

## IX. IMPLEMENTATION

### BACKGROUND

In the summer of 1941, just prior to the United State's involvement in World War II, "A Preliminary Country Life Report for the Town of Lancaster" was distributed<sup>1</sup>, prepared by a town committee. It greatly resembles a master plan, although it is not titled. Just like this *Plan*, it featured a division of the Town into four kinds of policy areas, made future projections, framed goals for the Town and policies for the districts, and then recommended a series of just ten specific actions. The central thread through the document and the actions was preservation of the viability of the Town's agricultural industry in order to preserve the fundamental nature of the Town.

One of the 1941 report's recommendations was for the adoption of zoning. Nine years elapsed between the report's publication and the town's adoption of zoning in 1950. None of the nine remaining recommendations, which included such familiar ideas as creation of a recreation center for young people, appear to have been implemented. However, if that 1941 report importantly contributed to the climate of opinion that supported adoption of zoning in 1950, then perhaps the effort of the study was well justified.

Much has changed since 1941, including our understanding of how to improve the chances of achieving implementation of planning proposals. Plan documents don't implement themselves. Implementation of each specific action item requires an initiator, which can be an individual or an organization, in or outside of Town government, who brings it forward for action efforts. It also requires a proposal developer, again an individual or an organization, able to move the proposal forward from being only a briefly outlined direction into an actionable item, ready for a town meeting warrant or other decision-making point.

Implementation ideally doesn't await final completion of a comprehensive plan, even though the essence of such plans is to make connections across topical areas. Much can be gained from early action through how that can improve understanding and minimize the "propose/dispose" dichotomy which too often damages plan accomplishments

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<sup>1</sup> Country Life Committee of Lancaster, "A Preliminary Country Life Report for the Town of Lancaster," August, 1941.

Reflecting that recognition, this Master Plan program has already included a number of steps towards implementation. First, several action items were taken to the first level of development as actionable items early in the program in order to meet requirements of a funding source, to gain understanding about the topics, and to address current concerns. As a result, first drafts of a number of items have been prepared. They include revised versions of Flexible Development and Major Residential Development provisions, new inclusionary zoning, earth products removal control, and town center zoning provisions. They also include a cluster of items related to support for agriculture: creation of an Agricultural Commission, a Right to Farm bylaw, zoning provisions for Agricultural Protection and Resource Protection.

Further, the program has budgeted time and funds for the initial development of a few further items towards being at an actionable level. The selection of those will be made reflecting the understanding hoped to be gained through the public hearing on this plan.

Choices also need to be made regarding how to structure the process for *Plan* implementation beyond the currently committed program. Some communities leave implementation initiatives to their planning boards. Some others create a special Plan Implementation Committee which acts as an initiator and developer for actions outlined in the plan.

Either a planning board or a special committee can and should also act as an advocate for policies and perspectives as well as initiating actions on specific proposals. Such should include long range and comprehensive viewpoints being taken on actions over time. The Board or committee should also act to gain incorporation of the learning from later actions into revisions to the Master Plan, making it truly the dynamic instrument which it should be.

It is often noted by planners that the half-life of a comprehensive plan is about five years. Comprehensive plan updates each five years are mandated by many states, including all New England states other than Massachusetts, and has been proposed by those seeking reform of Massachusetts planning law. Five-year updates of open space and recreation plans is required for state or federal grant eligibility for those topics. The American Planning Association's model for state planning legislation calls for a five-year major review of local comprehensive plans and their complete replacement after ten years. That further reinforces the concept of a master plan as a dynamic reference, not a static one.

To help in consideration of how to move forward with further implementation steps, the following table lists the action items currently contained in the *Master Plan*, noting the chapter of the *Plan* in which it is first suggested (some are repeatedly suggested, but not all repetitions are listed).

should be the lead in initiating and developing those actions. Actions upon which other actions depend or which are critical to a current issue are entered in boldface type. That doesn't mean that those are the most important actions, but rather just that delay for them could prove to be more costly than for others.

The table also indicates in the third column a tentative identification of the organization which

**LANCASTER MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

(**Boldface type** denotes actions upon which others depend or are critical to a current issue).

ACTION	CHAPTER	LEAD
<b>ORGANIZATION AND FINANCE</b>		
<b>Explore organizational change re sewerage.</b>	<b>Community Facilities</b>	<b>Selectmen</b>
<b>Create a Housing Partnership</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Selectmen</b>
<b>Create an Economic Development Task Force</b>	<b>Economic Develop</b>	<b>Selectmen</b>
<b>Revise capital planning to explicitly reflect adopted plans.</b>	<b>Land use</b>	<b>Selectmen</b>
<b>Revisit participation in the Community Preservation Act</b>	<b>Housing</b>	<b>Selectmen</b>
Create an Open Space and Recreation Coordinating Committee	OS, NR, Recreation	Selectmen
Assign above Committee to recommend use for available Town land.	OS, NR, Recreation	Selectmen
Adopt policy: no-degradation of pedestrian access to be allowed to result from road construction	Circulation	Selectmen
Expand recycling	Community Facilities	Selectmen
Explore joining a regional consortium for housing funding.	Housing	Planning Board
<b>FACILITIES AND OTHER EXPENDITURES</b>		
<b>Pursue Mary Rowlandson school expansion</b>	<b>Community Facilities</b>	<b>School Dept</b>
Reconstruct key intersections	Circulation	DPW
Railroad crossing gates	Circulation	DPW
Sidewalks on all major roads	Community Facilities	DPW
Tercentenary (or other) Building for a senior/community center	Community Facilities	Selectmen
Town Hall improvements	Community Facilities	Selectmen
Library improvements	Community Facilities	Selectmen
Other improvements.	Community Facilities	Selectmen
Explore creation of a Lancaster history museum	Historic, cultural	Historic Commission
Pursue various land acquisitions and restrictions	OS, NR, recreation	Conservation Comm
Improve trails and related facilities	OS, NR, recreation	Conservation Comm
Develop Nashua River canoe launch off Bolton Road	OS, NR, recreation	Conservation Comm
Pursue the NRWA plan's proposals	OS, NR, recreation	Conservation Comm
Develop new recreation fields	OS, NR, recreation	Recreation Comm
Approach MA Youth Soccer re occasional Town use	OS, NR, recreation	Recreation Comm
Improve Town beach facilities & functions	OS, NR, recreation	Recreation Comm
<b>STUDIES AND PLANS</b>		
<b>Resolve wastewater management for North Lancaster</b>	<b>Land use</b>	<b>Selectmen</b>
<b>Study leveraging the Route 2/Rte 70 aggregation's magnet.</b>	<b>Economic Develop</b>	<b>Econ Dev Task Force</b>
<b>Integrate zoning &amp; infrastructure planning along Route 2</b>	<b>Economic Develop</b>	<b>Planning Board</b>

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>LEAD</b>
<b>Pursue Town Center, seek zoning, do other studies.</b>	<b>Land use</b>	<b>Planning Board</b>
Prepare and follow a Planned Housing Production Plan.	Housing	Planning Board
Explore telecommunications as a tool for economic development.	Economic Develop	Planning Board
Explore new road alignments.	Circulation	Selectmen
Explore a gym and recreation center	OS, NR, recreation	Selectmen
Explore water supply and distribution improvements	Community Facilities	DPW
Pursue sewerage system Infiltration & Inflow	Community Facilities	DPW
Devise strategies for historic property preventive maintenance.	Historic, cultural	Historic Commission
Explore historic bridges as historic attractions	Historic, cultural	Historic Commission
<b>LAND USE REGULATIONS</b>		
<b>Make trip generation a permit consideration under zoning.</b>	<b>Circulation</b>	<b>Planning Board</b>
<b>Parking buffer controls in zoning.</b>	<b>Circulation</b>	<b>Planning Board</b>
<b>Adopt Earth Products Overlay</b>	<b>Land use, Ec Dev</b>	<b>Planning Board</b>
<b>Get town meeting vote on Policy Areas</b>	<b>Land use</b>	<b>Planning Board</b>
<b>Modernize regulations for the Enterprise Areas</b>	<b>Land use, Ec Dev</b>	<b>Planning Board</b>
Develop context-sensitive subdivision regulation standards	Circulation	Planning Board
Revise road classifications under zoning.	Circulation	Planning Board
Pursue bike accommodations.	Circulation	Planning Board
Oblige developments to provide pedestrian & bike accommodations.	Circulation	Planning Board
Explore “inclusionary” approaches	Housing, Land use	Planning Board
Explore expanding locations allowing multi-family housing.	Housing, Econ Dev, Land use	Planning Board
Update multifamily zoning rules.	Housing, Land use	Planning Board
Explore village overlay district.	Housing, Land use	Planning Board
Adopt Estate Preservation rules.	Housing	Planning Board
Authorize accessory dwelling units	Housing	Planning Board
Reconsider rate of development provisions.	Housing	Planning Board
Adopt continuing housing affordability rules.	Housing	Planning Board
Adopt means of assuring housing energy affordability.	Housing	Planning Board
Adopt agriculture-friendly zoning changes.	Land use, Econ Dev	Planning Board
Reconsider zoning rules and mapping for business town-wide.	Land use, Econ Dev	Planning Board
Revise Subdivision Regulations	Land use	Planning Board
Undertake “Dover Amendment” zoning enhancement re “exempt” institutional uses.	Land use	Planning Board
Revise site plan criteria, give business development “points” for creating open or recreation space.	OS, NR, recreation	Planning Board
<b>GENERAL REGULATIONS</b>		
<b>Explore water demand management approaches</b>	<b>Community Facilities</b>	<b>DPW</b>
Designate truck routes	Circulation	DPW
Recalibrate water fees so developers provide mitigation funds for water system improvements.	Community Facilities	DPW
Pursue a local historic district.	Historic, cultural	Study Committee
Adopt demolition-delay bylaw	Housing	Historic Commission
<b>CONTINUING EFFORTS</b>		
<b>Safety-oriented enforcement, education, exhortation</b>	<b>Circulation</b>	<b>Selectmen</b>
“Adopt-a-street” program	Circulation	Selectmen

ACTION	CHAPTER	LEAD
Enhance communication between town & citizens	Community Facilities	Selectmen
Create a “partnership” approach to development.	Land Use	Selectmen
Allow Conservation & Recreation Commissions priority for Town-owned lands before private use	OS, NR, Recreation	Selectmen
Work with MRPC re regional efforts at trip reduction.	Circulation	MRPC reps
Link business and the natural and cultural landscape.	Economic Develop	Econ Dev Task Force
Public education re preservation	Historic, cultural	Historic Commission
Seek grants or other funds to preserve cemeteries and bridges.	Historic, cultural	Historic Commission
Encourage participation in the APR program.	OS, NR, Recreation	Conservation Comm

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