

Residents say some things need to change in Hingham. Development, housing and traffic are the big three

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Hingham is asking for resident input for what they want to be incorporated into the master plan update.

An update on Hingham's master plan is coming up soon and residents are clear about what they want to change in town: more starter homes so young people can stay in town, housing for the elderly and a look at traffic issues.

The town is hosting master plan forums to hear residents preferences and concerns with the town and what they want included in the plan. The town will then take the feedback into consideration when crafting the master plan with help of consultants.

Upcoming forums are Wednesday, Nov. 20, at 7 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 23, at 11:30 a.m. and Friday, Dec. 13, at 8:30 a.m.

At a forum on Monday morning, many attendees were in favor of accommodating development to the towns needs. Residents wanted the town not to give in to over-development pressure or build away the remaining green space, so they can keep to the small town, historic character.

Residents said the town needs more starter houses in town so young people can stay in Hingham. They also were looking for more senior housing and a bigger senior center.

According to the town, since Hingham's master plan was last updated in 2001, Hingham's population and number of houses have increased by 10 percent. The K-12 population has grown 25 percent and senior population has almost doubled.

Resident Dick Ponte said he is very focused on getting a bigger senior center, as he said he has to go to other town's senior centers for the services he is looking for.

"I'm on a mission," Dick Ponte said. "The population of Hingham is growing older."

Residents expressed concern about traffic in town as well. Several groups at the brainstorming forum Monday listed traffic as the thing that needs to be changed.

"I would create some four way stops," Vicki Donlan said. "Some serious steps to manage traffic."

The town is in the middle of some big projects to improve traffic in town such as the Route 3A Road Diet, which will soon make permanent the lane reduction tested two summers ago.

Hingham Police are looking into changing the Kilby Street and Route 3A intersections after several accidents this year.

The state has also added lights on Derby Street at Exit 15 and created a new traffic pattern there to improve the flow of vehicles.

Among what's missing in town, attendees said, was:

- A breakfast spot
- Bookstore
- Town pool
- Parking
- Town shuttle for all ages

Residents said their favorite thing about Hingham was:

- Schools
- Open space/Nature

- Historic aspects (houses, structures)
- Traditions (4th of July, Christmas in the Square)

Hingham approved updating its master plan at Town Meeting in April. The town voted to borrow or transfer \$145,000 for the project and establish a master plan committee.

The master plan will guide for future development based on goals established and consider land use, open space, transportation, housing, historic preservation, economic development, and resiliency and sustainability.

Chairman of the Master Plan Committee Gordon Carr said the plan will tie in harbor developments, the Route 3A road diet plan and the Affordable Housing Trust plan, which are all currently being worked on.

In the future there will also be an option to submit ideas for the master plan in a survey on the town website.

