



Hingham Master Plan

Planning Board Public Hearing

March 8, 2021



Overview

Master Plan Committee

Master Plan Review

- What it is
- What it is not
- Why it matters

Vision, Goals, Policies

Discussion

Master Plan Committee

- Gordon Carr, Chair
- Adrienne Ramsey, Recreation Commission
- Liza O'Reilly, School Committee
- Paul Healey, Zoning Board of Appeals
- Bob Hidell, Conservation Commission
- Nancy Kerber, Affordable Housing Trust
- Susan Sarni, Board of Health
- Deirdre Anderson, Harbor Development Committee
- Michael Kranzley, Development and Industrial Commission
- Hans Von der Luft, Historic Districts Commission
- Liz Klein, Board of Selectmen Appointee
- Jerry Seelen, Town Moderator Appointee
- Donna Smallwood, Town Moderator Appointee
- Vcevy Strekalovsky, Town Moderator Appointee
- Bryce Blair, Town Moderator Appointee



5 Sustainability, Water, and Energy

Introduction

Hingham is rich in natural, cultural, and economic resources, and the community has developed and flourished by protecting and cultivating these resources over time. Sustainability, in its most basic form, means meeting our own needs today without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. It transcends environmentalism, so in addition to caring for and protecting the town's natural resources, sustaining Hingham means planning for the continued social well-being, cultural richness, economic health, and general welfare of Hingham residents for decades to come.

This chapter focuses on three interrelated issues within environmental sustainability, each with social and economic implications for the Town: Water, Climate Change/Sea Level Rise, and Energy Use. Hingham is a seaside community, so its marine and aquatic features and resources shape community identity, experience, and lifestyle. Protecting and investing in these resources can foster economic development (e.g. boating, fishing, and tourism), elevate quality of life (e.g. drinking water quality, transportation access and ferry service, and aesthetic appeal), and preserve natural wildlife habitats. Efforts to prevent and plan for the natural hazards associated with these resources also serve Hingham

and its residents' health and safety. Climate change, resulting from decades of carbon storage in the planet's atmosphere, has increased the frequency and severity of coastal and inland flooding and erosion as sea levels rise. Hingham has already made strides in building a more sustainable future by creating a *Hazard Mitigation Plan* (2014; 2016) and a *Climate Change Vulnerability, Risk Assessment and Adaptation Study* (2015), which serve as the foundations for local government efforts to institutionalize the Town's responses to natural hazards.

Responding to Hingham's environmental changes at the local level is critical to the Town's sustainability, but the Town must also assume responsibility for its global impact. The carbon footprint, or total greenhouse gas emissions, of any community largely comes from its energy use, usually with greatest contributions by buildings and vehicles. Improving the energy efficiency of local buildings and vehicles and expanding opportunities for the use of renewable energy have community support, and the Town's designation as a Massachusetts Green Community results from its pursuit of a sustainable future through proactive planning.

HINGHAM MASTER PLAN



Downtown, the Shipyard/3A commercial area is relatively large with long, through roads, relatively large parcels and large buildings, and in some cases tall buildings by Hingham standards. The Launch offers walkability "by design," i.e., with storefronts, offices, and restaurants abutting wide sidewalks and parking areas behind the main buildings. South of Lincoln Street (Fig. 3) is Lincoln Plaza, a shopping center with a supermarket, clothing store, and miscellaneous financial and personal services, and a co-work facility. The headquarters of Talbots, the specialty clothing store founded in Hingham decades ago, occupies a large, now underutilized site east of the shopping center. Over time, multifamily housing has developed nearby on Beal Street, bringing more customers and workers to Shipyard businesses.

In 2017, the South Hingham Study Group determined that South Hingham has capacity for an additional 1.5 to 3.6 million sq. ft. of nonresidential and residential floor area - and possibly more.

9-10



South Hingham

Hingham is well aware of the potential that exists for transformative development in South Hingham. It contains more land zoned for high-value industrial and commercial development than any other part of town, yet it also presents significant barriers to growth: lack of wastewater infrastructure, water supply constraints, aging public safety facilities, and traffic hazards. The absence of sewer service remains a significant impediment to realizing South Hingham's potential as a source of jobs, housing, and tax revenue. In addition, many South Hingham residents oppose more growth in their part of town, citing concerns about traffic, over-development, and loss of quality of life.

The Shipyard/3A commercial area is both a business/mixed-use center and a major water-dependent transportation resource. The Boston Harbor ferry service at the Hewitt's Cove terminal has played a crucial role in transforming this part of Hingham from a World War II shipbuilding yard to a busy population and employment center. A private boating facility, Hingham Shipyard Marinas, operates next door. Along the outer edge of the Shipyard/Route 3A area is extensive open space and parkland facing the Back River.

In 2017, the South Hingham Study Group produced a report on its assessment of development potential in South Hingham. The 2017 study area (900 acres) was very similar to the South Hingham land use map shown in Fig. 5.4, though it focused on the Office Park and Industrial Park districts south of Whiting Street and extending to the Weymouth and Rockland town lines. When the report was completed, the South Hingham study area had 3.3 million sq. ft. of commercial, industrial, office, institutional, and residential development. The Study Group concluded that South Hingham has capacity for an

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Existing Conditions

Inventory of Historic, Architectural, and Archaeological Assets

To date, Hingham has inventoried over 1,500 areas, properties, and other historic resources including buildings, structures, objects, and landscapes (sites). Each appears on the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) as well as the Town's *Comprehensive Community Inventory of Historic, Architectural and Archaeological Assets* (Map 3.1). For many of these resources, the associated written inventory forms have been scanned and uploaded into MACRIS and maintained by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), making the forms available for anyone with access to the Internet.¹ These forms document the history of the properties, their architects/builders, and original owners (to the extent known). All resources included on the inventory that are not located in one of the Town's historic districts are under the jurisdiction of the Historical Commission.



Designated as a National Landmark in 1960, Old Ship Church is located atop a promontory and adjacent to Hingham's first burial ground. This house of worship is believed to be the oldest wooden church in the nation still used for religious services and the only remaining Puritan meetinghouse. Its name refers to its architecture, which resembles an inverted wooden ship's hull. Since its initial construction in 1681, the church has been enlarged and retrofitted several times, and today contains its original eighteenth century wooden stalls and one of its most prominent original features—a "hammerbeam" roof. Today, the church holds Unitarian Universalist services each Sunday, except in summer months.

Historic Property Designations and Protections

Since the 1960s, Hingham residents have actively sought to protect its historic resources by obtaining state and national designations and securing protective restrictions and easements, as follows:

National Historic Landmarks are historic places that the U. S. Secretary of the Interior has determined to hold national significance and have an exceptional ability to illustrate American heritage. Nearly 2,600 properties, resources, and sites nationwide have received this designation, 189 of which are in Massachusetts, with two in Hingham.²

In 1972, the Benjamin Lincoln House was also designated as a National Landmark. Located at 181 North Street near the center of Hingham, this two-story home may be one of the oldest wood frame structures in the United States. It was the birthplace and principal residence of Continental Army Major General Benjamin Lincoln (1733-1810), a prominent military leader of the American Revolutionary War, whose family has retained the property from construction to the modern day. Portions of the house are said to date to the 1670s, with significant eighteenth-cen-

¹ Massachusetts Historical Commission, Massachusetts Cultural Resources Information System, <http://mhc-macrisc.net>
² Massachusetts ranks second in number of National Historic Landmarks; New York holds 273.

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8 Services & Facilities

Introduction

Hingham's public facilities are a critical component of the Town's identity. They foster a sense of community. Places where the community gathers, like the Town Hall, the Library, the Senior Center, and recreational facilities each contribute to the way residents and officials interact with each other and their environment, but these are not the only municipal institutions that shape the community. Residents take great pride in Hingham's highly ranked and well-regarded public schools.

Even utilities like the Weir River Water System and Hingham Municipal Lighting Plant unite the Town because residents have confidence in them. The condition and quality of buildings and services indicate the investment and care that a community commits to public well-being.

Good facilities planning and management and steady investment in public buildings and equipment save money in the long term. Collaboration among Town departments, facilities managers, and staff can extend the life and usefulness of Town property through regular and systematic

maintenance (and catching up on deferred maintenance), and it demonstrates a community's commitment to meeting the needs of its residents.

Capital planning decisions should be made systematically and the process should be transparent. A Town-wide Facilities Study, approved by Town Meeting in June 2020, is an important step forward for Hingham. The study "will provide the needed information for the Town to set its own priorities." It will include information about space use options and order-of-magnitude estimates of the cost of these options, and help the Town work toward "a long-term financial plan for establishing long-term priorities."¹

As a number of school and municipal programs have space needs, the Town is considering long-term options for new facilities and this will involve significant capital expenditures. The Town-wide Facilities Study can help to identify ways to optimize the use of existing facilities before making new investments.

¹ Town Meeting Warrant, Article 14, June 2020.

Master Plan Review

HINGHAM MASTER PLAN

What is a Master Plan?

A plan to guide the physical evolution of a town, taking into account the community's history and natural resources, its present and future needs for facilities and public services, its transportation access, and its goals for housing, the economy, and quality of life.

Guided by G.L. c. 41, S. 81D

A collection of integrated policies to support future decision-making

A framework for evaluating new opportunities and challenges not evident during the Master Plan process

What a Master Plan is not:

A strategic plan for Town government, any individual department, or the schools

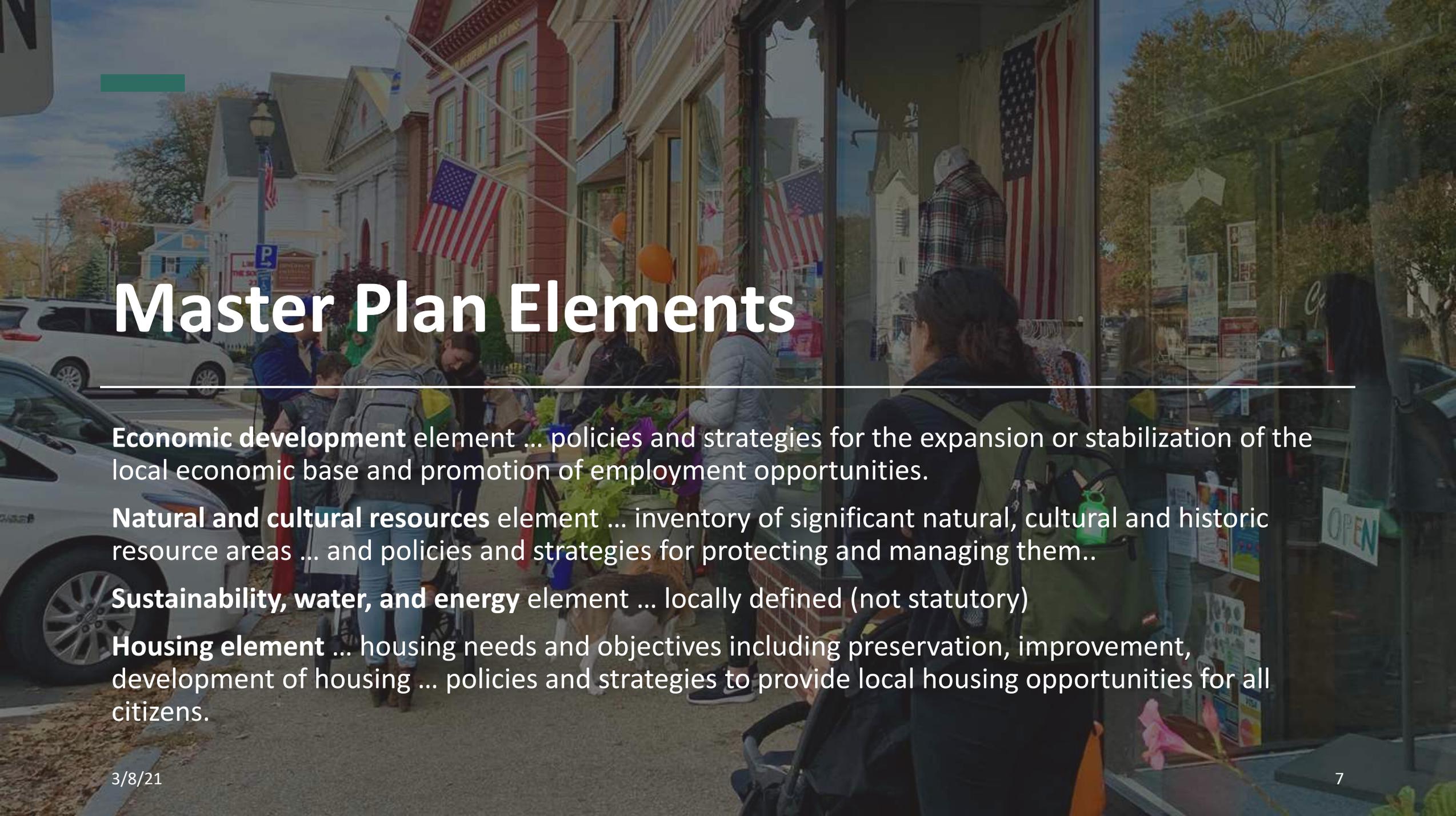
A capital improvements plan

An Open Space & Recreation Plan

A Housing Plan

An Economic Development Action Plan

A Climate Action Plan



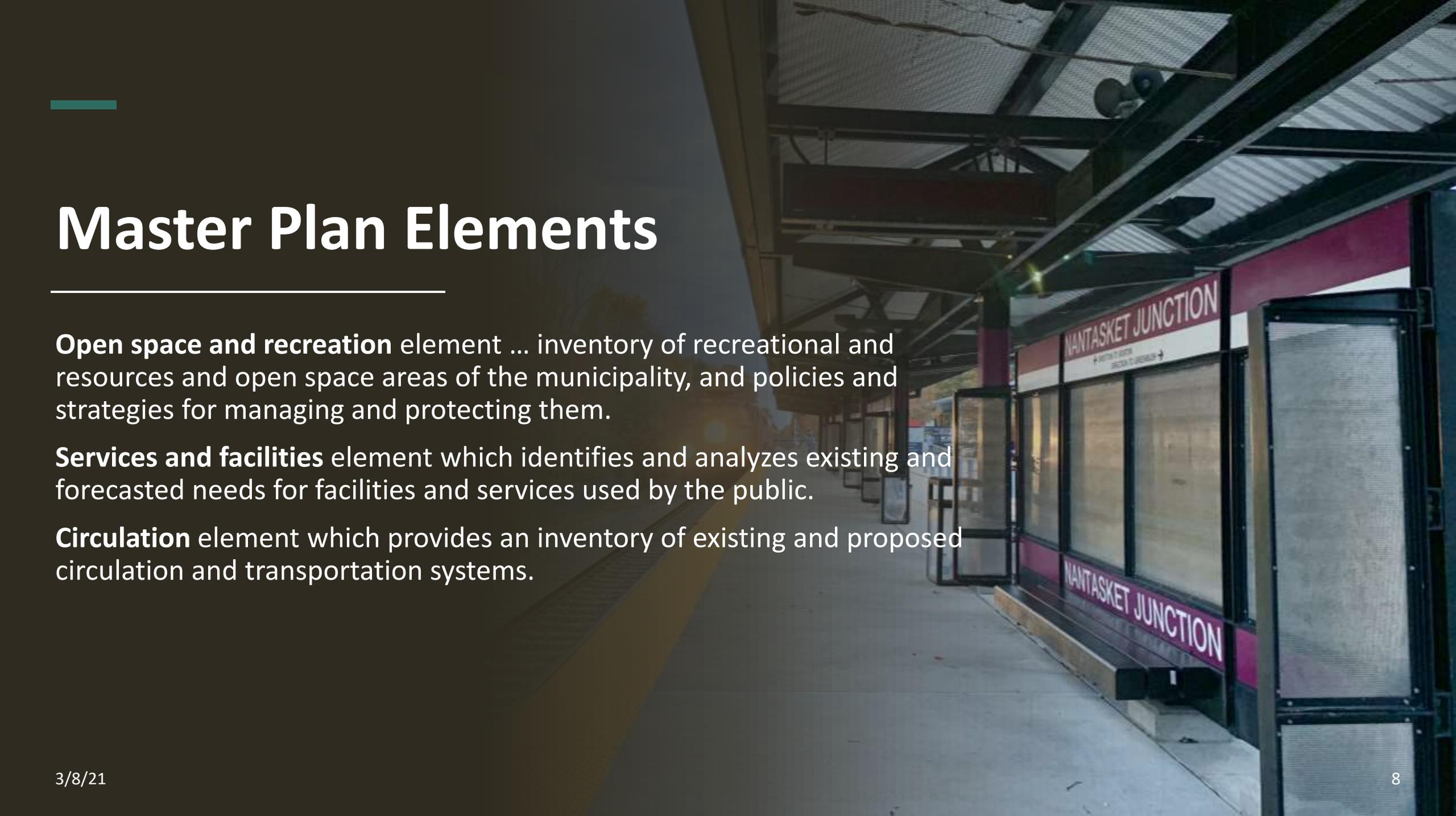
Master Plan Elements

Economic development element ... policies and strategies for the expansion or stabilization of the local economic base and promotion of employment opportunities.

Natural and cultural resources element ... inventory of significant natural, cultural and historic resource areas ... and policies and strategies for protecting and managing them..

Sustainability, water, and energy element ... locally defined (not statutory)

Housing element ... housing needs and objectives including preservation, improvement, development of housing ... policies and strategies to provide local housing opportunities for all citizens.

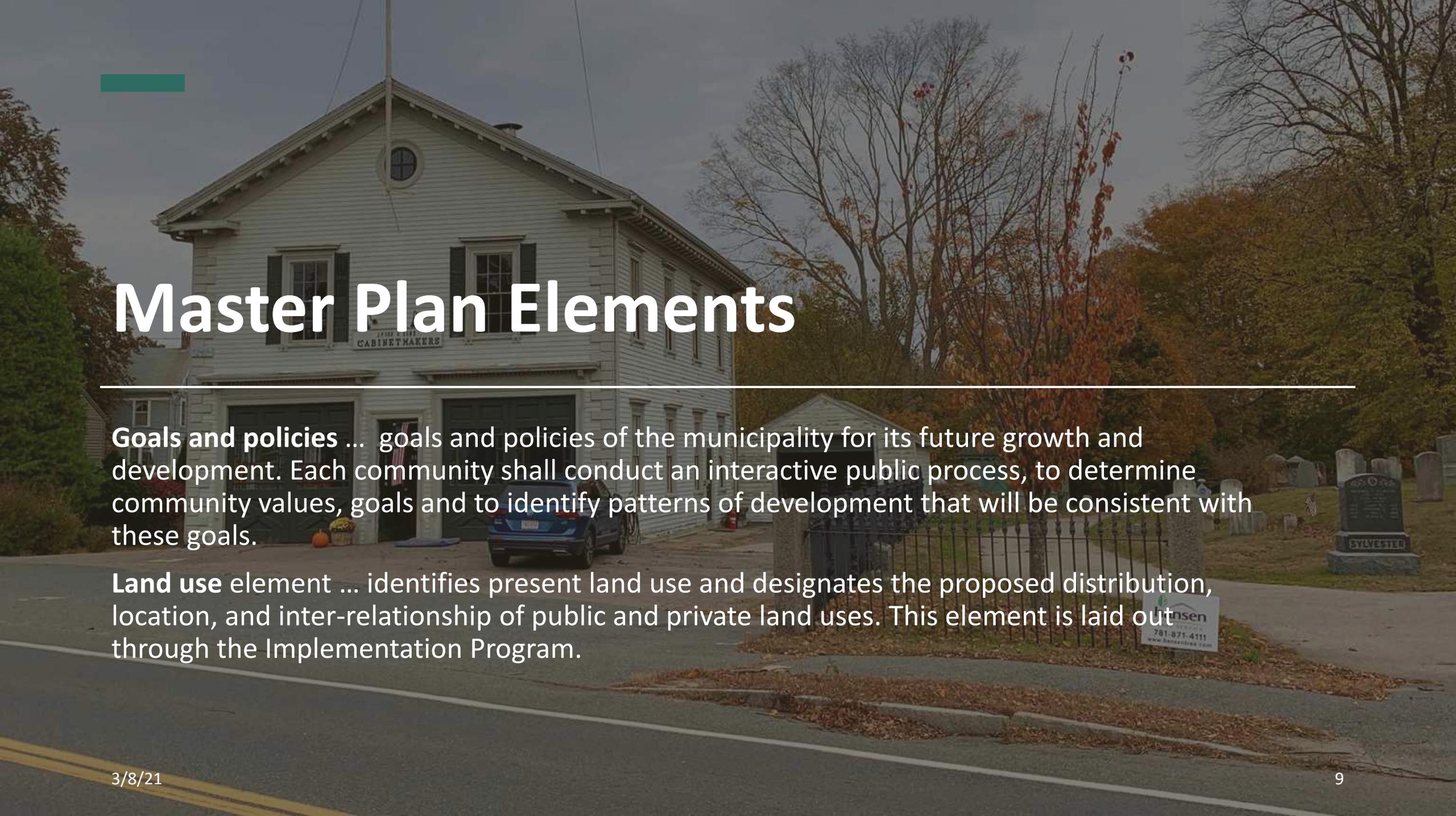


Master Plan Elements

Open space and recreation element ... inventory of recreational and resources and open space areas of the municipality, and policies and strategies for managing and protecting them.

Services and facilities element which identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted needs for facilities and services used by the public.

Circulation element which provides an inventory of existing and proposed circulation and transportation systems.



Master Plan Elements

Goals and policies ... goals and policies of the municipality for its future growth and development. Each community shall conduct an interactive public process, to determine community values, goals and to identify patterns of development that will be consistent with these goals.

Land use element ... identifies present land use and designates the proposed distribution, location, and inter-relationship of public and private land uses. This element is laid out through the Implementation Program.

The background image shows the Hingham Town Hall, a large brick building with a classical facade. In front of the building is a large globe sculpture on a pedestal, with the words "VETERANS MEMORIAL" inscribed on the base. Two flagpoles stand in front of the building, one with the American flag and the other with the Hingham flag. The scene is set outdoors with trees and a lawn.

Master Plan Elements

Implementation Program

... defines and schedules the specific municipal actions necessary to achieve the objectives of each element of the master plan.

... Scheduled expansion or replacement of public facilities or circulation system components with future costs (where known).

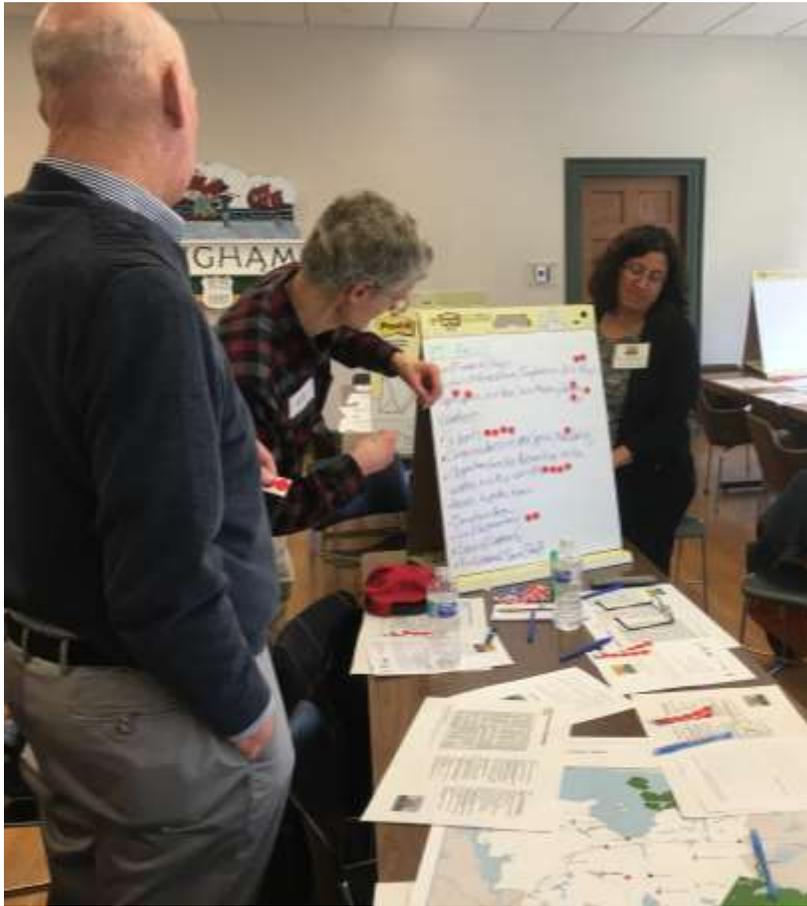
... This element shall specify the process by which the municipality's regulatory structures shall be amended to be consistent with the master plan.

Process, Vision, Goals, Policies

HINGHAM MASTER PLAN

3/8/21





Community Vision Process

- 6 Master Plan Core Assessment Meetings
- 6 Major Community Visioning Sessions
- 2 Senior Visioning Sessions
- 3 Student Visioning Sessions
- 6 “Meeting in a Box” Sessions
- 4 Community Comment Boards
- 947 Responses to Online Survey

Comment Boards



Core Assessment Meetings

Open Space and Recreation (9/24/2019)

Historic Preservation (9/24/2019; 12/02/2019)

Transportation (9/24/2019)

Economic Development (10/09/2019)

Sustainability, Water, and Energy/Natural Resources
(10/09/2019)

Land Use (10/09/2019)

Community Services and Facilities (10/21/2019;
11/05/2019; 11/20/2019)



Visioning Sessions

- 6 Major Community Visioning Sessions
- 2 Senior Visioning Sessions
- 3 Student Visioning Sessions

“Meeting in a Box”

- Hingham Republican Town Committee (11/03/2019)
- Ladies’ Book Club, (11/12/2019)
- Men’s Group, Hingham Congregational Church (11/12/2019)
- Hingham Economic Development and Industrial Commission (11/19/2019)
- Ralph’s Hingham Wine Merchant (12/05/2019)
- Special Needs Athletic Partnership (12/12/2019)

SAMPLE INVITATION

Use this template as a guide for your meeting invitations. You may want to include the language in e-mail invitations or reproduce the template itself for invitations sent by mail.



You're Invited!!

As part of the Hingham Master Plan update, I am/We are hosting a small group community discussion to seek your thoughts and ideas about the future of Hingham.

The Town of Hingham’s Planning Board initiated an update of the Comprehensive Master Plan to help our town identify needs and priorities as we prepare for the next decade. The guidance from Hingham locals is essential to the Planning Board as they address current and future challenges that come before the Town.

The last time Hingham adopted a Master Plan was in 2001. Much has changed over the past eighteen plus years, and the pace of change seems only to accelerate. Town Meeting 2019 voted to authorize the funds for the update of the Comprehensive Master Plan and to establish a Master Plan Committee.

The Master Plan Committee (MPC) plays an advisory role to the Planning Board in the development of the Plan and welcomes your thoughts and comments during the process. It is important to hear why residents chose to live in Hingham, why they opened a business here, and what needs to stay the same or what needs to change so their children will want to stay and raise their families here, too.

The voices of *everyone* in Hingham need to be heard

We need you to be part of this process. Please join us to share your stories, thoughts, and ideas with neighbors, friends, and other Hingham residents.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!!

Date & Time of the Discussion: _____

Location: _____

Please RSVP by: _____

My Contact Info: (Name) _____

Phone number(s) & E-mail address: _____



Visit the Master Plan Committee website at www.townofhingham.gov/masterplan

Community Survey

950 respondents!

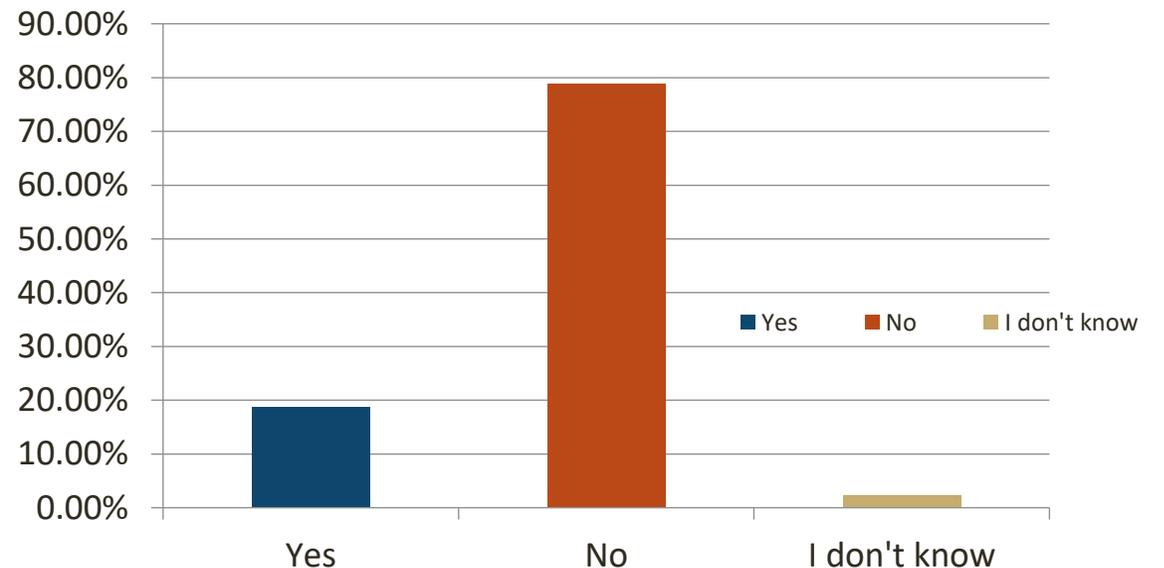
Mix of newcomers and long-term residents

Primary age groups: 45-54 and 65+

Favorite places:

- World's End
- Downtown
- Hingham Harbor

DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN ANY OTHER MASTER PLAN VISIONING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FALL, SUCH AS TOWN-WIDE VISIONING MEETINGS, SMALLER GROUP EVENTS, WRITING NOTES ON COMMENT BOARDS AND SO ON?



Master Plan Vision

In 2035, Hingham will be a place that ...

- **Honors** its coastal New England heritage and celebrates its place and role throughout our country's history.
- **Safeguards** its coastal and inland natural resources.
- **Enhances** public access to Hingham Harbor and its amenities.
- **Strengthens** its pride of place and sense of community through town-wide events and celebrations.

Master Plan Vision (cont'd)

- **Provides** infrastructure and services to encourage multimodal mobility linking key locations throughout town, such as the Shipyard, Harbor, Downtown, and South Hingham.
- **Promotes** the safety and well-being of older adults and supports aging in community by providing high-quality amenities and services and encouraging housing that meets the needs of seniors..
- **Provides** excellent schools and supports families by meeting the needs of children and youth, offering a wide range of recreation, athletic, social, and cultural activities.
- **Provides** for strong, resilient commercial districts by supporting responsible development that brings economic growth and diversifies our tax base.

Master Plan Vision (cont'd)

- **Welcomes** racial, cultural, and economic diversity.
- **Encourages** a range of housing types and prices.
- **Systematically plans for and invests** in planned preventive maintenance and capital improvements to municipal and school facilities and infrastructure.
- **Encourages and values** its tradition of public participation in government.

Master Plan Goals

1. Honor town character.
2. Protect the environment and prepare for the impacts of climate change.
3. Improve safety for all modes of travel and reduce traffic congestion.
4. Provide a variety of housing to encourage population diversity and aging in the community.
5. Support a vibrant, resilient local economy.
6. Provide high-quality services that support the health and wellness of residents of all ages.
7. Provide public facilities and infrastructure that support the Town's need to manage growth and town services.

1. Honor Town Character

Policies:

- Continue to document, prioritize, and protect historic buildings and resource areas.
- Provide stewardship of priority open space and natural resources area, connecting passive and active recreation lands wherever appropriate and possible.
- Increase vibrancy of the harbor for residents and visitors and improve connectivity to the Downtown.
- Develop a strategic plan for public and private historic preservation and heritage tourism.
- Facilitate open communication and coordination among all town boards and committees to advance the Master Plan's goals and better serve the residents.
- Value diversity and inclusiveness in our community.

- **Policies:**

- Prepare and implement a comprehensive plan to address and adapt to climate change.
- Reduce energy and water consumption by residents, businesses, and town government.
- Protect critical public infrastructure along the coast from sea level rise.
- Establish goals to achieve Carbon Neutral status by 2050.
- Enhance public access to the harbor and its amenities while protecting the coastline.

2. Protect the environment and prepare for the impacts of climate change

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



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

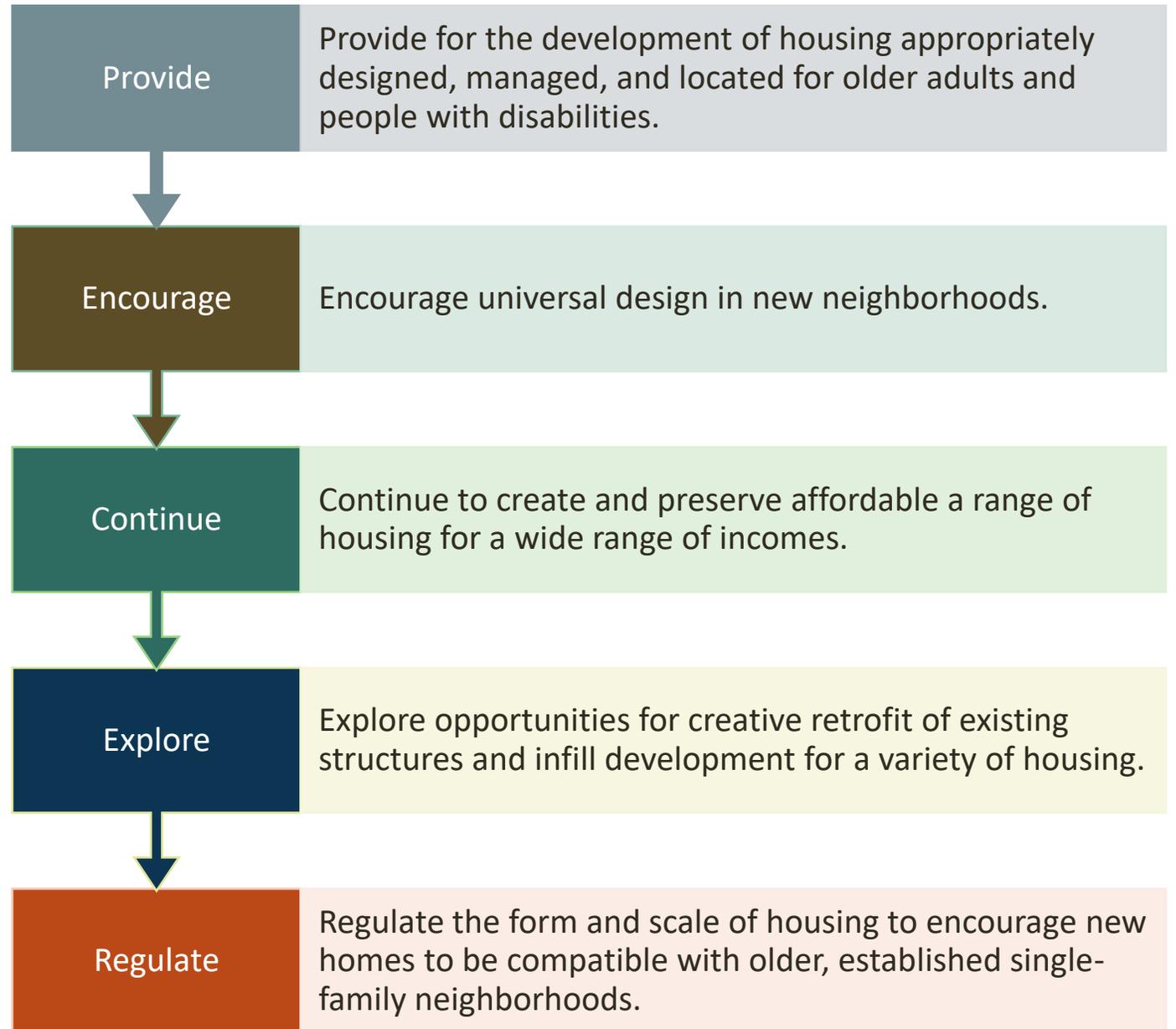


ENHANCE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICES CONNECTING PARTS OF TOWN, PARTICULARLY LINKING THE DOWNTOWN TO THE SHIPYARD AND HARBOR.



PURSUE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO COORDINATE PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC TO BENEFIT THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS.

4. Provide a variety of housing to encourage population diversity and aging in the community



5. Support a vibrant, resilient local economy

- Support local businesses and attract new enterprises that provide employment and deliver goods and services to residents and visitors alike.
- Attract nonresidential development to increase tax revenue.
- Encourage mixed-use development and a wide range of businesses and institutions in business districts.
- Guide development to desired locations with regulatory incentives and adequate infrastructure.
- Promote Hingham as a destination and each commercial district as a unique experience, such as Hingham Square and other long-time commercial centers.
- Ensure that proposed developments provide mitigation and community benefits in order to maintain high-quality services and amenities in Hingham.

6. Provide high-quality services that support the health and wellness of residents of all ages

Achieve and deliver	Achieve and deliver excellence in education and state-of-the-art school facilities.
Provide	Provide facilities and services that support older adults to age in the community.
Provide	Provide a range of opportunities for cultural, recreational, leisure, and social activities for all ages and abilities.
Support	Support the health and wellness of the most vulnerable residents in Hingham.
Monitor	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.



7. Provide public facilities and infrastructure that support the Town's need to manage growth and town services

- Conduct long-range capital planning and service delivery with the foresight to anticipate and address future needs.
- Explore opportunities for instituting planned preventive maintenance (PPM), with prudent and transparent budgeting that considers future maintenance and replacement costs.
- Provide adequate spaces to support municipal facilities in their missions.
- Increase the wastewater treatment capacity.
- Support the Hingham Municipal Light Plant and Weir River Water System in their efforts to increase capacity and conserve resources.
- Lead in the regionalization of services on the South Shore when it is in the Town's interests to do so.



We ask the Planning Board ...

- To receive public comments and questions
- To ask questions
- To provide comments
- To support the Master Plan Committee's 18-month effort to develop this Master Plan
- To approve the Master Plan



Discussion

HINGHAM MASTER PLAN