

Town of Windham

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MEMO

DATE: February 2, 2015

TO: Comprehensive Plan Review Team
FROM: Ben Smith, Planning Director *BUS*
Cc: Mark Eyerman, Planning Decisions
Amanda Lessard, Planner

RE: Revised Draft – Vision Statement

At the last Review Team meeting on January 22, 2015, the group spent much of the meeting discussing the draft vision statement presented. Based on feedback from that meeting, and feedback received in office and by email, I have revised the draft vision and included both a red-lined version, so you can see the changes from the previous version, and a clean copy that is easier to read.

A summary of the changes is included here:

- No changes made to the Core Values section
- Addition of schools/education community, active living, and support of arts and cultural events in the Vision for Windham (per Mike Duffy's draft)
- Breaking area/district visions out from the "main" vision. I don't know how this will translate into a final plan document, but I did this in recognition of the critique that the Vision for Windham was too long.
- Changed "true town center" in the North Windham Section to "new type of center" as this language was a sticky point for several members of the Review Team.
- Added section "Vision for Gateways into Windham" per Dave Nadeau's suggestion.
- Tightened up language by deleting some of the detailed lists and run on sentences.

I have also included my email to the Review Team dated January 29, which gives some of the guiding principles that I have held in mind when making the suggested revisions.

From: Ben Smith
Sent: Thursday, January 29, 2015 12:20 PM
To: Allan Phinney; Amanda L. Lessard (allessard@windhammaine.us); Dave Lavigne; Dave Nadeau; David Tobin; Frayla Schoerfeld; Gene Tanguay; John Eddy; Ken Grondin; Lisa; Liz Wisecup; Marge Govoni; Mike Duffy; Patrick Corey; Shaun Morrison; Sparky Hurgin; Tony Searles
Cc: 'Mark Eyerman'
Subject: FW: comp plan
Attachments: Michael Duffy_FW_Windham Vision Statement.pdf

Good morning, Review Team Members –

I am writing to confirm that our next meeting is one week from today - Thursday, February 5, at 7:00 at the RSU Superintendent's building again. For those that weren't at the last meeting, the group OK'd the public participation outline with a couple amendments, and spent most of the meeting (about an hour and a half) discussing the draft Core Values and the draft Vision Statement.

The goal of the meeting on February 5 is to finalize discussion of the draft Vision Statement. Discussion last week was wide ranging, but kept coming back to the length of the statement itself, and the specific part of the vision regarding North Windham.

To answer a key question raised at the meeting, the 21st Century Downtown Master Plan for North Windham is a district land use and transportation plan, which had its own public process and was adopted by the Council in January 2013. One of the implementation items that was discussed early on by the Council and the plan's Advisory Committee was for the 21st Century Plan to be incorporated into the Town's Comprehensive Plan. This can be done by reference or including the plan as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan. The Executive Summary of the 21st Century Plan was included in Mark's memo summarizing public input to date for the January 22 meeting, and the full plan can be viewed by visiting the [21st Century Plan web site by clicking](#) here – it would be helpful if you could find time to review this plan prior to the meeting next week.

I will be revising the draft Vision Statement based on comments at the meeting and the written suggestions from Mike Duffy (attached), Dave Tobin, and Liz Wisecup (see email below). My aim is to post a revised draft in a meeting packet for you on Monday.

As I go through that process, and as you think about the Vision ahead of the meeting next week, please know that I am using the following as guiding principles when it comes to the draft Vision Statement:

- A vision statement should create a picture in the reader's mind about what it will be like live or work or visit Windham in the future. It is descriptive, it is narrative, and it represents our best hopes for Windham over the next 10-15 years. It is the "goal post in the distance" that all the major goals and policy recommendations in the Plan should relate to, and through their implementation, move us closer to realizing the stated vision.
- If there's anywhere in the Plan to express a little starry-eyed idealism, it is in the Vision Statement! You have permission to dream about the best Windham you can imagine 10-15 years in the future!

- This is a bit of a counterpoint to the statement above, but the Vision must not be so far out there that there is no hope of ever getting to that goal post in the distance. It has to be realistic and specific enough to inspire action. I would argue that a vision statement that contains too many very general or pie-in-the-sky type of statements that no one can argue with will not serve us well as we develop the rest of the Plan.
- We all know we're not planning in a vacuum. We are building on a history of planning in Windham that includes all of the plans you received electronically at the first meeting in October (including the current 2003 Comprehensive Plan and the 21st Century Plan and many others). In addition, we also have more information right now about the views, values, preferences and attitudes of Windham community members that at any point in the past – again, see the summary of public input Mark put together for the last packet. Our draft Vision Statement should rely on that input.

Please note that I have scheduled some time on the Town Council's agenda for the meeting of February 10, but this is tentative pending the outcome of our discussion next week. If we end our meeting on February 5 with a draft vision statement we can all be supportive of, my goal with the Council is to give them a face-to-face update on our progress so far, make sure that they are on board with the draft vision statement. At that point we will have the green light to launch into the next phase of the planning – drafting and reviewing chapters of the plan. Your attendance at the Council meeting on the 10th is not required (except for Council Chair Dave Nadeau!) but it would be appreciated as a show of support.

Finally, I wanted to note that there were only 8 Review Team members at the meeting last week. Again, I know that no one is going to have perfect attendance and that's ok. If you cannot make the meeting next Thursday, please let me know. If you were not at the last meeting, or can't attend next week, I would be interested in hearing your thoughts on the draft that was presented last week, as well as any suggestions you might have. Please call or stop by the office to discuss, or simply send an email – this is an important step in the process, and we need to hear from you!

Thanks,
Ben

PS – If you are interested in looking at other comprehensive plan vision statements, please refer to Reference Materials disk or flash drive you picked up at our first meeting on Sept 25, 2013, or Mark's memo dated 10/6/13 that was in the meeting packet for the October 10, 2013.

Ben Smith, AICP
Planning Director
Town of Windham

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NOTICE: Under Maine's Freedom of Access ("Right to Know") law, documents – including emails – in the possession of public officials about town business are considered public records. This means if anyone asks to see it, we are required to provide it. There are very few exceptions. We welcome citizen comments and want to hear

from our constituents, but please keep in mind that what you write in an email is not private and will be made available to any interested party.

From: LWisecup@aol.com [mailto:LWisecup@aol.com]
Sent: Monday, January 26, 2015 3:41 PM
To: Ben Smith
Subject: Fwd: comp plan

From: LWisecup@aol.com
To: bwsmith@windhamme.us
CC: dtobin4062@aol.com
Sent: 1/26/2015 3:34:20 P.M. Eastern Standard Time
Subj: comp plan

Hi Ben, Read and reread the material I picked up. I don't think that some of the stuff in the lengthy vision statement is good .I can say more about that at the meeting. I'm not a good typist so beware. What I did for this first vision statement was to use the words that were underlined in the value statement of what the residents said they valued. The second one is a watered down version of the vision statement that Mark wrote.Can you send the below to the other committee members please. Thanks

One Idea for a vision statement taken from the values and vision statement(.My personal preference.)

Windham values its accessibility and convenience to both a major city and the Lakes Region .It will continue to embrace its vibrant and rural roots to balance the preservation of open space, farms, scenic vistas, forested land and recreational land while growing clean businesses that will attract quality/good paying jobs in a fiscally responsible manner. It will protect its natural resources,respect diversity,offer quality education, offer varied and affordable housing and maintain its strong sense of community with opportunities for all ages.

second idea for vision taken downsized from mark's statement.

Windham is a proud and progressive town where people of all ages can have productive and fulfilling opportunities while caring for each other and celebrating our heritage. We respect our diversity.

Windham will continue to grow while balancing our need for open space, agricultural space, recreational space, and business growth. The North Windham area will be the focus area for more commercial activity and more diversified job opportunities. It will continue to be enhanced to be a destination for the Lakes Region area .Windham Center will continue to be the civic center of the town with the schools and municipal facilities .Windham's rural areas have their value in the residents desire for the "rural feel" The community will work with land owners and none profits to protect the most desired open spaces.

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Values and Vision

Core Values

During the discussions about the future of Windham, a number of “values” emerged over and over again. These core values represent what the residents of our Town feel strongly about – what is important to them about Windham as a community.

- Open fields, forested land, and working farms are important to residents. These resources are valued for the recreational, scenic, and quality of place benefits they provide. These lands provide a connection to Windham’s rural past as well as a bridge to the future. As Windham continues to grow and develop, it is imperative that the most important of these areas be preserved for the future.
- Residents value the accessibility and convenience that Windham provides. At a regional level, this means the ease of access to Portland and the amenities of the Lakes Region and White Mountains. On a local level, it means the convenience of local shopping, dining, services, and entertainment as well as access to nature, trails and the water, such as the Mountain Division Trail and Dundee Park.
- Residents appreciate that Windham is a growing regional jobs center and recognize the need for investments to enhance this regional economic role and to increase and diversify the job opportunities found here.
- Residents value that Town services are provided in a fiscally responsible manner. At the same time they recognize that the Town must make targeted investments in roads and other infrastructure to enhance the quality of life for residents and to support economic and job growth, while being mindful of the property tax implications of these investments.
- Windham is, and should continue to be, a community for people of all ages and economic means. More diversity in housing types will serve Windham well and maintain a diversity of ages and income levels in the community. Single family homes will continue to be the predominate style of residential development in Windham, but there is a recognition that building on smaller lots and building more apartments, townhouses, and senior housing in proximity to the existing built-up areas will add to the economic vitality and community life of areas like North Windham and South Windham Village.
- Residents value Windham’s heritage and its rural roots and want to assure that the connections to its past are both preserved and celebrated.

Vision Statement

A key element of the Town's Comprehensive Plan is the Community Vision. The Vision sets out a picture of what we want Windham to be 10, 15, or even 20 years in the future. The Vision is forward looking – it is a statement of what we want - not what currently is. The Vision is intended to set an overall direction for the future of the community that then guides the development of the balance of the Comprehensive Plan. Here is our vision for Windham in 2025-2030:

Our Vision for Windham

Windham continues to evolve as a community. We are more than a collection of subdivisions and shopping centers and business parks. We are more than a “gateway” to somewhere else, and we are more than a regional convenience center. We are a proud, progressive town. We are a town where young families and seniors can find community and live healthy, fun and engaging lives. We are a growing, exciting community that still retains the qualities of a small town. We take care of each other and we respect and celebrate our heritage. We support our schools, and the community that they create. We encourage active living at all ages to support physical and mental health. We promote and support local arts and cultural events. We have learned from our past and we now want to be an even better community – a community where we are proud to say “I live in Windham” or “My business is located in Windham.”

Windham continues to grow and develop but our development is balanced by the preservation of important open space and agricultural land to maintain the “rural character” of our Town and to provide scenic, recreational, and economic benefits for our residents.

Windham is one community but it is a community of different neighborhoods and different areas, each with a distinct character. As the Town grows, this diversity is maintained and even reinforced. This provides the opportunity for a range of residents and businesses to call Windham home.

Vision for North Windham

North Windham continues the transformation that has already begun from a regional retail and convenience center to ~~true town~~ a new type of center with a mix of uses and activities that is a destination within the Greater Portland ~~and Lakes~~ Regions. As the 21st Century Downtown Master Plan is implemented, North Windham evolves into a place where people chose to live, work and play due to improved traffic flow, the creation of pedestrian and bicycle networks, quality architecture and streetscapes, and open space. Activity in North Windham is bolstered as more homes and mixed-uses develop within the core commercial area, along with growth and diversification of the jobs base to include more.

~~Residents find a more diversified jobs center in North Windham. The diversification in jobs is led by the traditionally strong retail sector and supported by gains in~~ manufacturing,

restaurants, and professional offices. This growth as a job center is enabled by smart investments in infrastructure needed to support these activities.

Vision for South Windham

South Windham attracts new village-scale residential growth by capitalizing on the neighborhood's assets ~~including a rebuilt River Road, the existing sewer system, improvements to Town-owned spaces (including streets), state improvements to the Mountain Division Trail, and access to the Presumpscot River~~. New single family homes on small lots and town-house style multifamily unit buildings are built next to and among the existing, upgraded and refurbished housing stock. New residents support small, local businesses on Main Street. Cooperation with the Town of Gorham and the Little Falls community on the other side of the Presumpscot ensures that a revitalized South Windham melds with Little Falls as a single community.

Vision for Windham Center

~~If North Windham is the commercial core of Windham, then Windham Center is the civic core.~~ Windham Center takes advantage of the location of school and municipal facilities, ~~along with the Windham Land Trust's Black Brook Preserve, the skate park, and the Community Garden,~~ to become a different type of "village" in the geographic center of the Town. This "civic village" focuses on increasing the number of single-and two-family homes on smaller lots, resulting in a neighborhood that is attractive to families with school-age children who want to live within walking distance of schools, the library, recreation facilities, playing fields, and conserved open-space.

Vision for Existing Residential Neighborhoods

~~Other eExisting residential neighborhoods (such as those in the Varney Mill Road area, the Cornerbrook and Brookhaven neighborhoods just off Roosevelt Trail, and the Timberhill and Evergreen neighborhoods along Park Road)~~ are valued for their sense of community. The character of these areas remains essentially unchanged. These neighborhoods accommodate limited additional single family homes that fit the existing character of these neighborhoods, either within the neighborhoods as "infill" development or on adjacent parcels that are incorporated into the existing neighborhoods.

Vision for Rural Windham

Rural areas of Windham are valued by the community for the recreational, scenic, cultural, and quality of life benefits they provide. The Town continues to recognize that agriculture and forestry are important pieces of the local economy and works to encourage and support new agricultural uses on the rural landscape. The community identifies the most important and scenic open spaces and undeveloped properties including agricultural land, and works

~~with land owners and partners in the non-profit community~~ to permanently protect these areas. ~~This~~ to-proactively involvement ensures that there will be ~~conserved open space and~~ productive working farmland available for future generations, and that the most scenic and iconic views of rural Windham are preserved.

Vision for Gateways into Windham

Entrances into Windham on Route 302, Route 202, Route 115, Route 35, River Road and Falmouth Road are attractive and well defined. It is clear to travelers that they have entered Windham based on clear signage and well maintained landscaping. Businesses in these areas make positive contributions to these gateway areas through thoughtful design and landscaped facilities.

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