



## Hingham Master Plan

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. Guidance from fellow citizens is essential for the Planning Board to address current and future challenges that come before us.

The last time our town 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 with the approval of Article 36.

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.

There will be many opportunities to share ideas and experiences through the project website ([www.hingham-ma.gov/833/Master-Plan-Committee](http://www.hingham-ma.gov/833/Master-Plan-Committee)), public forums, and neighborhood meetings. **Meeting in a Box** is one such opportunity.

## A Guide for Hosts and Facilitators

**Meeting in a Box** is a way to get neighbors and communities together to discuss key questions and provide their viewpoints and experiences. **This document is a collection of guidelines and materials for use by community-based host/facilitators.**

### Purpose of the Meetings:

1. To encourage small group conversations about Hingham today and the desired Hingham of the future;
2. To identify the things about Hingham that are most important to residents;
3. To identify the things that are missing or could be improved to make Hingham a better place; and
4. To make this planning process more inclusive by making sure that the voices of *everyone* in Hingham are heard.

### We appreciate your help!

Sincerely, The Hingham Master Plan Committee

This **Meeting In A Box** kit includes several different types of documents and materials:

**Instructions for you, the host:**

- Process Overview
- Host Instructions
- Sample Invitation
- Host feedback form (Sheet H)

**Materials to distribute at the meeting:**

**Remember to bring enough copies of each sheet as needed:**

- Sheet A: Sign-in sheet Facilitators / Note takers
- Sheet B: Sign-in sheet Participants
- Sheet C: Meeting agenda
- Sheet D: Hingham Master Plan one-page overview
- Sheet E: (two two-sided sheets) My Ideas (participant worksheets)
- Sheet F: (one two-sided sheet) Participant feedback sheets (Demographics & Evaluation)
- Sheet G: Get Involved in the Hingham Master Plan! sign-up sheet

**Additional items you will need:**

- Pens/pencils
- Flip chart (or other paper for taking notes), markers, and tape
- Return envelope

**Meeting in a Box Support Team**

Do you need assistance with materials, facilitation, or other things to make a successful meeting? Contact:

[Member of the Consultant Team?]

Or

[Town Staff contact?]

## **Meeting Process Summary – Host/Facilitator Checklist**

### **1. Invite**

- Identify participants to invite to your meeting or an existing group you would like to bring a Meeting in a Box to. (It is generally best to have one facilitator for every 8-12 people in a small-group discussion, but if you are comfortable, you can certainly have more people per group.).
- Send the meeting invitation via e-mail or mail and call invitees.

### **2. Remind**

- Call and/or e-mail the people you invited 1-2 days before the scheduled meeting.

### **3. Set up**

- Select a location where all participants can comfortably sit, ideally in a circle.
- Sort copies of meeting materials into sets for participants.
- Have enough pens/pencils available.

### **4. Facilitate**

- Lead a small-group discussion, making sure the meeting stays on topic and all discussion questions are answered.

### **5. Return**

- Collect all materials, including the individual worksheets and feedback sheets from each participant, and make sure each sheet is labeled with the meeting code (see details under “Host Instructions”).
- Package them together and return the response packet to the address provided on the return information sheet. Please recycle any unused materials.

## Group Logistics

These meetings are designed to encourage group conversation. **The host** is responsible for coordinating all aspects of the meeting. If you are hosting a large meeting, we suggest that you break into groups of 8-12 people and ask for a facilitator and note-taker for each group or consider recruiting facilitators and note-takers in advance. **The facilitator** (who might also be the host) is responsible for keeping the conversation focused and ensuring everyone has a chance to speak. **The note-taker** is responsible for taking notes throughout the discussion. If you do break into groups, please name/number the groups and indicate this on the discussion notes. Please also provide contact information for each of the facilitators and note-takers on **Sheet A**, in case clarification is needed. Make sure everyone who attends the meeting signs in on **Sheet B**.

**Meeting Agenda** - The agenda and instructions below are guidelines for you as facilitator. Feel free to make the language your own and to make it accessible to your participants.

Hand out **Sheet C**.

## Welcome & Introductions (10 - 15 minutes)

### 1. Who's in the room?

Take a few minutes at the beginning of the meeting for introductions. Ask people to tell something about themselves in addition to their name (e.g., their neighborhood, any affiliations, their interest in the master plan, etc.) so that everyone gets a better sense of who is participating and why. Do not, however, spend too much time on this activity.

### 2. What is the Hingham Master Plan?

Briefly review the information on the Hingham Master Plan one-page overview. Be sure to make any connections between the purpose of the Master Plan and issues of concern to the participants or issues you know they are working on.

Hand out **Sheet D**.

**3. Meeting Overview** - Briefly review the information on the meeting agenda:

Refer to **Sheet C**.

#### A. Meeting Purpose

- » To encourage a group conversation about Hingham today and the desired Hingham of the future.
- » To identify the opportunities that Hingham residents need to live healthy, productive lives.
- » To identify the barriers that prevent Hingham residents from accessing these opportunities.
- » To make this planning process more inclusive by making sure that the voices of *everyone* in Hingham are heard.

**B. How will the input from this meeting be used?**

- » The Master Plan Committee will use public input to develop town-wide policies that feed into an update to Hingham's Master Plan.

**C. Group Discussion Guidelines**

- » Review the suggested discussion guidelines or ask the group to brainstorm guidelines that will help everyone to participate. Ask if anyone has any questions and if everyone agrees to the discussion guidelines. Clarify as needed and address any concerns. Ask if the group needs anything else to help stay focused and have an effective meeting.
- » Suggested discussion guidelines:
  - Everyone should have an equal opportunity to talk and be heard.
  - Keep the conversation on topic.
  - Listen to others and avoid criticizing.
  - Respect limited time and keep your answers to the point.
  - Be honest and try to understand other viewpoints.
  - It's ok to disagree.
  - Try not to interrupt the facilitator or other group members.
  - Cell phones on silent.

copy for HARRINGTON