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GOAL 1. HONOR TOWN CHARACTER.

Policy 1.1. Continue to document, prioritize, and protect historic buildings and resource areas.

Actions

- Improve the condition of town-owned historic buildings; annually appropriate funds (CPC or other sources) to keep up with maintenance.
- Explore alternative approaches to protecting historically significant buildings from demolition, including extending the term of the existing Demolition Delay Bylaw.
- Retain single-family development patterns in established neighborhoods in order to preserve character.
- Build on existing efforts to identify new or expanded Local Historic Districts to ensure further protection of historic properties and consider tiered level of districts to address evolving historic/age designations of neighborhoods.
- Establish a Town Archives program; identify a storage location, develop a cataloging system for town records and other historical documents and artifacts, engage in document conservation, hire a professional archivist to carry out these tasks, appropriate funds to implement the program.
- Evaluate the condition and business viability of Hingham's privately owned small cemeteries and their future.

Policy 1.2. Provide stewardship of priority open space and natural resources area, connecting passive and active recreation lands wherever appropriate and possible.

Actions

- Better define and beautify Hingham's approaches, or its "gateways" by installing signs, adding planting, and upgrading other landscape features.
- Increase the protection of historic trees, stone walls, and other landscape features by strengthening and making clearer the existing Scenic Road regulations.
- Identify measures to strengthen regulations related to water quality and quantity.
- Appropriate funds to acquire land that connects existing open space parcels when they become available, consistent with the Town's OSRP.
- Establish a policy regarding the design of public playgrounds, with a focus on using recyclable/renewable materials.

Policy 1.3. Increase vibrancy of the harbor for residents and visitors and improve connectivity to the Downtown.

Actions

- Develop a wayfinding signage plan and information kiosks to direct visitors to destinations at the harbor and Downtown.
- Conduct a town-wide sign inventory.
- Make sidewalks ADA-accessible for all users.
- Consider repurposing travel lanes/parking lanes in Downtown to increase outdoor dining and pedestrian capacity and safety.

Policy 1.4. Develop a strategic plan for public and private historic preservation and heritage tourism.

Actions

- Appropriate funds and engage a preservation planner to develop a 20-year town-wide Preservation Plan to help guide preservation decisions. Such a plan should involve and share coordination with town commissions, including the Historical Commission and the Historic Districts Commission, as well as private preservation organizations, such as the Hingham Historical Society.
- Expand efforts to educate new and prospective owners of historic properties about best practices and guidelines/requirements for historic building preservation and homeownership of historic properties; establish partnerships with the real estate community and other welcome organizations and develop a newcomer/homeowner education program.
- Include historic/heritage tourism a part of Hingham's economic development plans; collaborate regionally with other communities to advance and develop a heritage tourism implementation plan.
- Support long-term efforts to designate Downtown as a Cultural District, connecting the harbor, downtown businesses, and historical organizations.
- Establish a partnership with a nearby college or university to study Hingham's historic resources further and to store and manage Hingham data.

Policy 1.5. Facilitate open communication and coordination among all Town boards and committees to advance the Master Plan's goals and better serve the residents.

Actions

- Establish a Master Plan Implementation Committee reporting to the Planning Board to help coordinate implementation of this Master Plan.
- Hold an annual "Master Plan Summit" with leaders/representatives of all town boards, committees, and staff to assess the status of master plan implementation, share priorities, plans, and progress on master plan recommendations, and consider possible amendments to the Plan if warranted by unforeseen conditions.
- Set up an Annual "State of the Plan" report to update town meeting in writing on the status of implementation of the recommendations.

- Increase and build on the tradition of volunteerism to ensure the continued core commitment to self-governance and participation; recruit volunteers from all age groups, approach newcomers, and be proactive about explaining volunteer opportunities.
- Use technology to encourage residents to participate in Town government.
- Convene semi-annual meetings of chairs of all boards, commissions, and committees to share information on activity and measure progress toward the Master Plan goals.

Policy 1.6. Value diversity and inclusiveness in our community.

Actions

- Establish a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.
- Actively recruit and hire underrepresented populations to enhance diversity of Town employees and volunteers.
- Support the Town's 50+ year commitment to welcoming METCO students and families in the Hingham Public Schools.

GOAL 2. PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND PREPARE FOR THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

Policy 2.1. Prepare and implement a comprehensive plan to address and adapt to climate change.

Actions

- Maintain a Climate Action Plan Task Force responsible for developing a climate action plan.
- Develop a public visioning workshop to collect input on community priorities for the climate action plan.

Policy 2.2. Establish goals to achieve Carbon Neutral status by 2050.

Actions

- Continue to explore a path to “carbon neutrality.”
- Investigate and develop strategies for reducing emissions to the greatest extent possible, including potentially a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory, and explore options for offsetting the remainder as feasible.
- Invest in a framework for tracking and evaluating progress over time.

Policy 2.3. Protect critical public infrastructure along the coast from sea level rise.

Actions

- Proactively budget for and implement the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness project recommendations and the Climate Change Vulnerability, Risk Assessment, and Adaptation Study.
- Increase the height of the existing seawalls, other coastal stabilization structures, and adjacent upland; and continue ongoing maintenance of existing seawalls and related structures. Educate private property owners to improve private seawalls and related structures; and maximize the protective ecosystem functions of adjacent salt marshes and other natural resources.
- Implement resiliency improvement and critical protections to sewer pump stations, including installing watertight mitigation gates, improvements to pump station buildings, and sealing of manhole covers.
- Protect the quality and quantity of potable groundwater and surface water supply by identifying additional water supply sources unlikely to be affected by sea-level rise, establishing emergency water distribution sites, and educating private well owners about the risks of sea-level rise.

Policy 2.4. Reduce energy and water consumption by residents, businesses, and town government.

Actions

- Consistent with the town budget, identify resources, and continue to meet and seek opportunities to exceed the 2020 Massachusetts Green Communities criteria and actively implement the Town’s Energy Reduction Plan.
- Investigate adopting a “net-zero” policy for new municipal construction and evaluate a budget strategy to accomplish this goal.
- Find more energy-efficient options for replacing municipal vehicles exempt from the Fuel-Efficient Vehicle policy.
- Develop an energy and water use reduction campaign, with resources targeted to municipal staff and facilities, businesses and institutions, and residents. Focus on changing the daily habits of individuals that cumulatively make a difference over time.
- Install electric vehicle charging stations at public properties and work with local businesses and institutions to install them. Consider an addition to the Zoning Bylaw to require EV charging stations at commercial developments. Dedicate parking spaces for electric vehicles at prominent public facilities such as Town Hall and the Library.
- Encourage compliance with anti-idling laws. Take advantage of the free anti-idling resources from the MA DEP “Green Team.”

Policy 2.5. Enhance public access to the harbor and its amenities while protecting the coastline.

Actions

- Plan and budget for adequate dredging of the harbor at least once every ten years and include dredging of the bathing beach swimming area with future dredging projects to improve the beach’s recreational use.
- Redesign and restore the wharves and related harbor infrastructure to be more resilient in the face of projected sea-level rise, following recommendations from the Climate Change study.

GOAL 3. IMPROVE SAFETY FOR ALL MODES OF TRAVEL AND REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION.

Policy 3.1. Improve safety for all modes of travel and reduce traffic congestion.

Actions

- Continue to fund the maintenance of roads, intersections, and sidewalks primarily through MassDOT Chapter 90.
- Continue the Pavement Management Program, which was allocated \$2 million in 2016.
- Conduct a Pedestrian and Bicycle Study to improve safety, accessibility, connectivity, and mobility for active transportation.
- Develop consistent standards for crosswalks for different areas, including dimensions and materials, to address varied safety needs, with added feature as needed.
- Evaluate the need for new traffic signals at high traffic and high crash intersections along Main Street to improve safety.
- Implement a Complete Streets Policy and Prioritization Plan through MassDOT's Complete Streets Funding Program.
- Develop a Traffic Calming Policy and Guidelines to help reduce traffic speeds and cut-through traffic on residential streets.
- Consider designating a 20 MPH safety zone in the Downtown area.
- Consider to opt-in to G.L. c. 90 Sec. 17C to reduce the statutory speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph in thickly settled or business districts.
- Support road safety improvements related to the Route 3A road improvement project.
- Work with Traffic Committee to identify potential locations for a Road Safety Audits in high crash locations.

Policy 3.2. Enhance public transportation services connecting parts of town, particularly linking the downtown to the Shipyard and Harbor.

Action

- Consider developing a shuttle bus or micro-transit pilot program to provide service for residents to local destinations, business districts, and regional connections.
- Evaluate options for providing first-mile/last-mile connections to transit stations.

Policy 3.3. Pursue public-private partnerships to coordinate public transport and traffic to benefit the commercial districts.

Action

- Work with large employers, business parks, and developers to implement strategies to reduce single-occupancy vehicles. This may include carpooling, shuttle vans, flexible work hours, and subsidized transit passes.

GOAL 4. PROVIDE A VARIETY OF HOUSING TO ENCOURAGE POPULATION DIVERSITY AND AGING IN THE COMMUNITY.

Policy 4.1. Provide for the development of housing appropriately designed, managed, and located for older adults and people with disabilities.

Actions

- Work with the Council on Aging (CoA), the Health Department, and local social service organizations to identify properties appropriate for group residences for adults with disabilities.
- Consider designating Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds for use by the Affordable Housing Trust (AHT) to acquire, renovate, and lease or sell existing homes to group residence organizations.
- Identify opportunities for small scale developments and other types of “missing middle” housing.
- Explore options and policies to encourage the redevelopment of residential properties to serve older adults and those with disabilities.

Policy 4.2. Encourage Universal Design in new neighborhoods.

Actions

- Encourage Universally Designed common areas and outdoor amenities in all-new high density multi-unit residential and mixed-use developments.
- Encourage both Universal Design and visit ability design in age-restricted developments.
- Adopt Universal Design guidelines as part of the site plan review requirements for commercial and mixed-use developments.

Policy 4.3. Continue to create and preserve a range of housing affordable for a wide range of incomes.

Actions

- Develop and implement a robust public education program about fair housing and affordable housing, including videos, panel-of-expert presentations, website materials, and periodic presentations at televised Select Board and Planning Board meetings.
- Finish the Housing Plan and disseminate to Town boards and commissions.
- Pursue enough funding and staff capacity for the Affordable Housing Trust to enable it to target a goal of at least five affordable units each year.
- Adopt an inclusionary housing bylaw that requires affordable units in all new residential or mixed-use developments over a certain size (e.g., six units), or requires a comparable financial contribution to the HAHT to produce the necessary units elsewhere in town.
- Adopt a hotel room occupancy tax and explore other funding sources such as residential demolition fee to fund the Affordable Housing Trust.
- Commit at least the 10 percent CPA set-aside for affordable housing directly to the Affordable Housing Trust each year, to be expended by the Trust for purposes consistent with the housing trust bylaw and G.L. c. 44, s. 55C.
- Conduct an annual inventory of Hingham's position relative to the state's SHI database to ensure the town remains above the current or future 40B thresholds.

Policy 4.4. Explore opportunities for creative retrofit of existing structures and infill development for a variety of housing.

Actions

- Explore the possibility of allowing detached accessory dwelling units in some or all of the areas where accessory dwelling units are now allowed for family members, but not for rental.
- Amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow for the conversion and adaptive reuse of existing commercial and institutional buildings for multifamily residential and/or mixed commercial/ residential uses, in conjunction with performance standards for minimizing impacts on surrounding properties.

Policy 4.5. Regulate the form and scale of housing to encourage new homes to be compatible with older, established single-family neighborhoods.

Actions

- Explore the option of establishing a maximum Floor to Area Ratio (FAR) for new construction in residential zoning districts, in order to control the massing of new homes.
- Explore other Zoning Bylaw amendments related to dimensional requirements for residential districts, including setting rear and side yard setbacks on a ratio based on building height and setting building height based on the average height of nearby buildings.

GOAL 5. SUPPORT A VIBRANT, RESILIENT LOCAL ECONOMY.

Policy 5.1. Support local businesses and attract new enterprises that provide employment and deliver goods and services to residents and visitors alike.

Actions

- Increase professional staff capacity in economic development and explore options to strengthen the role of the HDIC in economic development.
- Develop consistent time regulations and restrictions for on-street parking in the Downtown Business District to encourage businesses' parking turnover.
- Conduct a study to evaluate the operational and financial feasibility of structured parking in downtown lots and at Shipyard.
- As part of the senior center study, review and assess parking at the town hall and consider designating parking spaces at Town Hall for staff and visitors and identifying sign flow parking areas to optimize parking availability.
- Develop and conduct a business visitation program.

Policy 5.2. Attract nonresidential development to increase tax revenue.

Actions

- Encourage HDIC and others to engage regional partners such as the South Shore Chamber of Commerce to increase local capacity consistent with the overall strategy.
- Where appropriate, reduce special permit requirements and replace them with clear, predictable site plan approval standards.
- Identify, track, and develop strategic responses to "at risk" properties, i.e., sites considered "transformative" by the Town, with evidence of near-term change in ownership or use.
- Hold a biannual Economic Development Advisory Summit, advisory to the town administrator, Selectmen, economic development staff (if/when position is created), and HDIC to assist the Town with assessing industry trends and CRE conditions.

Policy 5.3. Encourage mixed-use development and a wide range of businesses and institutions in business districts.

Actions

- Commission and periodically update a market analysis and trends assessment of Hingham's business districts and review zoning for market driven development impediments.
- Consider Shared Parking arrangements between land uses with different parking characteristics to increase parking supply in the Downtown Business District.

Policy 5.4. Guide development to desired locations with regulatory incentives and adequate infrastructure.

Actions

- Prioritize public facilities, utilities, and infrastructure improvements in locations targeted for concentrated development and redevelopment: Downtown/ Harbor, Hingham Shipyard, and South Hingham.
- Conduct a zoning bylaw audit with an emphasis on making sure new development is targeted to desired locations and discouraged elsewhere.
- On top of investments in water and waste-water capacity (see Goal 7), explore options for investing in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in South Hingham as an incentive for private development.

Policy 5.5. Promote Hingham as a destination and each commercial district as a unique experience, such as Hingham Square and other long-time commercial centers.

Actions

- Support the downtown business association and encourage participation in marketing and branding efforts.
- Pursue/prioritize a boutique hotel in the downtown either as adaptive re-use or new construction.
- Target the commercial areas in the north and south gateways of Hingham for future economic development that will further diversify tax revenues while protecting traditional neighborhoods.

Policy 5.6. Ensure that proposed developments provide mitigation and community benefits in order to maintain high-quality services and amenities in Hingham.

Actions

- Explore options for tying the density of large-scale development (such as in South Hingham) to the provision of needed services and amenities to support that density and enhance the community beyond mitigating the development's particular impacts. For example, consider developing a "menu" of amenities and critical needs (such as affordable housing, open space, transportation demand management, etc. beyond what is otherwise required), each of which may provide a developer with additional density or other needed relief.
- Create an interdepartmental process for conducting development impact assessments on municipal services and measure overall cost-benefit analyses for the adjacent neighborhoods and the Town, overall, and advise on negotiations.
- Establish an interdepartmental mitigation group to represent Town departments to negotiate public benefit agreements with developers of large-scale projects.
- Work with regional municipal partners on critical resource preservation such as water and open space as well as shared participation in utility connections or improvements as appropriate.

GOAL 6. PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES THAT SUPPORT THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS OF RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES.

Policy 6.1. Achieve and deliver excellence in education and state-of-the-art school facilities.

Actions

- Continue to make the replacement of the current Foster School a top priority.
- Encourage robust participation in the School Committee's strategic planning process to fund excellent educational programs and update school buildings.

Policy 6.2. Provide facilities and services that support older adults to age in the community.

Actions

- During the current analysis of the future senior center, consider how creating an intergenerational Community Center could address multiple community needs, trigger additional funding sources, and benefit a wider range of constituencies.
- Support Town Departments to work together to coordinate programming in order to meet the needs of older adults (e.g., The Recreation Department, Library, Schools, etc. to provide opportunities for recreation, lifelong learning, socializing, fitness and wellness, etc.).
- Support Town Departments (Fire, Police, EMS, Town Nurse) as they experience an increase in calls for service from older adults as our population ages.

Policy 6.3. Provide a range of opportunities for cultural, recreational, leisure, and social activities for all ages and abilities.

Actions

- Once the Athletic Fields Study is approved and finalized, evaluate the recommended additional recreational opportunities / facilities.
- Maintain existing recreational facilities and undertake a plan for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance at all playgrounds.
- Provide new parks and playgrounds in underserved and more densely populated neighborhoods as needed or requested.
- Create a Community Calendar by centralizing information regarding existing offerings, activities, and facilities from various Town Departments (including Recreation, the Library, Council on Aging, Community Center).

Policy 6.4. Support the health and wellness of the most vulnerable residents in Hingham.

Actions

- Evaluate capacity of the Dept. of Health/ Board of Health to address current and future public health issues such as mental health, immunization, domestic abuse, food access, communicable disease surveillance, and drug, alcohol, and tobacco control, and overall community communications and monitoring.
- Conduct a community needs assessment to identify gaps in health and social services for current and future residents as certain groups are more susceptible to health issues than others and should get particular attention from the Health Department. This includes seniors, residents with disabilities, and lower-income families and individuals.
- Explore an opt-in home safety visitation program to regularly check in on the elderly, the homebound, and other vulnerable populations, with the goal of avoiding preventable accidents and health problems. Promote the opportunity for such as service through all channels (the Senior Center, Community Center, Library, etc.) and identify resources to keep each resident healthy and safe and develop a systematic way to identify participants.
- Explore the regulatory landscape, financial implications, and need for a community paramedicine program. Paramedics and EMTs may be deployed to conduct preventive care to vulnerable residents to reduce preventable accidents and trips to the hospital. Such programs are in their early phases, and Hingham should monitor their legal status and success in Massachusetts.

Policy 6.5. Monitor the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and plan for future public health events that may impact the Town's ability to deliver services.

Actions

- Learn from COVID-19 hotspots in Hingham, such as assisted living facilities and nursing homes, and be prepared to help deploy more frequent testing to these vulnerable populations in the event of future outbreaks.
- Seek input and recommendations from BOH and Health Officer on how the Town can be better prepared in the future. Identify where the Town was successful in delivering services and functions and where gaps existed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Be more prepared to store personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves, in quantities not only large enough to serve Town staff but also vulnerable populations.
- Begin talking with neighboring communities and state and regional partners about roles and collaboration necessary for better future responses. Establish a clear chain of command, so the Town knows when to rely on the State and where it needs to increase local resources to handle things internally.

GOAL 7. PROVIDE PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPORT THE TOWN'S NEED TO MANAGE GROWTH AND TOWN SERVICES.

Policy 7.1. Conduct long-range capital planning and service delivery with the foresight to anticipate and address future needs.

Actions

- Establish a process for long-term capital planning and investigate the establishment of a Permanent Building and Facilities Management Study Committee to explore alternative approaches to prioritize and manage capital improvement projects.
- Use the recently funded Town wide Facilities Study, once it is completed, to help set priorities. Develop criteria for capital expenditure priority setting.
- Utilize technology, including Geographic Information Systems, to support long-range planning efforts. Also, increase cybersecurity capabilities in order to protect against ransomware attacks, replace the fiber in the 16 municipal buildings, and investigate best practices for deploying 5G technology.
- Retain ownership of town-owned properties to help fill any anticipated future facility needs.

Policy 7.2. Explore opportunities for instituting planned preventive maintenance (PPM), with prudent and transparent budgeting that considers future maintenance and replacement costs.

Actions

- Consider hiring a Facilities Manager.
- Develop a preventive maintenance strategy for Town buildings and other major facilities and carry out regular and scheduled maintenance that is cost-saving in the long-run.
- Clarify maintenance responsibilities for town owned facilities and properties.

Policy 7.3. Provide adequate spaces to support municipal facilities in their missions.

Actions

- Support the Fire Department's plans to renovate and modernize aging fire stations.
- As part of the Senior Center Study, consider creating an intergenerational Community Center for all ages, following models on other towns to create efficiencies, address multiple department needs, and create a more vibrant and widely utilized facility.
- Evaluate space freed up by the relocation of the Police Department to the new Public Safety Complex to support expansion of other departments located in Town Hall.

Policy 7.4. Increase wastewater treatment capacity.

Actions

- Explore public or private alternative wastewater treatment solutions, especially in order to accommodate and support development in South Hingham.
- Continue to replace aging pipes and address infiltration and inflow issues.

Policy 7.5. Support the Hingham Municipal Light Plant and Weir River Water System in their efforts to increase capacity and conserve resources.

Actions

- Support the plans of the HMLP to add another transmission and sub-station to reduce the Town's carbon footprint and increase capacity to accommodate the trend towards electric cars, buses, home heating, and other uses.
- Work with HMLP to better promote existing incentives for electric vehicles, energy efficiency, and renewable energy including solar, and explore opportunities for additional incentives for these and other resources. Determine how HMLP may participate in existing incentive programs for consumers/residents.
- Work with the Weir River Water System water superintendent (under the advisement of the citizen's advisory board) to regularly forecast water needs and have a long-term plan for managing and expanding capacity.
- Work with the utilities on a coordinated public resource conservation campaign, promoting ways and incentives for individual homes and businesses to reduce their energy use.
- Support Weir River Water System to address existing deficiencies and conduct system upgrades to meet existing and future needs, to assess future water demand and water storage needs based on existing and projected supply and demands.

Policy 7.6. Lead in the regionalization of services on the South Shore when it is in the Town's interests to do so.

Actions

- Explore possibilities of sharing facilities and/or services with area towns to increase efficiency and cost savings (for example, regional wastewater treatment solutions).
- Enlist regional partners and the State to participate in the planning, funding and implementation of interventions to address sea level rise.