

TABLE REPORTS
“Hopkinton at the Crossroads Forum”
May 2005

Table A

Clarifications:

- Can we redirect traffic flow?
- Traffic flows through all dilemmas
- Start with Rural Character
 - What do we want it to be?
 - Don't mind going to Westboro to shop
- If we have more residential, taxes go up (C.O.C.S.)

Solutions & Questions:

- Rezone to manage growth?
- Commercial causes more traffic
- How to slow/stop the process?
 - Bigger lots?
 - Re-zone
- Large lots drive acquisition costs up
- Dense housing drives service costs up
- Affordable – How??
- Build list of KEY PRIORITIES
- Process:
 - Data Gathering
 - Consensus
 - Decision
 - Inspire Involvement
 - Long Range Fiscal Plan
- Use Master Plan Data
 - Define:

▪ <u>Current State</u>	<u>Desired State</u>
*	*
*	*
 - Then Identify what need to do to get to desired state

▪ <u>Drivers</u>	<u>Restraints</u>
*	*
*	*
 - Then attack the workable, biggest forces

Table B

Dilemmas Discussion

- Control growth – large parcels vs. small parcels
 - Rezoning v. existing zoning
- Invest in schools – find other revenue sources (instead of property tax)
 - How to pay for good education?

- Commercial growth leading to undesirable characteristics of town
 - “Smart” commercial growth
 - Improve balance
- Need more information on cost of open space v. development
- Traffic flow
 - Need better/more sidewalks
 - Not too bad
 - Would require drastic change and would ultimately increase traffic

Next Steps

- Information is needed:
 - Cost for residential v. commercial v. open space
 - Revenue from: residential/commercial v. open space
- Investigate partnerships
 - Commercial entities
 - Conservation organizations to acquire open space
- Balance short term v. long term goals
- Look for information from other towns who have faced and solved these problems/issues
- Preserve historic sites/homes

Table C

Dilemmas Discussion

- Traffic flow in center of town
 - Left turn arrows at light??
- Maximize commercial land (add to tax base)
 - Utilize South St. area?
 - Move some commercial out of downtown?
- Examine long term growth patterns
- Encourage commercial/industrial growth while limiting residential growth
- Promote commercial areas
 - Chamber of Commerce
- Balance between school spending and other town needs (to keep taxes from rising)
 - Find alternatives to certain school budget items
- Restrictions on developers
 - “Impact fees” (per unit or sub-division)
 - School subsidy
- Address changing water issues
- Maximize use of commercially and industrially zoned space
 - Address traffic impact simultaneously
 - Address re-zoning issues
 - Reduce residential growth

Creative Solutions

- Implement commercial plans which have less impact on town's "rural character"
- Encourage more commercial/industrial and/or agricultural development (which may limit residential growth)
- Impose impact fees on developers
- Encourage town to purchase open space
- Develop possible plan for Weston property before pitching sale to town. Look at: traffic, taxes, open space
- Consider split tax rate (residential v. commercial)
- Examine town boards' processes and guidelines to streamline planning and development. ("coordinate") i.e. – communicate through process (with Conservation Commission, etc.)

Table D

Moving Forward

- Control/manage residential growth and unwillingness to examine/embrace all zoning options
- More residential alternatives – spread out or centralized down town?
- Study current industrial/commercial zoned areas to see what can be done to maximize tax impact
- 20% of the population is less than 10 years old. What happens when they all start driving?
- Identify key outposts for smaller commercial shops/gathering spots
- At current rate, tax increase is inevitable if we want to keep services level – schools
- Economic modeling of key alternatives is key to educating the populace!

Table E

Dilemmas Discussion

- Restrict/stop Residential Growth
 - Need to strike a balance
 - Resident apathy
 - Change zoning to reach goal
- Downtown
 - Gathering places
 - Shops and restaurants

Moving Forward

- Revitalize Downtown
 - Gathering area
 - Spend locally
 - Need definitions
 - Financial incentives
 - Zoning incentives
 - Public and civic facilities
 - Do a survey – electronically
 - Public hearings and forums
 - Mailing survey with census
 - Seek input from similar towns
 - Seek grants

Table F

- Land use
- Commercial use – where is it planned.
- How valuation works – higher val/lower taxes.
- ? Footbridge across 495.
- ? New 495 exit to route traffic to comm. Areas (?use new/existing).
- Linkage fees for comm. - 85 and Hopkinton – Weston Nurseries and use.
- Retail opportunities (at Weston Nurseries)
 - Book store
 - restaurants
- How balance desire for open space with revenue generation?
- ? Priv/ pub partnerships for Dev. Of Weston Nurseries.
- Traffic dilemmas
 - Define pressure points
 - W. Main St/85 corner - ? by pass roads.
 - Alternative transportation (bike and foot paths).
 - Downtown parking to assist in revitalizing the area.
- Critical mass – look at what works in other towns of similar size - ? traffic bypass.
- Overlay districts
- Share the change
 - Spread equally around town.
- “Village” concept.
 - Create zoning overlay districts to allow this.

Table G

Question 1: Dilemmas

- Development inevitable, manage it, cannot be stopped.
- Traffic flow and downtown safety Not a dilemma.
- “Frame” the issues.
- Tradeoffs/ consequences of action/inaction.

Master Plan Committee Suggestions

- Making town attractive to comm. development.
- ? zoning change?
- Market concept of dev. To townspeople -> education to inform public.
- Define town’s priorities via population consensus.
- Forward reaching.
- Downtown livable and viable.
- Critical mass insufficient.
- Communication.

Table H

Dilemmas

- Smart development.
- By-law in place to control residential growth.
- Plan for the future.
- Mix use affordable housing.
- Downtown revitalization – Tax incentives to improve look of downtown.
- Keeping open space.
- Traffic impact.
 - Don’t widen downtown road.
- Access to town via walking, biking trails.
- Control development – smart.
- Mixed use with land that will be developed.
- Other uses other than residential “conference center.”
- Incentives that are given to new business done thoughtfully.
- Town purchase any large parcels of land to control the outcome.
- Zoning to be changed to promote new small business.
- Connecting open space – “Green necklace”
- Downtown more walkable and inviting.
- More restaurants and other attractions, bakery, retail.
- Parking downtown.
- Tax incentives to improve current businesses and new businesses.
- More sidewalks to connect downtown.
- Improving communications with residents to tighten community – promote more involvement.
- Workforce housing.
- Long term planning.

Table I

Question 1 - Dilemmas

- NIMBY
- What is the right kind of business.
- Zoning and access for new business – Keeping rural roads.
- Could better “traffic flow” and walkable and safe” go hand in hand?
- A lot of vacancies in existing building – B/C not looking for office space rather light manufacturing etc.
- Need to keep biz. Close to 495 or else increase traffic congestion in DT.
- Police enforcement on traffic flow/J-walking etc.
- “Of course it’s not Hopkinton people it’s out of towners.” ☺
- 14,000 people is not rural.
- We have rural rds. With suburban traffic.
- Why do people say we want to maintain a rural feel if it’s already gone?
- People who work here can’t afford to live here.
- Zoning questions - # of homes on X size lots with this much open space.
- People who purchased land years ago can no longer afford the taxes – “But I’d just like to live there if forced to sell. Open space turns into buildable lots – more kinds in schools – more houses ...
- Water and sewage
- |
- V
- Drinking

Points

- Zoning
- Traffic/parking/sidewalks
- Are we still really rural “14,000”.
- Rural rds. With suburban traffic.

Zoning

- Need solution to water and sewage issue.
- Requirements plan for developer
 - Drill a well
 - Good roads
 - Low income or affordable housing
- Zoning task force.
- Town-wide master plan for land-use.
- Get best town planner we can afford.
- Vision
- Funds: knowing where \$ comes from.
- Get a grant writer.
- Develop means for town to buy land
- Economic planner
- Investment
- Develop win/win to protect people with large amounts of land (tax increases etc.)
- Town to buy for open space?

Education

1. How can you control growth with zoning?
2. Water: Clean/drinking and sewage.
 - o Where is it coming from /going to.
3. What can we require of developers?
4. What we can get from/ how to max. grants?
5. Options/ ways to control growth?
6. How can we stop the tide?

Table J

Dilemmas

- Not traffic flow/definition? By pass? Rush hour.
- Expanding commercial may not be M.E. to preserving open space.

Focus

- Limiting residential growth, open space and comm. growth – light industry – office.
- Education re zoning.
 - o Zoning restrictions.
 - o Conservation restrictions.
- Consensus land owners and town committees – regarding available land (private or [61A? GIA? Me].
- 10-15 subjects?
- *Ombudsman – overseer of “Big Picture”
- *Proactive assessment of available priv. Land/use
- *Rezoning.

Table K

1. Cap bldg permits/yr.
 - a. Provide alternatives to owner to improve re not equal to residential.
 - b. Residential growth drives most dilemmas.
 - c. Reeducate population on benefits of alternatives.
 - d. Limitations in understanding options for planning
Residential Industrial Commercial
 - e. Competing agendas; inefficient communication/PR.
2. Revenue positive plan for Weston Nurseries.
 - a. Revive back lots bylaws
 - b. Town buys and controls W.N. with trust fund and buy future open land.
3. Lack of civic engagement due to town leaders.
Drive radical pub/ private partnerships.
4. Identify master endgame/target max. population – Inventory all available unimproved land.
5. General population = educate / participate
6. Grass roots org. by neighborhood: To sell master plan.