



# Draft Comprehensive Plan 2020

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

PRESENTATION TO THE SELECT BOARD

OCTOBER 26, 2020

# Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

- Previous Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2000
- Nov. 5, 2018 – Select Board appointed 18 member Steering Committee

Charles Donahue

Peter Neville

Nancy Donahue

Steve Olanoff

Paula Jacobson

John Rogers

Pam Kane

Barbara Shea

Peter Kane

Tom Viti

Trevor Laubenstein

Linda Walsh

Sheila Hanley Longval

Jack Wiggin

Janica Midiri

Kate Wynne

# Comprehensive Plan Update

- Long range visionary document and policy guide for physical development
- Involves participation from boards, committees, departments, businesses, residents, all stakeholders
- Planning Board has statutory authority to adopt
- 9 Subject Areas: Land Use, Town Centers, Housing, Economic Development, Natural & Cultural Resources, Community Facilities, Open Space & Recreation, Transportation, Sustainability & Resiliency
- 230+ Implementing Actions

# Community Engagement Process

Adopted a **Public Participation Plan** at first meeting, November 19, 2018

Hired facilitator/public engagement consultant

Community survey, Spring 2019. 800 responses

Visioning Session, Saturday, May 18, 2019. 61 residents participated

Public meetings:

- 7 Steering Committee meetings 2018-2020
- 5 meeting with Planning Board, Fall 2019
- 2 Open Houses, February 2020

Webpage, Facebook page, INSIDE Westwood (WMC), Email blasts, Quarterly Westwood, Westwood Wire, Westwood Day, School Department bulletins

# Major Themes

- Walkability through pedestrian improvements (sidewalks, trails)
- Attractive and active streetscapes; businesses that generate foot traffic and social interaction in Town Centers
- More inclusive housing opportunities and moderately priced housing
- High quality public services (Schools, Recreational Facilities, Town-Services, Natural & Conservation land improvements)
- Renewable energy alternatives and energy efficiency to combat climate change
- Collaborative public process for decision making to garner cohesion

# Land Use

- Strengthen design and quality of pedestrian-oriented civic/commercial centers.
- Increase sense of community by connecting centers, public facilities, and open spaces with walking and bike infrastructure and shuttles.
- Guide residential development to protect open space and natural resources, serve diverse social needs, and community character.
- Protect key open space resources through acquisition, conservation restrictions, and regulatory means.

## Selected key Actions

- Repurpose municipally-owned property, as opportunities arise, to advance plan's objectives.

# Town Centers

- Balance needs of residents and business while creating more vibrant and active Town centers with a diverse range of offerings.
- Enhance the small-town community character with attractive buildings, streetscapes, greenery, and amenities conducive to multigenerational gatherings.
- Prioritize the pedestrian experience by fostering walkable and intimate village centers to serve all residents and visitors.

## Selected Key Actions

- Formalize the Planning Board design review process
- Through zoning, promote active first floor commercial uses

# Housing

- Diversity housing stock by increasing the availability of moderately priced homes, senior housing, rental units, condos, townhomes, and attached style housing.
- Provide opportunities to increase racial and ethnic diversity of the community.
- Implement policies and regulations to provide more low and moderate-income housing options.

## Selected Key Actions:

- Explore revisions to zoning bylaw
- Pursue actions in the 2019 Housing Production Plan
- Diversity and fair housing trainings for town boards, real estate agents, local businesses, major employers
- Active Housing Partnership for community outreach and education



# Economic Development

- Maximize the Town's commercial tax base by pursuing economic development that attracts desired development and is compatible with Westwood's community character.
- Foster the village centers as a place to stop, dine, and mingle by encourage a mix of desirable services and uses that generates foot traffic.

## Selected Key Actions

- Actively engage the local business community in measures to improve town centers.
- Support continued development of University Avenue area.

# Natural & Cultural Resources

- Protect notable resources by fostering historic preservation and encouraging rehabilitation projects.
- Increase opportunities for community gathering through artistic, cultural, and other place-making activities to strengthen sense of community.
- Protect and improve access to open spaces and natural resources.

## Selected Key Actions

- Strong desire for community interaction and promotion of diversity (coordinate community cultural events calendar)
- Provide incentives for redevelopment of historic properties.

# Community Facilities

- Public facilities are safe and secure.
- Facility long range planning is consistent with this Plan.
- Resources and facilities meet universal design standards.
- Public facilities are energy efficient.

## Selected Key Actions:

- Town Hall renovation, expansion and accessibility improvements
- Elementary School Building Project (new school & use of decommissioned property)
- Town be a leader in renewable energy (solar) and energy efficiency
- Prioritize sidewalk and pedestrian connections

# Open Space & Recreation

- Closely follows the Open Space & Recreation Plan adopted in 2019
- Protect and enhance Westwood's scenic character
- Increase recreational facilities and programming for residents of all ages to fulfill any unmet and growing demand.
- Expand and improve protected open space and conservation land by enhancing maintenance, access, awareness, and use.

## Selected Key Actions:

- New multi-purpose indoor recreation community center
- Incorporating universal design (above minimum accessibility required to give opportunity to people of all abilities)

# Transportation

- Create safe, equitable, and affordable transportation system for residents and visitors
- Adhere to Town's Complete Streets Policy
- Explore all funding mechanisms for improvements

## Selected Key Actions:

- Prioritize new sidewalks and improvements to existing sidewalks
- Collaboratively pursue transit and shuttle improvements
- Adaptive signalization on High Street to improve traffic flow, regional study and regional cooperation
- Conduct a Town-wide traffic cut-through study

# Sustainability & Resiliency

- Prioritize and invest in clean renewable energy – Town buildings, vehicles, electricity generation
- Instill sense of urgency around climate change action
- Prioritize actions that will have the greatest environmental impact (CO2 reduction efforts)
- Promote healthy living

## Selected Key Actions:

- Develop Climate Action & Resiliency Plan
- Solar photovoltaics at Town properties, buildings, parking areas
- Perform hydrologic study to identify areas needing drainage improvements

# Implementation Plan

- 230+ Actions Arranged in Short-Term (0-2 years), Medium-Term (3-5 years), Long-Term (5+ years), and Highest Priority
- Highest Priority Items (Requires Supported & Focused Effort):
  - ❖ Elementary School Building Project
  - ❖ Pedestrian/bike path connecting town centers
  - ❖ Expand inclusive housing opportunities and affordable housing
  - ❖ Many sustainability actions (renewable energy actions & develop Climate Action & Resiliency Plan)



- Welcome Select Board feedback, comments, and input
- Seek letter of support prior to Planning Board adoption
- Planning Board public hearing to open on Tuesday, November 17, 2020