



WINCHESTER MASTER PLAN 2030

PHASE II VISION AND GOALS

REPORT

This report prepared for the Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) details the vision statement and twenty-three community goals developed during Phase II of the Winchester Master Plan 2030 for the Town of Winchester, Massachusetts.

INTRODUCTION

Since the first community workshop in February 2019 kicked off *Phase II: What Could Winchester's Future Look Like*, we have heard from Winchester residents on the community's key assets, concerns, and challenges—and how they envision the future of Winchester over the next ten years. This vision statement and accompanying set of goals was initially developed from responses heard at the first community public forum on February 6th, 2019 and later revised based on feedback from the Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) and from community engagement in Phase II. This included two community workshops; six community events; three facilitated discussions with local interest groups; four independently organized meeting-in-a-box submissions; hundreds of comments collected through the project's website, courb.co/Winchester—and many individual emails and phone calls.

If you would like to learn what we heard from the community engagement in Phase II, please visit the project website: courbanize.com/projects/winchestermasterplan/information to read summaries.

As a long-term visionary document, the Winchester Master Plan will build on existing Town initiatives to plan for its physical evolution and growth. Only by first imagining where we want to go, can we figure out how to get there.

MASTER PLAN PROJECT TEAM

Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC): Diab Jerius, Heather von Mering, Elizabeth Cregger, Heather Hannon and Maureen Meister (*Planning Board*); Denis Collet (*Precinct 1 Representative*); Keri Layton (*Precinct 2 Representative*); Samantha Allison (*Precinct 3 Representative/Finance Committee*); Pamela Cort (*Precinct 5 Representative*); James Johnson (*Precinct 6 Representative*); Magda Ferrari (*Precinct 7 Representative*); Sherry Winkelman (*Precinct 8 Representative*); John Clemson (*Historical Commission*); Tracy Burhans (*Design Review Committee*); Zeke Nims and David Miller (*Conservation Commission*); Brian Szekely (*Town Planner*)

Project Team: JM Goldson community preservation + planning (*Project Lead; Housing and Demographics; Historic and Cultural Resources; Open Space, Natural Resources, and Recreation*); RKG Associates Inc. (*Land Use; Economic Development; Public Facilities and Services*); Toole Design Group (*Transportation and Circulation*); Bob Mitchell, FAICP (*Land Use and Zoning*)

WINCHESTER IN 2030: A VISION STATEMENT

Community members envision that in 2030 Winchester is a civically-engaged, close-knit community that is welcoming and inclusive with a representative leadership and town government. The community balances new growth with its historic charms and maintains high-quality town services in a fiscally-responsible way.

- **BALANCED GROWTH:** In 2030, Winchester has expanded commercial diversity and mixed-use development where strategic, including in Downtown, in the Holton/Cross Street area, and along the North Main Street corridor. Winchester balances commercial and residential growth with special attention on celebrating and maintaining its historic character and natural green spaces. Well-designed new development offers new amenities, entertainment, and retail opportunities to residents and to increase the Town's commercial tax base. It prioritizes walkability to increase foot traffic to walkability to local businesses, accessibility to services, and community interactions. Through responsive design and site planning, new development of all types is carefully integrated, strategically located, and appropriately scaled, with a focus on creating more compact development in some areas.
- **COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS:** In 2030, Winchester's new community spaces help to build and sustain social networks and celebrate diversity by providing gathering spaces for town events, community groups, and performances as well as programs for community members of all ages. Winchester's public facilities, such as its school buildings near Town Center, are shared by the broader community for events, performances, or other evening or weekend use. Improved and expanded neighborhood parks, athletic fields, and other outdoor public spaces encourage informal neighborly interactions and offer attractive places to enjoy spending time outside. Community-wide collaboration and connections improve civic life, foster synergies across local groups, resources, and initiatives, and build a network of engaged citizens.
- **GOVERNANCE:** In 2030, Winchester provides services in a streamlined, equitable, and proactive manner by effectively managing and maintaining town-owned facilities and implementing capital improvements at the optimal time in order to sustain a growing and changing community. Town departments, staff, and elected leaders work in a collaborative and systematic manner to achieve the community's vision and goals.
- **HOUSING CHOICES:** Winchester's housing stock in 2030 has more economically attainable options and a balanced mix of apartments, condominiums, and houses that can accommodate a variety of households, including large families, young adults, older adults, and people with disabilities. Winchester's stock of older modestly-sized homes are valued and protected from teardowns to preserve Winchester's historic neighborhood-scale and offer more financially-attainable housing options.

- **MULTI-MODAL:** In 2030, residents can safely walk or bike around the community using a transportation network built for users of all types. Anybody of any age and a variety of abilities can get anywhere in Winchester without a car thanks to the expanded and protected bikeway, improved pedestrian path, and shuttle system network that takes locals to businesses downtown as well as the library, grocery store, Wright-Locke Farm, the Hospital, the Fells, and other parks and recreation areas. Throughout Winchester, user safety is prioritized over vehicle movement through physical design improvements such as traffic calming strategies, designated bike lanes, and highly-visible crosswalks.
- **PUBLIC EDUCATION:** In 2030, Winchester public schools continue to be the Town's most prized asset and one of the main factors in attracting newcomers to the community. Winchester's students are supported through a variety of educational opportunities, including extracurriculars and curriculums, that reflects the many cultures and learning styles of its students. Classrooms offer more multilingual opportunities and any student can participate in sports, music, theater, or other organized activities without the risk of financial barriers.
- **REGIONAL CONNECTIONS:** In 2030, regional transportation options have improved. At least fifty-percent of Winchester commuters use the commuter rail or bus to get to work. Younger adults—priced out of the more expensive Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville's housing markets—are drawn to centrally-located units in downtown Winchester and the community's small-town feel that provides easy transit connection to Boston and neighboring communities in the Greater Boston region.
- **SUSTAINABILITY:** In order to best maintain the Town's resources and be best equipped to meet future challenges, the town prioritizes initiatives to ensure a sustainable and resilient community. In 2030, Winchester is celebrating its first microgrid installation for localized energy that can operate autonomously. In collaboration with regional efforts to provide sustainable local food sources, Winchester continues to its leadership role in providing local produce. Many public buildings are powered with clean, renewable energy in an ongoing effort to be a leader in the region for its sustainability initiatives.

DRAFT COMMUNITY GOALS

DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. Offer new amenities, entertainment, and retail opportunities to residents where strategic, including the North Main Street corridor and in Downtown Winchester.
2. Encourage contextually-responsive new development. New development will be carefully planned and appropriately scaled, with a focus on creating denser development in some areas.
3. Promote housing types to allow residents to age within the community. Housing for older residents should be near community gathering spaces and have access to everyday amenities and needs.
4. Create and preserve housing that is affordable, especially small-scale development that harmonizes with Winchester's character and provides easy access to everyday amenities and needs.
5. Encourage more commercial, mixed-use, and compact development in areas that support economic vibrancy including in downtown and along the North Main Street and Cambridge Street corridors.
6. Support the continued success of existing businesses and seek opportunities for new businesses in Winchester.

SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

7. Integrate green energy and sustainability initiatives within town structures, new development, and other infrastructure.
8. Prepare for climate change impacts by protecting key parcels, continuing to require flood mitigation for new development, and prioritizing those most vulnerable (including seniors, children, non-English speakers, and others).
9. Provide town services in a streamlined, equitable, and proactive manner by effectively managing and maintaining town-owned facilities and implementing capital improvements at the optimal time in order to serve a growing and changing community.
10. Seek out and seize opportunities to leverage funding with local, regional, and national partners to invest in Winchester.
11. Increase communication about and awareness of town-issues, such as environmental initiatives, and other town projects in the pipeline.

BUILDING COMMUNITY GOALS

12. Create new and support existing initiatives that increase cultural, ethnic, religious, and economic diversity—and bridge divisiveness between these groups.
13. Increase and improve spaces for community events, artistic ventures, athletic fields, and recreational facilities that encourage residents to gather and interact.
14. Maintain the Town's visual beauty and historic neighborhoods, structures, and architecture through stronger local protections.
15. Preserve and improve Winchester's existing open space, street trees, and water quality.

16. Increase the amount of public open space to support passive recreational opportunities such as hiking, walking, and picnicking.
17. Maintain Winchester's investment in its teachers, school facilities, and students to offer a high-quality and well-rounded K-12 public education in and out of the classrooms.

CONNECTIVITY AND MOBILITY GOALS

18. Integrate transportation improvements with new development and regulatory changes to prioritize pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit-users.
19. Make existing parks, playgrounds, and other open space safer and easier to access, particularly by biking, walking, and public transit.
20. Improve walking and biking safety throughout Winchester for all ages and abilities through ADA compliance and the creation of no-stress bike infrastructure.
21. Work closely with the MBTA to improve public transportation service and encourage more commuter ridership, alleviate parking concerns, and reduce single vehicle occupancy commuters.
22. Create a more robust and safer biking and multimodal lane network to support the rising use of micromobility options (i.e. bike share, e-bikes, e-scooters).
23. Improve walking and biking safety around Winchester's schools, to promote healthy transportation options for youth and to alleviate traffic congestion during peak pick-up and drop-off times.