in the town and region address your needs? What types of additional businesses would you like to see in town to address your needs?
- The 1999 Dunstable Master Plan identified banking and ATM facilities, restaurant, drug/variety stores, chain food store and medical and dental services as the most desirous services needed in Dunstable. Are there additional services needed in Dunstable? What specific sites should be prioritized for development? Where are they?
- Should the MUD district be prioritized for mixed-use, specifically housing and commercial uses? Will the Housing Feasibility Study outline specific commercial uses for the two parcels?
- Which workforce development programs would help the underemployed or unemployed residents secure a new job? Which programs should be targeted to youth or older workers? Has the town utilized the resources available through the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Area (GLWDA)?
- Should the town promote its agricultural resources more actively? What initiatives would you like to see implemented? Are there opportunities to work together on an agricultural program regionally? What resources are available from the federal or state governments to accomplish this?
- How do the "green initiatives" fit within the town's economic development program and what needs to be done to support these initiatives?
- What infrastructure issues (water, roads, public transit, parking, telecommunications, etc.) need to be addressed in order to support continued economic growth?