

Annotated Table of Contents to illustrate thoughts on the structure of our deliverable document to the Town Council

The Plan (30 – 60 pages)

This is the forward looking part of the Comprehensive Plan. It contains the Vision Statement and the most important recommendations for moving the Town toward achieving that Vision.

Acknowledgments & Public Participation Summary

The public participation efforts undertaken on behalf of this Plan update will be detailed in this section, from the early efforts in 2014, through the Survey and Community Forums, through all the Review Team meetings and meetings with the public to present draft documents and presentation of revisions, through final adoption by the Town Council.

Core Values & Vision Statement

The Core Values & Vision Statement will appear as accepted by the Review Team.

Highlighted Recommendations by Core Values/Big Issues

I anticipate that all of the Goals and Strategies recommended in the plan will be grouped into a manageable number of themes or categories that are meaningful to residents as well as elected and staff leadership. See the “Complete List of Goals and Strategies by Category” section below.

In this section, the highest priority Goals and Strategies for each of the category will be listed, so that policy makers have the prioritized short-list of items that are the most important and have the biggest impact on Windham are listed at the front of the plan.

As the heading indicates, there are various ways to organize the forthcoming recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. One possibility is to use the six Core Values pulled from the public participation work we have done so far:

- Open fields, forested land and working farms are important
- Accessibility and convenience of regional destinations and local services
- Role as regional jobs center
- Fiscal responsibility and quality municipal services
- Community for all ages and economic means
- Heritage and rural roots are preserved and celebrated

Future Land Use Plan

This section of the plan will include a map as well as descriptions of mapped areas of Windham that will be designated “growth areas,” defined as geographic areas targeted to accept most of the projected residential and commercial growth over the next 10 years, and “rural areas,” defined as geographic areas from which most of the projected residential and commercial growth over the next 10 years will be diverted. In the discussion of the draft vision statement, the Review Team decided not to include separate sections like “Vision for North Windham,” “Vision for South Windham Village,” and the “Vision for Windham Center,” but those concepts and visions will likely reappear in this section of the Plan.

Plan Implementation & Evaluation

This section will answer the questions of “Who is responsible for managing the completion of each of the strategies chosen for implementation?” and “How do we measure success or progress toward reaching each of the goals over time?” The current goal is to avoid the need for an implementation committee by producing a prioritized and focused list of action items so that the Town Council could take on specific items and assign others to staff or committees.

Recommended Update Schedule

Rather than a major revision to the Plan every 10-15 years, this Plan will recommend more modest updates on a more frequent basis, perhaps every 3-5 years.

Evaluation and Reporting

This section will lay out what an annual report card back to the Town Council should contain. It is likely that each of the major categories will get its own score or grade based on well-defined measures that will be identified through this planning effort. These measures should be as specific as possible and benchmarked against the information contained in the Inventory Chapters (see below).

Regional Coordination Program

This state requirement requires the Town to think about how to work with neighboring communities and regional organizations to manage shared natural resources or facilities as well as a description of how this has been done in the past.

Inventory Chapters (100-150 pages)

This part of the plan looks back through time and provides a description of the current state of the Town in specific areas required by the state. Section headings below are the “subject silos” that the state requires in the Plan. I propose that we work on these first, so that we are able to use the information on community conditions and community trends to help inform and prioritize recommendations as noted above.

Existing Land Use

Analysis
Conditions and Trends
State and Local Goals
Strategies to Implement Goals

Historic and Archaeological Resources

Analysis
Conditions and Trends
State and Local Goals
Strategies to Implement Goals

Water Resources

Analysis
Conditions and Trends
State and Local Goals
Strategies to Implement Goals

Natural Resources

Analysis
Conditions and Trends
State and Local Goals
Strategies to Implement Goals

Agricultural and Forest Resources

Analysis
Conditions and Trends
State and Local Goals
Strategies to Implement Goals

Population and Demographics

Analysis
Conditions and Trends
State and Local Goals
Strategies to Implement Goals

Economy

Analysis
Conditions and Trends
State and Local Goals
Strategies to Implement Goals

Housing

Analysis
Conditions and Trends
State and Local Goals
Strategies to Implement Goals

Recreation

Analysis
Conditions and Trends
State and Local Goals
Strategies to Implement Goals

Transportation

Analysis
Conditions and Trends
State and Local Goals
Strategies to Implement Goals

Public Facilities and Services

Analysis
Conditions and Trends
State and Local Goals
Strategies to Implement Goals

Complete List of Recommended Goals and Strategies by Category

As noted in the “Inventory Chapters” sections, each inventory area will include identified goals along with strategies to meet those goals. This section will regroup all of the recommendations into larger categories that cut across these subject silos.

For example, based on the identified Core Values, one category will likely relate to preserving rural character, which cuts across many of the subject silos that are required in the plan including Recreation, Natural Resources, and Agriculture & Forest Resources (see “Inventory Chapter” section, below). By pulling recommendations out of their individual subject silos, it becomes easier to see the connections between and among recommended Goals and Strategies, and to prioritize the most important, biggest impact items.

Though the Highest Priority Items will be identified early in the plan document, it is important that all of the Goals and Strategies recommended in the plan be listed together in their own section. As items are completed or re-prioritized, this section will serve as the reserve of strategies that future Town Councils may draw from to continue making progress on the Plan.