

Woonsocket Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Kickoff Meeting



Woonsocket
Comprehensive Plan
2022-2042



Comprehensive Planning 101



What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- **Vision:** Shared vision for Woonsocket's future
- **Roadmap:** Guides how we get there together
- **Enhancer:** Makes the things we love about Woonsocket even better
- **Fixer:** Fix the things that need to be fixed
- **Protector:** Protect the things in Woonsocket that make it a great place to live, both for today's residents and future generations

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Tool to make decisions about . . .

- **Development:** What it looks like and where it happens
- **Environment and History:** Protecting environmentally sensitive areas and historic sites
- **Investments:** Prioritizing investments in community services and infrastructure
- **Community:** Providing opportunities for all residents to have a voice
- **Business:** Better support local business development

Why should Woonsocket update its Comprehensive Plan?

- **Preparation:** Be proactive and prepare for the future
- **Stewardship:** Spend tax dollars efficiently and effectively
- **Legacy:** Make Woonsocket better and stronger for the next generation
- **Policy & Regulation:** Ensure City policies and regulations support the shared vision
- **Funding:** Support for grants, financing, and private investment

What goes into the making of a Comprehensive Plan?

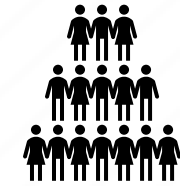
- **Existing Plans:** Build on existing work and pull all our best ideas into one place
- **Facts and Data:** What do local demographics and statistics tell us?
- **Needs and Desires:** What do residents need and want to live a happy and full life?

Our most important task will be hearing from YOU and your neighbors!

What does a Comprehensive Plan cover?

Traditionally ...

- Community Services
- Housing
- Transportation
- Future Growth
- Natural Resources
- Historic Resources
- Economic Development
- Parks & Open Spaces

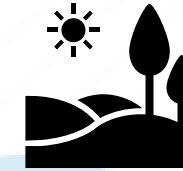


What does a Comprehensive Plan cover?

More recently . . .

- **Energy**
- **Climate Change**
- **Public Health/Food Access**
- **Governance**
- **Special Places**

The City will look at all these things together to understand how everything affects everything else



What does a Comprehensive Plan cover?

Comprehensive plans are living documents that include:

- **Vision:** Where does Woonsocket want to be 20 years from now?
- **Goals:** What does Woonsocket look like when its Vision is achieved?
- **Policies/Objectives:** How do we go about reaching our goals?
- **Actions:** Specific steps to implement the Plan

Examples of Comprehensive Plan Styles

- H. Encourage opportunities for innovative transit-oriented development.
- I. Recent years have seen mobility gains for those having disabilities, including improvements in sidewalks and crosswalks. To assure continuing accessibility improvements, make arrangements to have centralized staff responsibility for oversight of accessibility provisions, and a single point of contact for those having accessibility concerns, rather than dispersal of that responsibility among agencies as at present.

ESTABLISH CONTEXT-SENSITIVE DESIGN APPROACHES FOR TRANSPORTATION

Just as the above listed items are designed to gain greater transportation sensitivity in land use and development decision-making, those that immediately follow are designed to gain greater sensitivity to community context, including land use and development, in transportation and mobility decision-making.

- A. Assure that the design of arterial roadway capacity improvements avoid to the extent feasible the inducement of more auto traffic passing over Newton's local streets. That is easy to articulate as an intention, but requires sensitivity to local nuances of habits and contexts that goes beyond that of the usual traffic engineering trip allocation models. That is one important reason for seeking the creation of a transportation advisory group within Newton which can provide such nuanced understanding to design considerations at regional and state level, as suggested below.
- B. Avoid increases in congestion on major roads so as to avoid displacement of through traffic onto minor residential streets. Chiefly, that means fine-tuning of intersection configurations, signage, signalization, parking controls, and other traffic engineering elements to enhance overall capacity. Road widening should be considered only as a last resort.
- C. To the extent feasible consistent with A and B above, minimize widening of existing roads and addition of traffic signals in order to maintain an infrastructure consistent with the existing character of Newton's village centers and neighborhoods.
- D. Where despite A, B and C above cut-through traffic still seriously impacts residential streets, make wider usage of traffic calming devices as a means of slowing traffic and/or diverting its path. Such practices as speed humps, traffic circles, center island narrowing, median barriers, half-street closures, and forced turn islands are already in use in Newton. Many other newer devices, such as raised crosswalks, are in use in nearby communities, but in this City the use of calming techniques has been sparing. Requests for traffic calming efforts are a common item docketed for action by the Aldermen. Support for traffic calming appears to be strong among both residents and their officials. What is needed is a focused effort (which has begun) to clarify City policy, update ordinances as necessary, and to then move forward on specific actions in a newly comprehensive way¹².

¹² See [successor to] CPAC memo "Traffic Calming Measures," December 13, 2004.

Traditional – Text-heavy report, very detailed

“Magazine” style – Greater emphasis on graphics and images, text kept to a minimum

Semi-Traditional – More focus on graphics and tighter text

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Plan (Map 3) illustrates future land use patterns for the Town of Shrewsbury. It is important to understand that it is not a zoning map. It is much broader and offers a framework for future zoning amendments.

Land Use Category Descriptions
Future land use patterns are depicted through land use categories. The following descriptions offer the intent of each land use category.

Residential

Nearly half of the land in Shrewsbury is categorized as Residential. These areas contain the Town's older neighborhoods that have access to municipal water and sewer service. Cluster or conservation subdivision design is strongly encouraged to accommodate and protect the natural features of the land, such as wetlands, wildlife areas, and open spaces, including farms and fields.

Lower Density Residential

Lower Density Residential areas are identified as single-family residential uses at a lower density than what is typical in the Residential designations. These areas are

dispersed along the outer perimeter of Town where the landscape is more sparsely developed. Homes are more likely to have wells for drinking water and on-site wastewater treatment systems than other areas of Town. As with Residential areas, cluster development is also strongly encouraged.

Higher Density Residential

Higher Density Residential represents areas with condominiums, townhouses, multifamily developments and apartment buildings. They are primarily found near major roadways like Main Street, Route 9, Route 140, and Route 20. Higher density residential developments should be situated near services, jobs, and transportation.

Commercial

Commercial areas accommodate a range of commercial uses and services. They are clustered along Route 9, Route 70 and Route 20 as well as the 1200 interchange on Main Street. Establishments in these areas serve both the local neighborhoods and residents Town-wide and tend to be more auto-oriented, in that customers reach them predominantly by car. Management of driveways and on-site travel lanes should be considered



Centech Park North (Former Allen Farm)

Exeter recognizes the importance of our local history:

- Maintaining a detailed inventory of the buildings, monuments, and other resources in the community is of paramount importance. These inventories should be maintained in high quality database formats and integrated into GIS where possible.
- Maintaining and providing easy access to the rich library of historical accounts and summaries will keep these stories alive and relevant in our community. Educating residents and visitors about our past instills appreciation and support for resource protection.
- Supporting the integrity of local historic and cultural structures and places requires technical and financial resources.
- Coordinating the goals and responsibilities of different historically focused agencies will strengthen the ability of Exeter to steward these resources.

The Arts

Exeter has a growing and vibrant arts scene with connections into the local and regional artist community, local government, and academia. In local government, Exeter maintains an Arts Committee, which is an all-volunteer committee appointed by the Selectboard to help promote the arts and artists in the region. The committee is responsible for organizing and mounting numerous shows in the historic Town Hall and its gallery and in the Town Offices building.

Another local resource is the Exeter Fine Crafts gallery, which opened for business in October, 1966. This gallery focuses on craft work unique to the region and includes furniture, glass work, jewelry, pottery, and more. The gallery also offers work space and classes in studios within the same building. At the regional level, the Seacoast Artist Association is a community of artists



Exeter Historic Town Hall

and people interested in art, based in the Seacoast area of New Hampshire. Working to promote art appreciation and services, the Association encourages artists of all ages and media. A primary concern of the Association is a Scholarship Fund for the benefit of Seacoast area high school seniors interested in the further pursuit of art. Students present their portfolios for judging in April of each year.

Phillips Exeter Academy is not only an important educational institution, but it also brings a strong emphasis on arts opportunities for its student body. "Arts at Exeter" provides

"The mission of the Exeter Arts Committee is to promote art in public life and to work with local artists to develop an environment that supports their work. This includes visual art, music, dance, and poetry, among others."

-Committee Website

What is the role of the Steering Committee?

- **Provide Perspective:** Ensure that a variety of stakeholders and residents in Woonsocket participate in the planning process
- **Review:** Baseline Report, Plan, and other documents
- **Guide Public Outreach:** What are the best ways to share information and hear what the community has to say?
- **Guide Plan Format:** Help us determine a format that everyone can understand and relate to
- **Implementation:** Help identify the actions the City needs to take to implement the plan
- **Present:** Support City staff in presenting a draft Plan to the Planning Board/City Council
- **Network & Recruit:** Make connections in the community so that more people take part in the process
- **Advocate:** For proactive planning across the City and for the groups you represent

What is the role of City staff?

- **Project Management:** Make sure things run on budget, on time, and on scope
- **Internal Communications:** Manage communications between the consultant team and the Steering Committee
- **Public Communications:** Manage communications with the public
- **Public Engagement:** Manage logistics for public events, help with staffing
- **Municipal Collaboration:** Make sure we have all the information we need from City sources
- **Finding Champions:** Make sure that specific groups and people are committed to implementing the plan when it's ready
- **Present:** Draft Plan to the Planning Board/City Council
- **Implementation:** Work with champions to make sure actions are completed

What is the role of the Consultant team?

- **Serve:** Help capture the needs and ideas of the community and translate that into a plan
- **Research & Write:** Compile data and research and prepare the Baseline Report, Comprehensive Plan, and Implementation Plan
- **Listen & Learn:** From the best experts on Woonsocket – YOU!
- **Advise:** On common pitfalls or mistakes that could occur if certain ideas are pursued
- **Report:** On successful practices in other communities that may be applicable to Woonsocket
- **Provide Guidance:** For ways to address the issues brought up by the community
- **Provide Technical Expertise:** On topics like transportation, economic development, housing, etc.

The Planning Process

Three Major Products

Baseline Report	Comprehensive Plan	Implementation Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facts• Data• Demographics• Statistics• Inventories• Trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Input• What do the facts tell us?• Vision• Goals• Objectives• Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summary of all the Actions• Time Frame• Cost• Who (specifically!) is responsible?

Process for the Steering Committee



Baseline Report

Consultant Team and Staff
Interviews with +/- 25
Woonsocket stakeholders



Next SC Meeting

Key messages and planning
for the first round of public
workshops



Monthly Meetings

What date, time, location
work best?



Subcommittees

Will be created as needed



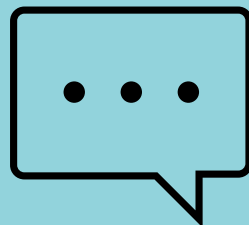
“Messaging” the Plan

Envisioning
ur
Future



- Introduction of logo and project name
- What key messages about the project should we be sharing with the public? What will get people interested and excited?

Next Steering Committee meeting will discuss key messaging in more detail as well as planning for the first round of public workshops.



Kickoff Survey

How should we spread the word about the Kickoff Survey to encourage responses from a representative pool of residents?

- Press Release
- Master Outreach List (letters/e-mail)
- Project Website - www.woonsocketplanning.com
- Posters and Flyers
- Social Media

We need YOU to help us reach as many people as possible!



Thank You!

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