

**Winthrop Comprehensive Planning Process**  
**Land Use**  
**August 24, 2009**

**Board Attendance:**

Patrice Putman  
Andy Wess  
Sarah Fuller  
Ken Johnson  
John Callinah  
Brian Ketchen

Harold Burnett  
Jack Kaiser  
Jim Norris  
John Carpenter  
Phil Locashio  
Mick Czado

**Town Support:**

Chris Huck, KVCOG  
Cornell Knight, Town Manager

**Community Members:**

7:00 pm — Meeting opens

Patrice spoke about the upcoming September 12<sup>th</sup> (Saturday) “full day event” to review material and recommendations-to-date of each comprehensive plan topic, with the goal of solidifying and prioritizing data. It was discussed that the proposed 9 am to 3 pm time slot may be too burdensome for the group and therefore might limit participation. For the interest of shortening the time, it was recommended assigning volunteers to specific areas of the comprehensive plan to better prioritize and distill the material before that meeting.

The meeting can start with presentations by each group of volunteers. New lists of prioritized and consolidated recommendations can be reviewed with a set time limit for each discussion.

It was recommended to schedule a second “event” for the purpose of cutting the list of these topics in half. It was also proposed that a uniform template be created for people to follow while working with and prioritizing all past data and discussions.

For Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>, it was also suggested that each group assigned to each comprehensive plan topic begin discussion with a brief summary i.e. goals and recommendations, reach consensus of each, then follow with more detailed discussions as time allows. Time limits for each topic of discussion should also be imposed.

It was also suggested to have two morning sessions. Make sure each proposed group per topic use said templates and summarize their data before the meeting. It was then suggested using the Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> meeting for “hot button” topics only. Afterward, these discussions could be posted on the internet with a scheduled, follow-up discussion to take place.

It was further suggested by Chris Huck to take a poll to find out what are the top three priorities and then split into groups for discussion.

It was suggested to decide what are the realistic goals and resources to make them happen, and that may help to consolidate or eliminate past ideas and recommendations.

Patrice asked members of the board to choose topic(s) on which to work collaboratively before the September 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. The list is as follows:

Archaeological and Historical Records – John Callinah, Harold Burnett

Economic Development – Jack Kaiser, Sarah Fuller, Brian Ketchen, Ken Johnson

Natural Resources – John Carpenter, Jim Norris, John Callinah

Public Facilities – Phil Locashio, Jim Norris

Recreation – Phil Locashio, Sarah Fuller

Agriculture and Forestry – John Carpenter, Harold Burnett

Housing – Mick Czado, Brian Ketchen, Ken Johnson

Transportation – Andy Wess

Land Use – Andy Wess, Jack Kaiser, Mick Czado

Have recommendations back to Patrice by September 1<sup>st</sup> via email for review on next following meeting (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in September)

### **Land Use Discussion**

The plan for Land Use requires a decision to be made regarding level of growth. Do we want to grow slowly, quickly, or gradually? Based on a past consensus of Winthrop being a New England Village, some objectives requiring or dissuading growth have already been considered and discussed.

Land Use objectives ties in with comprehensive plan topics such as capital facilities and recreation. Also, in order to determine a vision for transportation, land use determinations need to be made as well.

If the choice for growth is fast, more land is required to be in the growth area(s). The more land in the growth area, the more potential for investment in economic development and public facilities. Lowered housing costs and job development are also necessary. Fast growth runs the risk of public facilities being overburdened and creating the need to raise taxes, etc.

It was suggested to develop incentives for growth in certain areas, i.e. affordable housing.

It was suggested that enrollment in schools should increase; make schools central to growth that would encourage more speculation in Winthrop. More kids in school means more state revenue, leading to reimbursement dollars for facilities that are already paid for or are currently being paid down. Also, attracting tuition based students may be beneficial.

Slow growth: The town has done a good job addressing specific issues one by one. Consider costs of growth in certain areas opposed to others. Look at current land resources and assess how much growth can realistically be made. Growth in certain areas may already be limited.

Chris Huck drew attention to a map that includes areas detailing poor soil and wetlands; Alternatively, there is no way the town can use all available land resources in the foreseeable future. Existing properties may also be modified or “densified.”

Water/Sewer rates are high in proportion to existing number of users. If growth was encouraged to depend on the public infrastructure without overburdening it, this would increase utility revenue. Some pre-emptive capital investment of water and sewer, for example, might be sensible, if built toward areas that may service future homes.

It was asked if financial incentives existed for people to develop or anticipate for future growth? Financial incentives can be created for developers by waiving impact or permit fees. The opposite effect might be to charge impact fees for certain rural development, helping to defray further burden on existing taxpayers.

More ideas and comments:

Urge adoption of a policy or ordinances that prohibit chain retail, etc. Tourists, economy, et al are retained by present locally owned businesses that are preferred over large retailers.

- Business restrictions may be merited, but tax revenue may be sacrificed.
- It is difficult to regulate franchise businesses – are restrictions defined by size, parking, signage, etc.?
- Distinctions can be made between corporate-owned chains and independently owned franchises, such as Subway or Dunkin Donuts.
- Freeport has an architectural standard that is now prevalent in many communities. Retailers could be made to conform to a certain model specifying facades, roof pitches, etc., however this can also be detrimental to a small business unable to afford the cost of this standard.
- Finally, parking standards, environmental standards that are kept up to date can serve as the ultimate control over what can or can't be developed (with special regard to “big boxes”)

Strategic community development may lend to a desired growth level in certain areas; for example, organizing the community to bring improvement to a park or building.

Jobs we are creating in Winthrop presently are not compatible with the present cost of housing. i.e., Alternative Manufacturing has numerous employees commuting in from other communities. Service based, lower wage jobholders cannot sustain growth in housing. Alternatively, the new call center on Route 202 (Carleton building) and the medical center are creating entry level jobs with low wages but with the potential of those individual wages increasing with seniority, experience etc.

The '96 comprehensive plan does not break land into rural or growth areas. The new plan should identify growth areas. Assuming no changes in lot sizes, approximately 60% of Winthrop is still developable. When lot sizes are reduced, this creates more opportunity for landowners and developers, as well as raising the percentage of what is developable, although smaller lots may create a higher cost of infrastructure as it would be serving a greater amount of people.