

MEMORANDUM

TO: Amanda Lessard, Planner

CC: Tony Plante, Town Manager  
Long Range Planning Committee

From: Ben Smith, AICP, North Star Planning *BWS*

RE: Comprehensive Plan Implementation Progress

Date: August 23, 2018

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Implementing a Comprehensive Plan takes focus and time. Even with the shift from a collection of over 100 individual goals and strategies in prior plans to the 4 Big Things in the 2017 Comprehensive Plan, it will take the continued concerted effort of the Town Council, town staff and members of the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) and other volunteers to continue to drive Windham forward. A focus on the short term actions will lead to long term progress.

The Comprehensive Plan update was adopted in June 2017. The Council appointed volunteers to the LRPC in September 2017, and they met for the first time later that year. Some of their work is manifested in the Cluster Subdivision Ordinance changes submitted to the Council in a separate staff memo. In addition to the work of this group, Windham has had a head start on this effort though incorporating ongoing planning work into the Comprehensive Plan including the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Downtown Plan and the Windham Economic Development Plan. The total of community efforts on all these fronts can be used to gauge progress in the year since the plan was adopted.

**Implementation Progress 2017-2018**

Big Thing #1 – Change the Game for Windham’s Growth Areas: North Windham, Windham Center, South Windham

- J 2017 CDBG – Feasibility Study for the Reuse of Andrews School and former Fire Station in South Windham
  - o Windham was awarded funding to examine how to repurpose underutilized public assets in South Windham Village. An

engineering evaluation of the old South Windham Fire Station has been completed, and community discussions are anticipated soon.

- J 2018 CDBG – Depot Street sewer improvements, South Windham
  - o Windham was awarded funds to cover a portion of the costs associated with necessary sewer line upgrades. These upgrades will eliminate an ongoing maintenance situation and add capacity to a maxed out system in order to facilitate future growth and redevelopment.
  - o The town has an opportunity to partner with a willing land owner to gain land to locate the required pump station and leverage private funds along with the local and federal funds required for this project.
- J Community Park progress at current Skate Park location in Windham Center
  - o The town has been awarded federal funds to create a new park with a reconstructed skate park. This new facility is in the planning and approval process now with construction anticipated in 2019.

#### Big Thing #2 – Create a North Windham to be proud of

- J Public Sewer Project
  - o The public-private partnership that represents the start of a public sewer system on the Lippman property is the most significant municipal project currently in the works. It is not an exaggeration to say this project will establish a foundation for community development, environmental and economic benefits for a century into the future.
- J Route 35 Sidewalk Project
  - o Windham secured regional transportation funding to construct approximately 1,700 feet of new sidewalk on the north side of Route 35 from Boody's Corner west to Basin Road. There is no sidewalk on either side of Route 35 today. Construction will take place in 2019.
- J Zoning Changes for North Windham to implement the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Downtown Plan
  - o These changes significantly “loosened up” zoning in North Windham to allow for a wider range of uses, including multiunit residential, reduced parking requirements and will help establish a local street network over time as redevelopment occurs.
- J Broadband Initiative for North Windham
  - o High speed internet is generally recognized as the “interstate system of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.” Windham is leading a regional coalition that includes towns, St. Joseph’s College and Cumberland County to

become a state leader in bringing this utility to local businesses and residents.

#### Big Thing #3 – Invest in Rural Windham to keep it Rural

- J Proposed amendments to Cluster Subdivision Standards
  - o Though not an investment, these regulatory changes will allow owners of productive lands to retain ownership and maintain productivity when subdividing property. The proposed changes also require future lots to be coordinated with prior divisions through master planning.
- J Proposed Voluntary Municipal Farm Support Program (VMFSP)
  - o The Council held workshop discussions on this program to gain 20-year conservation easements on prioritized properties in exchange for a reduction in property taxes. This program will allow the Town to conserve key properties with the need for a fully capitalized war chest of conservation funds. The result is that town staff will gain time to work with land trust and other 3<sup>rd</sup> party funders to gain permanent protections on the important places essential to maintaining Windham's identity.

#### Big Thing #4 – Focus on Community Facilities and Programs

- J New Shared Use Facility
  - o The town is currently building a new facility to house Windham Public Works and the RSU 14 Bus Facility. The need for such a facility has been long identified and the voters approved bonding in 2017.
- J Community Center Committee
  - o The public support for a municipal facility with indoor recreation facilities and public meeting space was documented in the community survey associated with the Comprehensive Plan visioning process in 2014. An ad hoc committee was established in 2017 with staff support to examine needs and potential locations for such a facility. The committee is working with Harriman Associates on these questions and a public forum is scheduled for September 24, 2018.
- J Summerfest Committee
  - o The Town Council has established a Summerfest Committee to organize and run this important community event. This action and the work of the appointed and other volunteers continue an important community event into the future.

## **Measuring Progress going forward**

There are a number of suggested performance measures related to the Core Values described in the Comprehensive Plan. They are specific and measurable items that can be used to indicate progress going forward. The idea is that they will be the basis for an annual progress report going forward. This report will be a reminder of the community's values and priorities and help show everyone where efforts are paying off and where additional focused efforts need to be made. The suggested measures should be tracked over time and additional measures should be added as appropriate.

1. Preserve important open spaces, forested lands and working farms
  - a. Number of acres of land protected through the acquisition of development rights, conservation easements or Town gift/purchase.
  - b. Percent of new dwelling units permitted in growth areas relative to rural areas.
2. Increase Windham's role in the regional economy and increase and diversify the jobs available in Windham.
  - a. Total number of jobs in Windham.
  - b. Ratio of retail jobs to the total number of jobs in Windham.
3. Preserve and improve accessibility and connections to local and regional destinations.
  - a. Feet of new sidewalk constructed in growth areas.
  - b. Ridership on the Lakes Region Explorer.
4. Make smart, targeted investments in infrastructure to shape future growth and improve municipal services.
  - a. Percent of infrastructure funds spent in growth areas.
  - b. Number of residential and non-residential connections to a public sewer system.
5. Windham should continue to be a community for people of all ages and economic means.
  - a. Number of age-restricted dwelling units permitted as a percent of total dwelling units.
  - b. Number of multiunit dwellings built relative to single family homes.
  - c. Number of accessory dwelling units permitted.
6. Celebrate community and connections to Windham's past.
  - a. Estimated number of attendees at community events like Summerfest and the Tree Lighting.
  - b. Number of attendees at Windham Historical Society events.
  - c. Number of Windham youth sports participants.
  - d. Estimated number of library patrons or number of items checked out.