



THE PLANNING BOARD OF WEST BOYLSTON
MIXTER OFFICES • 120 PRESCOTT STREET
WEST BOYLSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01583

TO: Town Wide Planning Committee
DATE: October 3, 2006
RE: Master Plan Implementation

2006 Master Plan Implementation Report

On September 14, 2005, the Planning Board voted to adopt the plan drafted and presented by the Town Wide Planning Committee as the Master Plan for the Town of West Boylston. The following is a discussion of the progress made on the five-year implementation plan of the recommendations in the Master Plan.

This memo discusses the items in the Implementation Plan that list the Planning Board as a responsible party. It is organized with the same sub-sections as the Implementation Plan itself.

1. Housing

1.1. Adopt an Incentive Zoning Bylaw to encourage developers to provide housing for low and moderate-income households in new developments.

In collaboration with the Housing Partnership, the Planning Board drafted an Incentive Zoning Bylaw and presented it to Town Meeting. The Incentive Zoning Bylaw was adopted as Section 3.10 of the Zoning Bylaws by Town Meeting on May 15, 2006.

1.2. Revise Zoning Bylaw requirements for multi-family housing to include standards for design, neighbor-hood compatibility, and environmental protection. Increase density to four units per acre.

The warrant for the October 16, 2006 Town Meeting contains an article to increase the density of multi-family dwellings. The proposed change will decrease the minimum lot area required for each unit to 10,000 square feet from 20,000 square feet for parcels that connect to the sewer system.

1.3. Use a “limited development” approach to create some affordable units and preserve open space. (with Conservation Commission)

The residential developments of Hillside Village and Angell Brook, totaling over 230 units were approved with affordable units and more than 25% open space which will be under the control of the town through the Land Trust.

2. Open Space and Recreation

2.1. Amend the Zoning Bylaws to include provisions for Open Space development (Cluster Zoning.)

This item is under consideration

3. Transportation

3.1. Develop a plan to improve and construct sidewalks and promote bicycling activity through expansion of the trail system. Improve walking systems near schools and construct sidewalks along Route 12 to insure pedestrian safety along this busy road. (with Board of Selectmen and DPW)

The Subdivision Regulations currently promote the construction of sidewalks, walking paths and bikeways. The Planning Board has required new sidewalks constructed in the new Timberwood and Century Farm subdivisions. We also have attempted to require projects undergoing Site Plan Review to construct sidewalks, especially along Route 12. However, some concerns have been voiced as to the ability and responsibility of the Town to maintain these new sidewalks within the state right-of-way and whether the Planning Board can require developers to add sidewalks on state-owned property.

The Planning Board has limited resources to implement an integrated sidewalk plan. A project should be developed within the Town’s capital plan to address this issue.

3.2. Review Subdivision street width standards to determine if narrower streets are feasible without compromising public safety.

The document, *Rules and Regulations Governing Subdivisions in the Town of West Boylston*, is currently under review. The current draft reduces the roadway width for Local Residential streets from 26’ to 22’, for Primary Industrial streets from 36’ to 32’ and Secondary Industrial streets from 30’ to 28’.

3.3. Review Subdivision Regulations to improve street connectivity.

As mentioned above, these regulations are currently under review and the public hearing is still open with these issues being discussed.

3.4. Participate in regional transportation planning activities, especially the Transportation Committee of the CMRPC and the Metropolitan Planning Organization to keep abreast of regional projects that may affect the Town and insure that Town projects are advanced. (with Town Administrator.)

This is an ongoing responsibility for one elected member of the Planning Board. Currently, John Baker is our representative to CMRPC. Along these lines, we should note that Briar Lane in Worcester, which is a feeder street to our Hartwell Street Industrial Area, has finally been repaved. The Planning Board has been making this request for the past several years to the City of Worcester.

4. Land Use

4.1. Adopt a new Zoning Map with Assessors parcels as the base.

Unfortunately, this task requires some funding that we have not been able to obtain. We received an estimate for this work in 2003 from CMRPC for approximately \$6,000. In addition, this task needs to be approached carefully. There are several very large parcels that are partly in the Business and partly in the Residential area. Re-zoning them as Business could push a business use into the midst of an existing single-family residential area.

4.2. Investigate the feasibility of creating Village zoning districts for Oakdale, Pinecroft and the Town Center to insure future development is compatible with the village character of each area.

The Planning Board has begun work on this issue and is generally very favorable to the idea. We forwarded our notes on the subject to the ZBA for their comments. Two members of the ZBA met with us and voiced concerns. They expressed that they were averse to taking away any rights that current owners of the property had.

4.3. Revise the Schedule of Use Regulations to insure appropriate land uses are allowed in each district.

We are planning on looking at this over the next several months and hope to bring any proposed changes to Town Meeting in May 2007.

4.4. Adopt a cluster development bylaw to preserve open space, preserve natural resource functions, and allow for a more compact development form.

This item is under consideration.

4.5. Increase the permitted density of multiple family developments in the GR district now that sewers are available. (From 2 to 4 units per acre.) (with Housing Partnership)

As mentioned above in the Housing section, we are proposing such a change at the Town Meeting in October. The article, as written, will only increase the density for those projects where sewers are available and permitted.

4.6. Study the feasibility of allowing Mixed Use projects, especially in existing villages.

Mixed Use projects are part of the discussion of the Village Zoning district. Currently our zoning allows both residential and business use on parcels in the business district, which certainly qualify as mixed use. There are several of these parcels in the villages at this time. However, the bylaws only allow for one “habitable” building on each parcel.

4.7. Consider prohibiting single-family homes in Business districts to minimize conflicts between incompatible land uses.

We will consider this prohibition during our review of the Schedule of Use Regulations mentioned above.

4.8. Develop a water and sewer policy that manages growth. (with DPW and West Boylston Water District.)

The Planning Board believes that development of the policies is important and has express willingness to assist. We requested an opportunity to comment on any proposed policies, but have yet to receive notification. The Planning Board’s role in policy development could be better utilized.

4.9. Reduce the minimum lot size in Industrial Districts from 5 acres to 2 acres.

The warrant for the October 16, 2006 Town Meeting contains an article to make this proposed change.

4.10. Undertake a thorough revision of the Zoning Bylaws to insure consistency with the Plan. (with the Board of Selectmen and the ZBA)

The modifications that we are proposing are drafted with this goal in mind. A more thorough revision will take time and resources.