HINGHAM MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE
August 26, 2020 Discussion Topics: "Burning Questions"

TO: Gordon, Adrienne, Liza, Paul, Bob, Nancy, Liz, Susan, Jerry, Donna, Vcevy, Bryce, Deidre, Mike, Hans, and Mary

We've asked everyone on the consulting team for any questions they'd like you to respond to as we work on draft recommendations for the Master Plan. The questions are in no particular order. You will recognize some of the topics because they came up in one way or another at earlier meetings, but we're not clear where the Committee stands. With that in mind, we need you to take a firm position – by majority vote if necessary – so there will be no confusion later. Thanks!

1. Should the Master Plan recommend establishing a "Sea-Level Rise Action Fund?" We are still thinking about this, but generally, the fund would be dedicated to the study, design, and construction of physical improvements along Hingham's coastline or in other areas directly affected by sea-level rise. Annual deposits would accrue over time in an interest-bearing account. The level of magnitude, depending on the amount the Town is willing to invest each year, would never pay for major multi-million-dollar projects, but could finance design fees or provide matching funds for larger state-level projects.

2. Should the Master Plan promote traffic calming measures as a way to reduce vehicle speeding and discourage cut-through traffic on residential roads? Will residents be willing to comply with speed reduction and cut-through deterrents even if/when it means they are inconvenienced?

3. We are looking at some potential recommendations about housing. Some (not all) involve zoning. The Committee has been clear about wanting to protect the character and make-up of Hingham's single-family neighborhoods. Should the Master Plan take some kind of stand on the appropriateness of a "smart growth" approach, e.g., focusing new mixed-income/multifamily/mixed-use development in designated growth or transformation areas, e.g., Shipyard, Beal Street, South Hingham, and away from the town's suburban residential areas?

4. Should the Master Plan outline some type of mitigation policy or framework to guide Town-developer negotiations and permitting review of future large-scale, transformative development projects?

5. Should the Master Plan recommend adoption of a Complete Streets policy to plan and implement pedestrian and bicycle improvements on appropriate roadways and intersections? We are still debating this as a team, but we're inclined to recommend it,.

6. We're evaluating regulatory options for retaining and protecting older, smaller homes, e.g., altering zoning to limit building coverage, height, or other lot regulations. When we asked about this on the last online survey, most Committee members indicated they either support some type of regulatory intervention or support looking into it more. We'd like to give the topic a closer look. Our questions at this time include:

    a. Who would oppose regulatory strategies to discourage teardown/rebuild or substantial alteration and expansion of existing older homes?

    b. Should there be some type of site plan/design review process for new dwellings over a certain size?

    c. Should the Town consider revising the demolition delay bylaw so that it applies to *any* single-family teardown regardless of the building's age or historical importance, the goals being to (1) discourage loss of smaller housing stock and (2) reduce the environmental impact of construction and demolition materials disposal?

7. Some Massachusetts cities and towns have installed "site finder" systems on their municipal websites in hopes of attracting developers and site search consultants by making it easy for people to find CRE properties in their community. Maintaining site finder systems can be time-consuming, but they do help to convey the message that a community is "open for business." Would it make sense for Hingham and some other Route 3 towns to work with an outside organization – say, South Shore Chamber or MAPC – to set up and maintain a site finder system, with each community contributing to the cost?

8. Should the Town require all large new development projects to provide Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies to reduce single-occupant travel (ridesharing, etc.)?