

HINGHAM MASTER PLAN GOALS

Adopted March 20, 2017

A. Land Use Goals

Preserve and maintain the unique characteristics of Hingham that contribute to its image as a historic coastal village community. Ensure that future planning initiatives and land use planning and zoning regulations protect, preserve and enhance the attributes which comprise this image including the town's village character, attractive residential areas, scenic vistas, protected open spaces, historic buildings and districts, streetscapes and coastal resources.

1) Promote balanced growth while preserving Hingham's character

- a) Ensure that zoning regulations and economic development initiatives promote development that balances growth, density and economic benefits with the need to protect the scenic and historic character of existing neighborhoods.
- b) Encourage high-quality commercial and mixed use development in South Hingham and the Hingham Shipyard.
- c) Increase the amount of protected open space consistent with the environmental, water supply, recreational and other goals as determined by the Town and its committees or other bodies.

2) Promote quality design

- a) Support and strengthen the design review process to maintain high standards in all development projects.
- b) Develop design standards geared towards historic districts that will facilitate new energy technologies while maintaining historic character.

3) Improve the gateways to Hingham

- a) Improve entrances to the town from major roadways to create gateways that reflect the Town's character and are welcoming, and enhance visitors' first impressions of the town.
- b) Update zoning regulations along major roadways to eliminate sprawl by requiring clustering of commercial uses and to minimize the number of curb cuts.

4) Strengthen the town's capacity for planning and management

- a) Maintain adequate staffing of all key town land use departments to ensure a high level of planning, management and oversight of all land use management matters. Specifically, maintain the position of Town Planner to assist the land use departments in developing initiatives and zoning regulations to support the Master Plan. Through significant coordination of all relevant stakeholders, the Master Plan and Zoning By Law shall act as the compass for all land use decisions undertaken by the town, giving deference to the land use departments.
- b) Utilize technology such as Geographic Information Systems, and other computer mapping software, to support planning board reviews and current and long-range planning.
- c) Continually review and amend zoning regulations to ensure that they support current general land use goals as stated in the Master Plan.

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B. Economic Development Goals

- 1) **Facilitate and sustain the development of local businesses:** Businesses that are owned and operated locally are an important component of the local economy; studies show that more of the money spent in a local business stays in the community. Local businesses also provide a unique destination for visitors and area shoppers.
 - a. Review zoning, permitting, and licensing regulations and policies to ensure that they encourage rather than hinder local business creation, siting, and activity.
 - b. Involve business owners and the Chamber of Commerce in a town-led review of current zoning, permitting, and licensing practices.

- 2) **Capitalize on the unique strengths of each commercial district consistent with Land Use Goal A1.**
 - a. Enhance the tax base by encouraging a continued balance of commercial, industrial and residential development in South Hingham and the Hingham Shipyard to take advantage of their respective key locations and existing amenities and infrastructure.
 - b. Preserve the historic character and walkability of Downtown Hingham and the harbor area while seeking ways to encourage appropriate retail and residential development and connections between the waterfront and downtown.
 - c. Undertake a market analysis to inform future economic development initiatives.
 - d. Evaluate Business B districts for opportunities to encourage appropriately sited mixed commercial, retail and residential development.
 - e. Develop a master plan to articulate the strengths, constraints and opportunities in each commercial and industrial district.

C. Natural Resources and Energy Management Goals

- 1) **Protect and enhance Hingham's natural environment for the current and future benefit of the town.**
 - a. Protect additional land of all types to sustain viable populations of native plant and wildlife species.
 - b. Develop land management plans for conservation properties to minimize human impact while encouraging passive recreational uses.
 - c. Protect additional coastal land in consideration of the potential impacts of sea level rise, acquire properties as needed.

- 2) **Protect water resources**
 - a. Protect groundwater aquifers and surface water supplies to ensure sufficient clean water for current and future users.
 - b. Protect Hingham's freshwater and saltwater resources from pollution and incompatible development.
 - c. Encourage Low Impact Development and broad water conservation efforts.

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3) Reduce energy consumption

- a. Educate and encourage residents and businesses to adopt best practices.
- b. Promote the use of sustainable energy alternatives.

D. Historic and Cultural Resources Goals

1) Protect and preserve Hingham's historical and cultural resources

- a. Identify and add resources to Hingham's existing historic property inventory, including historical buildings and scenic roads.
- b. Continue to leverage Community Preservation Act funds to preserve historic properties.
- c. Provide adequate administrative staffing resources and support to the Historical Commission and Historic Districts Commission.
- d. Continue the update of Hingham's database of historic resources to support stewardship.

E. Open Space Goals

1) Expand Hingham's network of protected open spaces

- a. Determine priority parcels for open space protection and develop criteria for identifying lands that meet multiple town goals.
- b. Support land protection efforts that preserves the landscape and helps to provide a connected system of conservation, open space, and recreation areas throughout the town.
- c. Support the goals developed as part of the Master Trails Plan.

2) Utilize a variety of methods to finance open space protection

- a. Develop partnerships between the public and private sectors to support land protection efforts.
- b. Review zoning and subdivision regulations to determine any necessary revisions in support of land protection efforts.
- c. Improve public awareness of the benefits of open space protection.
- d. Leverage Community Preservation Act funds to acquire additional open space.

3) Preserve Hingham's scenic character

- a. Protect unique and scenic environments including hilltop vistas, waterfront views, geologic formations, archaeological sites and active farmland.

F. Active Recreation Goals

1) Provide new recreational venues to expand the variety of athletic/sports options available to Hingham's citizens on a town-wide basis.

2) Adequately finance improvements to existing and previously planned recreational venues.

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- 3) **Seek new parks and playground sites in now underserved neighborhoods and densely populated neighborhoods.**
- 4) **Improve maintenance and coordination of recreation activities at Hingham's many recreational sites.**

G. Housing Goals

- 1) **Provide and maintain economically-diverse housing while continuing to meet State M.G.L. Chapter 40B requirements of 10% affordable units.**
 - a. Develop and adopt a housing production plan to assess housing needs and housing demand, determine the constraints and opportunities of the existing housing inventory, and identify strategies to create and preserve new affordable housing units.
 - b. Identify locations to encourage the proactive development of diversified affordable housing opportunities similar to friendly 40Bs through the Local Initiative Program.
 - c. Ensure that existing deed-restricted housing is monitored for compliance with restrictions, including occupancy by income-eligible households.
 - d. Leverage Community Preservation Act funds to acquire, create and preserve and rehabilitate/restore housing for individuals and families, including low or moderate income senior housing.
- 2) **Encourage and maintain a mix of housing types in various locations throughout the town by supporting development that provides for households at all income levels.**
 - a. Enact an accessory unit bylaw tailored to Hingham's specific needs that will allow secondary units while respecting neighborhood character.
 - b. Research options for regulating "teardowns" and building appropriate replacement housing.
 - c. Develop design guidelines that address, appropriate neighborhood-level densities.
- 3) **Affirmatively further fair housing throughout the town.**
 - a. Ensure use of affirmative fair marketing plans and processes for the rental or sale of affordable housing units.
 - b. Educate land use decision makers on fair housing requirements and their specific fair housing obligations

H. Transportation Goals

- 1) **Accommodate all modes of transportation**
 - a. Consider adopting a "Complete Streets" policy which focuses on accommodating all roadway users by creating a road network that meets the needs of individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes.
 - b. Improve bicycle and pedestrian access to the commuter boat terminal and commuter rail stations.

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- c. Adopt measures to encourage or require new commercial developments to implement traffic demand management (TDM) strategies to reduce reliance on single-occupant vehicles.
 - d. Reduce single passenger local vehicle trips by encouraging the development of alternatives.
- 2) **Make capital improvements to Hingham's roadways for the safety of all users**
 - a. Prioritize roadway projects that provide safety improvements over those that expand roadway capacity, and consider participation in the historic roadway program on a project by project basis.
 - b. Address safety concerns at key locations, including the 3A rotary.
- 3) **Ensure that context-sensitive solutions are used to address transportation needs.**
 - a. Utilize design guidelines for roadway improvements to maintain the historic character of the community.
 - b. Make improvements to the gateways to the town.
 - c. Review parking at the commuter rail stations and commuter boat terminal to ensure that there is adequate capacity and to minimize impacts on adjacent neighborhoods.
 - d. Coordinate transportation improvements with municipalities that share transportation infrastructure.

I. Infrastructure and Capital Facilities Goals

- 1) **Maintain a high standard of municipal services.**
 - a. Ensure that adequate facilities and staffing are available to maintain a high standard of municipal services.
 - b. Continue to provide an excellent educational system.
 - c. Clarify maintenance responsibilities for town-owned facilities, properties and recreational sites to ensure timely and cost-effective maintenance.
- 2) **Plan for future capital and human resource needs**
 - a. Retain ownership of town-owned properties to provide sites for new municipal facilities that may become needed in the future.
 - b. Continue to plan for and anticipate future major capital facility construction needs.