Town of Westport Master Plan Public Workshop #2 Summary

The Westport Master Plan Committee (MPC) hosted the first public workshop on the Master Plan Update on Saturday, September 27, 2014 from 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM at the Westport Public Library. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce and gain public input on three of the ten Master Plan elements:

- Economic Development;
- Housing; and
- Transportation and Circulation.

An interactive break-out exercise was used to elicit community input regarding local challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to these elements. Eleven (11) participants registered on the sign-in sheets representing a variety of Westport stakeholders. The following is a summary of the feedback received at the workshop.

Registration (9:00 – 9:20 AM)

As participants arrived at the workshop, they were greeted by the Town Planner, members of the MPC and/or the consultant team from the Horsley Witten Group, Inc. (HW). Agendas, nametags, and handouts were provided as they signed in at the registration table. Refreshments were donated by the MPC members. There were posters showing the community survey results and community maps on display for participants to view during this time as well.

Opening Remarks and Presentation (9:20 – 10:00 AM)

Jim Hartnett, Westport's Town Planner, greeted the participants and asked Elaine Ostroff, member of the Planning Board and Chair of the MPC provided an introduction to the Master Plan Workshop, which included a summary of the work that has been done by the MPC to date and future meetings. The Town's consultant, HW was introduced and their role in the process, facilitating the four public workshops that will take place as part of the Master Plan update.

HW then provided a presentation, which included: an overview of the Master Plan Update process; a summary of the three elements that were the focus of this workshop (Economic Development, Housing and Transportation and Circulation); and an introduction to the break-out exercise.

The presentation on the overview of the Master Plan update process included: the background and purpose of the Community Master Plan; some example projects that came out of the 2004 Master Plan; and the tasks to accomplish for updating the Master Plan.

The next portion of the presentation "set the stage" for the late morning break-out exercise by providing a summary of the challenges and opportunities related to each of the three focus elements. The draft goals and objectives related to each element were also briefly presented. HW then introduced the purpose and directions for the break-out exercise itself.

Break-out Exercises (10:00 – 11:30 AM)

Because of the small group, participants were asked to divide themselves into two break-out groups and all three topics were discussed.

HW facilitators guided each break-out group through a discussion of challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to each of the three focus elements. Each topic was addressed individually. For each topic, the group was asked two questions:

- 1. What are the top challenges and opportunities related to [Economic Development, Housing or Transportation and Circulation]?
- 2. Are these challenges and opportunities addressed sufficiently and accurately by the proposed Master Plan goals and objectives or do you have any suggested edits or additions?

Each question was allotted approximately 30 minutes for discussion of each topic. After the facilitator read the first question aloud, group members worked individually for a few minutes to write down their thoughts on a worksheet. These worksheets would be collected at the end of the workshop. Each group member was then provided the opportunity to share one idea, noting that their other ideas written down would also be considered. If time allowed, group members provided additional ideas after each person shared their first idea. Responses were recorded on a flipchart.

This process was repeated for the second question. Instead of writing responses on the flipchart, a "bubble diagram" was used. The bubble diagram poster-size in the center of the table, and included key phrases that described each goal and objective. Word-smithing of the goals and objectives themselves was discouraged and the group focused on determining whether any larger issues, goals or objectives were absent. Responses were noted on the bubble diagrams.

The following includes a summary of the public input received through the break-out exercises for each element.

Economic Development

Group #1 Flipchart

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Existing strip commercial development
- Lack of tax revenue
- Water and sewer
 - o Low tax rate implications and tax trade off
 - Lack of infrastructure
- Understanding the private sector (ROI)

- Monetize without compromise
- There is no cultural brand.
- There is no infrastructure for micro enterprises, such as capital and training.
- Age demographic
- NIMBY culture
- School system reputation
- Run government more like a business
- Town landing
- Social divide
- Housing costs
- Zoning compatibility between districts

Opportunities

- Proximity to UMASS and the hospital and medical school
- Enhance and reinforce agriculture and "farm to table"
- There is an culture of accepting economic development
- Are there opportunities for fishing spinoffs?
- Marketing Westport's assets
- There is a good foundation of arts and culture.
- Aquaculture industries
- Transportation network is pretty good.
- Is the town's location an asset?
- Cultural legacy
- Marine
- Food science
- Positive image with investors: "We make it here."
- Culture of creators
- Large business, small fiscal impact
- Town landing
- Seasonal real estate, service people: demand will rise
- Promote costs
- Connect generations
- Existing jobs, people and families

Group #2 Flipchart

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- The town lacks services, land and infrastructure for economic development water and sewer
- There is no land for an industrial park. Zoning is restrictive, no water and sewer service.

- The town has not defined what type of economic development is right for Westport, a small community. What fits? What's happening now? Do we keep the status quo?
- Lack of social services for the aging population
- Understanding the Town's role in economic development activities, promoting economic development in Westport.

Opportunities

- Route 6 has water and sewer from Fall River, access to fiberoptics. However, the developer has to pay to access.
- People working from home only need internet and no other facilities (e.g. water/sewer)
- Need to rethink what is here, the types of businesses
- Waterfront and fishing are there opportunities to have support businesses like refrigeration? Right now the product leaves town for processing.
- The town to market the "Westport" brand.
- Access to the water.
- Regional opportunities available to Westport: ATMC in Fall River.
- The Science and Technology overlay district exists on Route 6 to attract the types of start-ups coming out of ATMC.
- What types of funding opportunities are out there?
- Business to Business
- Solar farm, doesn't require water and sewer but uncertain how much money comes into town and does not add jobs – no employees onsite.

Comments on Draft Goals and Objectives (combined from both groups)

- Under Goal 1. *Pursue and develop commerce*, the town needs to clearly define what economic development means to Westport.
- Under Objective 1.1. Expand administrative capabilities to support economic development, include cross-departmental support.



Housing

Group #1 Flipchart

General Comments

- Should we reduce from 60 to 40?
- There needs to be more acceptance of multi-family projects and affordability.
- Is there a regional solution?
- Balance between wage and eligibility?

Challenges and Opportunities

<u>Challenges</u>

- Low income requires subsidy
- Lack of small accessible housing (mobility, etc.)
- Lack of accessible neighborhoods, being walkable
- Affordable homes are needed for elderly
- Land and housing is expensive.
- Low variety, even for moderate income \$50,000 \$70,000
- Moderate affordable
- Package septic systems: why don't we see more of these?
- Housing are not being past to other family members. Why? Is it taxes?
- Developers of multi-family won't build here.
- Fall River and New Bedford are absorbing all the families for affordability
- Perception of affordable
- 10% requirement of 40B poor design

Opportunities

- Low income requires subsidy
- Central Village: zoning isn't working for density
- Westport Factory
- North Village Overlay: allows up to 50 units, including rental
- Lots of land, but is it good land?
- Package septic systems: why don't we see more of these?
- Mixed use area vs. zoning
- Co-housing models, like Sandy Wood in Tiverton, RI
- High income jobs
- Modify zoning with inclusionary requirement, but there is the septic issue
- There are two apartment complexes: Oak Bridge and Edgewater

Group #2 Flipchart

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- There is a need for veterans housing.
- There is no alternative to downsize. There are some in the North End on Main Road, but not adequate. There are no amenities, no connection to community or the outdoors.
- NIMBYism
- Zoning does not encourage connections between neighborhoods.
- Lack of public water and sewer systems
- Limited land
- There are empty town buildings and vacant town-owned land that could be used to develop affordable housing, but it is not a priority of the town's executive body. Larger projects become a priority.
- In addressing the need for water and sewer: public wells require a lot of land.
- Seasonal housing should be included.
- Need also to develop housing that is affordable, which requires a spectrum of housing types. This requires smaller lots, which can incorporate open space.
- The town's population is aging and there are no young families. Is that sustainable?
- Town needs to understand who is building homes and who is buying homes in Westport, and why.
- There is a lack of units that are accessible to those with disabilities.

Opportunities

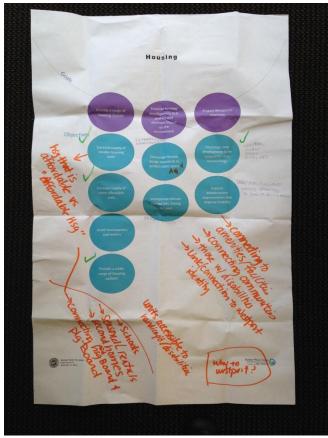
- The town has an Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
- Put affordable housing everywhere so it isn't concentrated in one place.
- Connect neighborhoods with the larger community.
- New construction that has a sense of "Westport" in its character, identity, and placemaking. This adds value.
- Increased density can increase neighborliness, particularly open space preservation where homes are concentrated on one part and the rest left as open space.
- Natural resources
- Educate public about what is affordable housing and who lives in affordable units
- Second homes are increasing. There is less impact on town services, and could lead to rentals. Is there a market for it?
- There are empty town buildings and vacant town-owned land that could be used to develop affordable housing.

Comments on Draft Goals and Objectives (combined from both groups)

• Objective 1.1. *Increase supply of smaller housing units*. There needs to be equal emphasis on homes that are "affordable" (smaller units, smaller lots, etc.) and "affordable"

housing" that meets the mission of the Westport Affordable Housing Trust (Objective 1.2). Units that are accessible to those with disabilities should also be included in both these objectives.

- Objective 1.2. *Increase the supply of more affordable units*. There should be more connections between the Westport Affordable Housing Trust and the Planning Board.
- Objective 1.4. *Provide a wider range of housing options*. The group stressed the need to understand why people move to Westport, or do not.
- Objective 2.1. Encourage flexible design standards to protect open space. The town should also use this approach in protecting agricultural lands, where subdivisions allow activities can continue.
- Objective 2.2. *Incorporate climate change into Zoning By laws*. Also consider affordability for homeowners in new requirements.
- Objective 3.1. Encourage new development to be compatible with surroundings. The town should consider Central Village design guidelines.



• Objective 3.2. Support infrastructure improvements that improve livability. Connecting with the Westport itself and other neighborhoods through physical improvements as well as civically and socially. Improvements should also be accessible to those with disabilities. The town needs to understand the tradeoffs of denser development, and the services needed.

Transportation and Circulation

Group #1 Flipchart

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Lack of pedestrian safety
- Lack of transit, but not set up for it
- Medical center on Route 177 needs improvements. There are a lot of accidents.
- Lack of signage for basic rules
- Rate of improvements doesn't match traffic.
- Route 177 needs better access management.

- Zoning facilitates dead ends. Future connections are not covered (Beach Avenue) and access management is not considered (Route 177).
- Vegetation/striping

Opportunities

- Aging population is pent up demand for transit
- Clover leaf at I-195/Route 6/Route 88 is under appreciated.
- There are no opportunities.
- Route 88 protects residential development and has easy access.
- Traffic is good, but needs management.
- Speed control speeding is bad for walking and biking. More enforcement is needed.

Group #2 Flipchart

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- Lack of public transit expect on Route 6.
- SRTA service on Route 6 needs improvements/awareness. There is no park and ride.
- There is growing demand for public transit with changing demographics and for those with disabilities.
- It is hard to walk and bike on local roads. Vegetation needs maintenance along roadways to increase shoulder for walking and biking.
- The town attracts road races (cyclists) that don't necessarily lead to benefits for the town, and adds to safety problems.
- Adding bike infrastructure (lanes, etc.) changes the character of the road.
- Lower speed limits on town local roads plus increased enforcement.
- Lack of options for the aging/elderly and those with disabilities on getting to appointments. Options focus on local appointments and not those out of town.
- Central Village is not safe for pedestrians and bikes.
- Westport is a car-oriented community. It's spread out.

Opportunities

- Routes 88, 6 and 177 are well connected and opportunities for development.
- Bicycle path along Route 88 ROW, north to south can connect to the Providence-to-Cape Cod bikeway being planned. It could also serve commuters to Fall River.
- Are school buses/routes an opportunity to include the elderly?
- Route 88 saved Westport. It saved Main Road and Horseneck Road.
- Is there an opportunity to encourage traffic to Route 177 from Old County Road? Commuters to UMAS. And East-West main throughway is needed.
- Water transportation alternatives
- Are mini-ports, used to divert barges, an opportunity? Route 88 is a large roadway to handle trucking.

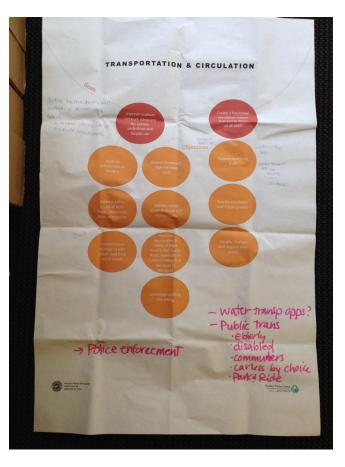
- Increase opportunities to cross Route 88.
- Park and ride stops along Route 88 for cyclists/shuttles to local roads
- The town is lucky to have 3 state-maintained roads.
- The Council on Aging has expanded its transportation options, but still limited.
- Rural Uber? Rideshare opportunities for local and regional destinations (e.g. doctor's appointments)
- Conservation land could incorporate bike and walking paths, making connections between places, like schools. Surfaces need to be wide enough and materials that are smooth.
- Route 88 could be used as a bus corridor, with park-and-rides at lights within the easement. Summer bus shuttle is an option.

Comments on Draft Goals and Objectives (combined from both groups)

• Under Goal 2, Create a functional circulation system that meets the needs of all users, another objective needs to be added to explore public transportation in a variety of forms,

including park and rides on Route 6 for the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA), seasonal and/or commuter shuttle service within Westport, transit services for seniors, transit services for persons with disabilities, and those who wish to be carless by choice. An action item might also be coordination with SRTA to increase outreach in the community and better information and improved facilities at existing bus stops to encourage usage.

- Under Goal 2, the Town should be an objective that considers water transportation alternatives.
- Under Objective 2.1. Support multi-use trails, ensure outreach/education efforts, "Know before you go," about access and usage of trails/properties. The physical barriers some users by encounter to these trails and sites should also be explored and how to overcome them.



Closing (11:30 AM – 12:30 PM)

After the break-out exercises, participants convened into a general session. HW facilitators reported out to participants on the common themes that were discussed among their groups. Jim Hartnett, Westport Town Planner, then closed the meeting, thanking the public for coming to the workshop and for providing valuable input for the plan. Participants were encouraged to contact the Planning Department, Planning Board, or Master Plan Committee with any follow up

uestions or comments. Participants were also invited to attend the next two Master Plan public workshops, which will be held October 25 th and November 15 th .	2



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DIFFERING SOCIAL /ECONOMIC VISIONS CHALLENGES

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Name (optional):	Michael	P	Sullivan	Contact phone/email (optional): 508.97/-0 110	
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TOWN OF WESTPORT MASTER PLAN PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2 HOUSE ECO POUSIONES

Name (optional): Contact phone/email (optional):
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Name (optional):	JIM	WHINN	Contact phone/email (optional): _	774-930	-2801

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We would like to better understand the challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to housing in Westport. Follow along with the facilitator at your table to answer two questions. Please leave this worksheet with your answers at the sign-in table.

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Instructions

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ATTACHMENT B – Worksheets: Housing

Name (optional): William Rands Contact phone/email (optional): William rus & quailacery
Instructions We would like to better understand the challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to housing in Westport. Follow along with the facilitator at your table to answer two questions. Please leave this worksheet with your answers at the sign-in table.
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(1) Water Services, Mini Port/Leading + Onloading Water Taxi
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Economic Development ?
Water services (2) Housing as economic development

Name (optional): ARAY Contact phone/email (optional): 617.270.3912
Instructions We would like to better understand the challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to housing in Westport. Follow along with the facilitator at your table to answer two questions. Please leave this worksheet with your answers at the sign-in table.
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Name (optional):	JIM	WHITIN	Contact phone/email (optional): _	774-950-5801
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We would like to better understand the challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to housing in Westport. Follow along with the facilitator at your table to answer two questions. Please leave this worksheet with your answers at the sign-in table.

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TOWN OF WESTPORT HOUSING

MASTER PLAN PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2

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Name (optional):	JIM	COYNE	Contact phone/email (optional)	UCJZ86@ YAHOR
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Instructions

We would like to better understand the challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to economic development in Westport. Follow along with the facilitator at your table to answer two questions. Please leave this worksheet with your answers at the sign-in table.

answers at the sign-in table.
1. What are the top local challenges and opportunities related to economic development?
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Name (optional):	Contact phone/email (optional):
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Contact phone/email (optional):

We would like to better understand the challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to economic development in Westport. Follow along with the facilitator at your table to answer two questions. Please leave this worksheet with your answers at the sign-in table.
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Name (optional):

Instructions



Name (optional): Contact phone/email (optional):
Instructions We would like to better understand the challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to housing in Westport. Follow along with the facilitator at your table to answer two questions. Please leave this worksheet with your answers at the sign-in table.
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HOUSING

Name (optional): KOSC MEGO	Contact phone/email (optional): 508-837-8384
	wstptrose@aol.com
	portunities, goals and objectives related to housing in Westport. er two questions. Please leave this worksheet with your answers at
	TRANSPORTATION
1. What are the top local challenges and opportunit	
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TOWN OF WESTPORT MASTER PLAN PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2 TOWN OF WESTPORT TRANSPORTATION

Name (optional): TIM WHITN Contact phone/email (optional): 774-930-5801
Instructions We would like to better understand the challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to housing in Westport. Follow along with the facilitator at your table to answer two questions. Please leave this worksheet with your answers at the sign-in table.
1. What are the top local challenges and opportunities related to housing?
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2) NO - Public TRANSPORT of TAXI Sewer. What difficult for series, harbupyed, uncounsely by the

TRAFFIC

Name (optional): \frac{1\ta freff}{\text{Contact phone/email (optional):}}
Instructions We would like to better understand the challenges, opportunities, goals and objectives related to housing in Westport. Follow along with the facilitator at your table to answer two questions. Please leave this worksheet with your answers at the sign-in table.
1. What are the top local challenges and opportunities related to housing?
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