

The Comprehensive Plan

First Four Elements:

- Land Use
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Housing
- Economic Development
- *Implementing Actions*

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- **Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 41, Section 81-D vests authority for the plan with the Planning Board**
- **The Local Process**
 - **Public Process**
 - **Goals and Objectives**
 - **Data Collection and Analysis**
 - **Policy Formulation**
 - **Narrowing to consensus action items**
- **A Blueprint for Lexington's Future**

What does the law require in a Comprehensive Plan?

- **Goals and Policies Statement**
- **Land Use Plan**
- **Housing**
- **Economic Development**
- **Natural and Cultural Resources**
- **Open Space and Recreation**
- *Services and Facilities (Public Facilities)*
- *Circulation (Transportation)*
- *Implementation*

What Were the Strategic Wellsprings of the Comprehensive Plan?

Long Range Planning Committee



**Selectmen's Vision 2020 Strategic
Planning Initiative**



**Public Concerns Expressed at Ongoing
Planning Venues (not ComPlan)**

How Did the Comprehensive Plan Proceed?

- **2000 Town Meeting begins the process in earnest, authorizing all seven elements and providing assistance for first four.**
- **Fall 2000, Initial Public Planning Board meetings**
- **Staff and Board issue RFP and conduct procurement**
- **Consultant for first phase hired**
- **CPAC (Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee) appointed, November 2000**

continued

How Did the Comprehensive Plan Proceed (continued)

- **Data Collection and Analysis**
- **Report of Initial Findings to Town Meeting 2001**
- **Town Meeting authorizes further funding to continue Comprehensive Plan process**
- **Public Process and Themed Workshops**
- **Resource (Focus) Group Meetings**
- **Draft Elements Issued**
- **Consensus Building Meetings**
- **Implementation Plan Crafted**

How Did the Project Work?



- Planning Board worked with the input from numerous sources
- Drafting done by the staff and consultant

What Was the Public Process?

- Planning Board
- CPAC
- Resource Groups
- Other Participants, Interested Parties
- Themed, Structured Workshops
- 22 Public Meetings and Hearing

Board of Selectmen
Historic Districts Commission
Historical Commission
Conservation Commission
Department of Public Works
Economic Development Officer
Recreation Department
Vision 2020
Lexington Center Committee
Design Advisory Committee
LexHAB
TMMA
East Lexington Neighborhood Assoc
South Lexington Civic Association
North Lexington Civic Association
Meriam Hill Association
West (Precinct 8) Neighbor. Assoc.
Development Community
Business Community

COMPLEX CHOICES FOR LEXINGTON'S FUTURE

Illustrative Examples by
Planning Element or Key Issue

LAND USE CHOICES: *Examples from Lexington Center*

- **Can the Center again be of primary service to local residents or are tourism and/or nighttime activities the sectors to promote?**
- **Will added residential uses in the central business district boost economic vitality?**

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY CHOICES:

Examples Highlighting the Degree of Commitment To Economic Diversity

- **Obstacles to Affordability/Diversity:**
 - Resistance to siting.
 - Fear of density increases.
- **Options for addressing the Issue**
 - Siting in remote/mixed / busy locations.
 - More accessory apartments

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHOICES: *Examples for Understanding Growth in a Broader Context*

- **Why Expand Businesses in Town?**
 - Help the tax base and tax rate
 - Control the burden on homeowners
 - Increase low-or-no commuting options to residents.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHOICES:

*Examples of complex trade-offs
with business expansion*

- **Expand Businesses if Town Receives Such Benefits as:**
 - help in trip reduction/traffic mitigation.
 - occasional provision of public benefits , where appropriate.

CULTURAL PRESERVATION CHOICES:

Examples of Alternatives for Enhancing Community Character

- **Preserving Architectural/cultural Resources and Settings:**
 - Further recognition of historic resources (e.g. Moon Hill).
 - Preservation via CPA, grants, private resources, etc.
- **Trade-offs in Such Initiatives:**
 - Property value increases.
 - More individual property regulation.

What Initiatives Can Result From a Comprehensive Plan?

- **The Plan can provide a clear impetus and direction for any of the following future actions:**
 - **Zoning Amendments**
 - **Changes to Regulations**
 - **Special Programs and Initiatives**
 - **Other laws or public policies**
 - **Legislative Initiatives**

What a ComPlan is Not

- **It is not law and is not binding.**
- **It in no way precludes parties taking—or not taking—other initiatives.**
- **It in no way limits or constrains full debate over initiatives (opposite is true).**

A Comprehensive Plan Provides:

- **A rational basis for short-term community decision making**
- **A long-term strategic underpinning for future town actions**
- **A baseline for future updates and changes in policy directions**

Follow-Through on the ComPlan

- **Direct outreach to boards, departments, committees, external interest groups**
- **Working w/ Vision 2020 Implementation Committee**
- **Ongoing reminders to Initiators, Key Actors identified in Implementation.**
- **Public information efforts**