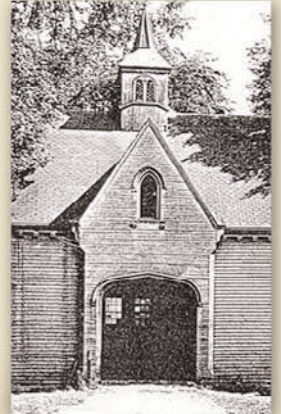


Brookline

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2005-2015



Appendix

1. Summary of Public Process
2. Massachusetts General Law & Executive Order 418
3. "Housing Brookline" (2003 Edition)
4. Board of Selectmen and Planning Board Resolutions



TOWN OF BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS

Brookline

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2005–2015
APPENDIX



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Planning Process

Brookline has had three Comprehensive Plans. The first plan, produced in 1959, was updated in 1976 and 1989 by citizens' committees and Town staff. Over the years the Town has also produced a number of plans and studies focusing on specific areas, districts and issues. In 1998, nearly ten years after the most recent Comprehensive Plan, the League of Women Voters held a Future Search event to identify residents' concerns and hopes for the direction the community would take in the future. The Future Search made recommendations for a new Comprehensive Plan.

The 2003 Brookline Plan differs from those that preceded it in several ways. Because Brookline is a well-run community with many resources and the capacity to manage and resolve routine concerns, the Town decided to focus most of its planning attention on high priority and difficult issues, developing a more detailed blueprint for future action in those areas. At the same time, the Plan remains "comprehensive," dealing with all the planning elements established in M.G.L. Chapter 41, Section 81D, the legal foundation for the authority, objectives, content and application of comprehensive plans.

In August 2000, the Board of Selectmen appointed the Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC), made up of 21 representatives of Town boards, commissions, advisory bodies, committees, and citizen groups. The planning process has been directly supported by staff from the Department of Planning and Community Development, with assistance from other key Town departments. In the first phase of the Comprehensive Planning process (2000-2001), Town staff prepared Issues and Opportunities reports, organized outreach and facilitated discussions in Brookline neighborhoods. For the second phase of the planning process (2002-2003), the Town engaged a consultant team made up of Goody, Clancy & Associates and Community Design Partnership to assist in preparation of the Comprehensive Plan. This process is described in detail on the following pages.

Phase I Understanding Trends Through Analysis and Community Discussion

Issues & Opportunities Reports. During 2000 and 2001, the Department of Planning and Community Development prepared exhaustive reports with data, illustrations, and GIS maps – the Issues & Opportunities Reports – for discussion with the Comprehensive Plan Committee and Brookline community. Issues & Opportunities covered the following topics:

- Parks, Open Space and Greenways
- Water Quality Management
- Historic Preservation
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Schools
- Sustainability

- Recreation
- Travel and Mobility
- Information Technology
- Town Facilities
- Arts and Culture

These detailed reports are available separately on the Town's web site and in a stand-alone volume in the Town's libraries and the Department of Planning and Community Development.

Neighborhood Forums. An effective Comprehensive Plan depends on repeated dialogue with community residents. While the Issues & Opportunities Reports were being prepared, the Department of Planning and Community Development and the Comprehensive Plan Committee also went out to the neighborhoods to ask Brookline residents about their neighborhood concerns and their views about the town as a whole. Seven Neighborhood Forums were held between March 2000 and October 2001 at the following locations:

- Coolidge Corner/South Side
- Washington Square
- Fisher Hill
- High Street Hill/The Point
- Brookline Village
- North Brookline
- South Brookline/Chestnut Hill

Some 400 people attended these Forums, which began with reports from neighborhood associations, then moved on to discussion of the positive aspects of the neighborhood, and concluded with identification of both neighborhood and town-wide concerns.

During these meetings, discussions revolved around a series of themes.

- Participants in the Neighborhood Forums were especially concerned about preserving neighborhood character, development patterns and quality of life, with particular focus on ensuring that new development in neighborhoods be compatible with the surrounding context.
- Support for enhancing the appearance, business mix, and general vitality of commercial districts was found in all neighborhoods.
- Participants valued Brookline's traditional diversity and expressed concern about the increasing cost of housing and the need to provide more affordable housing.
- Transportation and parking management was a high priority in many contexts, including a desire for improving the environment for both pedestrians and bicyclists.
- The need for enhanced maintenance, accessibility, and expansion of open space, both for passive and active recreation, was also a focus of interest.
- The Route 9 corridor was singled out as needing specific attention and strategies to improve both its appearance and function.
- Maintenance improvements to Town facilities and vigilance about litter, sanitation, pollution were highlighted.

- Improved public participation in decision-making processes was seen as a priority by many residents.

Phase II

From a Vision to a Plan

After engagement of the consultant team in early 2002, the planning process moved into a new phase. The CPC, working with the staff and consultants, explored the balance of preservation and change needed in Brookline, agreed on a preliminary vision statement to guide the Plan, identified key priorities for deeper discussion, and developed possible scenarios for Brookline's future.

Identifying and Confirming Town Values and Sense of Identity

From February to May 2002, the consultant team, the CPC, and community participants in planning events worked together to develop a Draft Vision Statement and Goals and to identify Priority Areas and issues meriting special focus and attention in the Comprehensive Plan.

Confirming the Vision and Priority Areas through Community Discussion

In June 2002, the CPC took the draft Vision Statement and Priority Areas to the Brookline community for discussion and review in a Town-Wide Forum and four Open Houses. A set of fact sheets on demographics, housing, transportation, economy, town finances and environmental issues as well as exhibit boards with information on the vision statement, proposed areas of focus for the Comprehensive Plan, and maps with potential directions for the next stage of the planning process were available for inspection and to spark conversation. At all of the events, participants were asked to fill in comment sheets asking for their views on the draft Vision Statement, on preservation and change issues in Brookline, and on the most important issues for the Comprehensive Plan. At the Town-wide Forum, participants worked in small groups to discuss the draft vision and the questions on the comment sheets. The Open Houses were less formal, with individual completion of the comment sheets and unstructured conversations with members of the consultant team, committee members, and Town staff.

Over 100 people completed and returned the comment sheets. The results of the forum and open houses tended to confirm the Vision Statement and the Priority Areas that were developed with the Comprehensive Plan Committee, but they also added nuance, detail, and insight to the discussion. Participants identified the same set of issues as the CPC: affordable housing needs; traffic, transportation and parking management; open space preservation; commercial district support and balancing the commercial and residential tax base; and neighborhood density and design concerns.

Developing and Refining Scenarios

To deepen discussion, the consultants prepared three Scenarios for Brookline's future for consideration by the CPC. The Scenarios were designed to show alter-

native paths to achieving the vision and provide a comparative framework for considering the alternative paths. Each Scenario incorporated varying assumptions for growth, land use, public initiatives and infrastructure investments, policies, strategies, and actions and demonstrated how key choices are interrelated. The three scenarios for discussion were:

Scenario A: Limited Growth / Community Preservation - Incremental

Improvements/Policy Refinements. This scenario outline limited commercial and residential growth through infill projects, and the identification of a number of new policy initiatives, key streetscape, infrastructure, and community enhancement projects. It consisted of:

- Continuity with existing initiatives and programs
- Incremental growth in the residential base and employment
- Limited growth in capital programs and commitments
- Focus on policy and regulatory solutions

Scenario B: Commercial Growth with New Community Initiatives - New Initiatives and

Programs Supported by an Expanded Commercial Tax Base. This scenario outlined higher levels of commercial growth than Scenario A, particularly in the Route 9 corridor. It also outlined new housing initiatives that broadened the scope (and cost) of the Town's affordable housing agenda including the purchase of existing multi-family rental buildings. It consisted of:

- Promotion of commercial growth in order to expand the commercial tax base and fund new initiatives
- Promotion of growth along regional roadways and in primarily transit-served areas
- Support for infill development in established commercial centers

Scenario C: Residential Growth with New Neighborhoods - Models Residential Growth

Needed to Secure 40B Levels of Affordable Development. This scenario outlined a future where the highest priority would be on expanding affordable housing townwide to create up to 750 new affordable units over 5 to 10 years. It consisted of:

- Promotion of significant residential growth to facilitate development of additional affordable housing consistent with state 40B goals – and associated growth in community facilities such as schools to accommodate the needs of new residents
- Establishment of incentives for residential development in existing developed and undeveloped areas

Committee Charrette. An intensive CPC planning workshop, open to the public, was held in October 2002 to critique the alternatives and develop more refined scenarios based on discussion of priorities and tradeoffs. The CPC debated options for affordable housing, open space preservation, commercial districts, transportation management, and other issues, and evaluated the inter-relationships and tradeoffs among these options.

Composite Scenario

The consultants prepared a new scenario based on the refinements and presented it in a report to the CPC, Planning Board, and Board of Selectmen in December 2002.

- *Scenario D: Balanced Growth / Neighborhood Conservation and Community Diversity* – This scenario outlined a future that focussed on the conservation of com-

munity character, while supporting new initiatives and production of affordable housing. All of these efforts would be supported by an expanded commercial tax base This scenario included the following:

- Commercial growth focused primarily in the Route 9 corridor
- Annual creation of at least 25 units of affordable housing townwide
- Initiatives to enhance community connections and preserve neighborhood character

This scenario served as the foundation for the next stage of work.

Establishing Focus Areas: Working Group Meetings

Based on the work undertaken in prior phases, the CPC identified three areas as needing sustained attention in the Comprehensive Plan. These are the areas where controversy is most likely and decision-making is most susceptible to complex tradeoffs: 1) Diversity: Affordable Housing; 2) Quality of Life: Neighborhoods; 3) Balanced Growth: Route 9.

- Each Working Group was composed of CPC members as well as citizens and representatives from relevant Town boards or organizations. The meetings were open to the public and discussions benefited from the attendance by a number of knowledgeable community residents, including Town Meeting Members.
- Each Working Group met four times during January – April 2003 to delve more deeply into policy and strategy choices for each of the Focus Areas.
- The Working Groups produced a set of refined goals, policies and strategies as well as further scenario refinements.

In June 2003, this work was presented for discussion with the CPC and interested members of the public.

Return to the Neighborhoods

To report to the public on the progress of the Comprehensive Plan, the Department of Planning and Community Development and members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee held a series of eight new Neighborhood Forums during April – June 2003 to bring the community up to date and to listen to community reaction and concerns to preliminary ideas emerging from the planning process. The Neighborhood Forums were organized in the same way as those in 2000 and 2001, with the addition of a forum in the Runkle School area. Attendance at these meetings included many people who had not been at previous neighborhood or townwide meetings.

Phase III

Community Review & Discussion of the Preliminary Plan

Based on the work to date, a preliminary Comprehensive Plan was prepared and released for public comment in January 2004. The preliminary Plan provided the Brookline community with an opportunity for further review and comment on the priorities, goals, policies, strategies that make up this Plan. The Brookline community had an opportunity to comment and discuss the Plan through an

extensive public review process extending from January through May 2004. This process focused on four additional public forums held at sites across the Town in April. The Brookline Neighborhood Alliance also held an event on the preliminary Plan, and the Town Meeting Members Association was also helpful in sponsoring events and raising awareness of the preliminary Plan.

The comments received in these forums, which draw over 100 people in all, were outlined in a report to the Comprehensive Plan Committee which also included staff recommendations on how to address concerns that were raised during these forums. The preliminary Plan raised a number of concerns, the most notable of which were related to its format and readability; the impact of proposed recommendations on Brookline's neighborhoods; and the tradeoffs between open space preservation and affordable housing development.

The Committee then decided to break into four subcommittees to look at the possible changes and develop a final document. The next draft of the Brookline Comprehensive Plan came out of that process, and was presented to the Comprehensive Plan Committee in the Fall of 2004.

In November 2004, the Comprehensive Plan Committee sent the final Comprehensive Plan to the Board of Selectmen, completing their formal charge. The Board of Selectmen held a forum to discuss the Comprehensive Plan in December 2004, and the Planning Board approved the plan in January 2005.

Consistency with Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) & Executive Order 418 (EO 418)

This Comprehensive Plan has been drafted in a format that outlines the most significant planning needs and opportunities in the Town for the next 10 years. It is also drafted for consistency with MGL Chapter 41 Section 81D , which outlines what elements should be addressed in a Comprehensive, or Master, Plan. MGL c. 44 s. 81D reads as follows:

"A planning board established in any city or town under section eighty-one A shall make a master plan of such city or town or such part or parts thereof as said board may deem advisable and from time to time may extend or perfect such plan.

Such plan shall be a statement, through text, maps, illustrations or other forms of communication, that is designed to provide a basis for decision making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality. The comprehensive plan shall be internally consistent in its policies, forecasts and standards, and shall include the following elements:

- (1) Goals and policies statement which identifies the goals and policies of the municipality for its future growth and development. Each community shall conduct an interactive public process, to determine community values, goals and to identify patterns of development that will be consistent with these goals.
- (2) Land use plan element which identifies present land use and designates the proposed distribution, location and inter-relationship of public and private land uses. This element shall relate the proposed standards of population density and building intensity to the capacity of land available or planned facilities and services. A land use plan map illustrating the land use policies of the municipality shall be included.
- (3) Housing element which identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted housing needs and objectives including programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing. This element shall identify policies and strategies to provide a balance of local housing opportunities for all citizens.
- (4) Economic development element which identifies policies and strategies for the expansion or stabilization of the local economic base and the promotion of employment opportunities.
- (5) Natural and cultural resources element which provides an inventory of the significant natural, cultural and historic resource areas of the municipality, and policies and strategies for the protection and management of such areas.
- (6) Open space and recreation element which provides an inventory of recreational and resources and open space areas of the municipality, and policies and strategies for the management and protection of such resources and areas.
- (7) Services and facilities element which identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted needs for facilities and services used by the public.

(8) Circulation element which provides an inventory of existing and proposed circulation and transportation systems.

(9) Implementation program element which defines and schedules the specific municipal actions necessary to achieve the objectives of each element of the master or study plan. Scheduled expansion or replacement of public facilities or circulation system components and the anticipated costs and revenues associated with accomplishment of such activities shall be detailed in this element. This element shall specify the process by which the municipality's regulatory structures shall be amended so as to be consistent with the master plan.

Such plan shall be made, and may be added to or changed from time to time, by a majority vote of such planning board and shall be public record. The planning board shall, upon completion of any plan or report, or any change or amendment to a plan or report produced under this section, furnish a copy of such plan or report or amendment thereto, to the department of housing and community development."

The Comprehensive Plan addresses each of these nine issues as follows:

1. *Goals and Policies*: The Comprehensive Plan includes an overall 'Visions of Brookline 2015' and visions for each of the nine elements. It also sets forth goals, policies and strategies in each of the nine elements.

2. *Land Use Plan*: The Land Use and Housing element outlines the majority of issues required in this section. The Neighborhoods and Districts & Town, School and Cultural Facilities elements also provide information on land use.

3. *Housing*: The Affordable Housing & Land Use and Housing elements provide this information.

4. *Economic Development*: The Economic Development elements provides this information.

5. *Natural and Cultural Resources*: The Historic Resources; Natural Resources, Open Space, Parks and Recreation; and Town, School and Cultural Facilities elements provide this information.

6. *Open Space and Recreation*: The Natural Resources, Open Space, Parks and Recreation element provides this information.

7. *Services and Facilities*: The Town, School and Cultural Facilities element provides this information.

8. *Circulation*: The Transportation and Mobility element provides this information, and some additional information is provided in the Route Nine element.

9. *Implementation Program*: The Action Plan will provide this information.

Executive Order 418

This Comprehensive Plan is also designed to be consistent with Executive Order 418 (EO 418) regarding the development of a local Community Development Plan. EO 418 says that a Community Development Plan is the following:

“A ‘community development plan’ is a comprehensive, strategic plan for the future development of a city or town, and shall include, among other things, plans for:

- . where the community will create new housing opportunities;
- . where it will target commercial or industrial economic development (if any);
- . how it will improve its transportation infrastructure (or how its existing infrastructure will handle any growth); and
- . where and how it will preserve open space.”

The Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the requirements of Executive Order 418. It is a comprehensive, strategic plan for the future development of Brookline. It includes a section on how to develop new affordable housing opportunities (the Affordable Housing element) and how to examine the existing neighborhoods for appropriate future housing (the Land Use and Housing element.) It includes a section on the Town’s strategy with respect to commercial or industrial economic development (the Economic Development element). It includes information on how Brookline will improve its transportation infrastructure if needed (the Transportation and Mobility element) as well as a section focused on the issues of the primary regional roadway in Brookline (the Route Nine element). It includes a section on where and how Brookline will preserve open space (the Natural Resources, Open Space, Parks and Recreation element.)

In addition, the Districts and Neighborhoods element provides a strategy for how to “put it all together”, as recommended in the Community Development Plan process.

