

STRATEGIC PLANNING – Comprehensive Plan Review Village of Cambridge

In November 2009 the Cambridge Village Board began a process of strategic planning that included a review of the Comprehensive Plan (2004) as its foundation. (The Comprehensive Plan itself calls for a review within 10 years.) Through three meetings (to which community members were invited), the Board reviewed the goals from the original plan within the context of what is actually happening in the Village, adding possible strategies to meet the goals, and assigning tentative priorities to the new ideas.

The strategies and priorities that were identified by the Board have been merged with those of the initial plan to create a composite document that adjusts the comprehensive plan in light of current and projected realities. The information has been formatted using the following template:

GOAL:

Current Activities supporting goal:

- What is actually happening within the Village that supports the achievement of the goal.
- Is the goal Village sponsored (indicates that the Village is responsible for this activity)
- Or is the goal Village supported (indicates that the Village supports the activity but is not the lead).

Needs and Possibilities to reach/ support goal:

- Set priority level (H/M/L) based on the Village Board Assessment.

A priority task now – for the Board and for Village residents – is to assess what is do-able, what is crucial to meet the goals, what steps should be taken and in what order. With this in mind, the table presented as Attachment A serves as the basis for the next step(s) in this strategic planning process, leading to the recommended update of the Comprehensive Plan.

Please note that the Board added a 'new' goal as #1; the remaining 12 goals have been re-numbered but otherwise remain in the same order with the same content as in the initial plan.

When the Comprehensive Plan was developed, the following actions were identified and prioritized:

"The following timetable for implementing major programs and projects described in the Comprehensive Plan has been developed:

- **Priority Actions (initiate upon adoption of the comprehensive plan):**
 - *Zoning and Subdivision Revisions to Reflect the Comprehensive Plan's Recommendations*
 - *Main Street and Park Street Visualization Project*
 - *Sewer and Water Improvement Task Force*
 - *Village Green Initiative*
- **Short Term Actions (initiate within two years of plan adoption):**

- *Coordinated Public Facility Space Programming and Feasibility Study*
- *Playground Development*
- *Industrial District Improvements*
- *Cambridge Pathways*
- *Main Street Parking Improvements*

- ***Medium Term Actions (initiate within two to four years after plan adoption):***
 - *Industrial Expansion*
 - *Community Services Opportunity*
 - *Area Redevelopment Plan*

- ***Long-term Actions (initiate within five to ten years after plan adoption):***
 - *Update the Comprehensive Plan"*

Some of these actions have been accomplished, others are in progress and still others have not been addressed. The reasons are multiple and complex: lack of funds; lack of human resources; timing; not such a great idea after all; change in leadership and/or board and village priorities to list a few. When reviewing the matrix, these actions (drafted to meet one or more goal) should be reviewed as well.

The review of the Comprehensive Plan is an opportunity for residents of the village to help mold the future of the village to meet the most and strongest needs of the community as a whole. It is worth noting that four goals – 2, 6, 7, and 11 – are strongly interrelated. Whether that reflects some priority must be decided through the deliberative process with as much and as diverse input as possible. In addition, the needs/possibilities are certainly not comprehensive, leaving the opportunity for actions to be added or deleted.

The task of studying and revising the Comprehensive Plan now passes to the public. Now is the time for our best thinking and clear planning.

- Cambridge Guest Home Village supported
- Community Gardens Village supported
- Bike Races Village supported
- Bread Oven Village supported
- Community initiatives, e.g. H Romack's environmental activities with kids Village supported
- Cambridge Youth Commission and youth programs Village sponsored
- CYC Management/SC Development Village sponsored
- Playgrounds being developed Village sponsored
- Freight Yard revitalization Village supported
- Main Street Pedestrian Improvements Village sponsored

Needs/Possibilities	Priority	Action
• A structure to develop and support collaboration among existing groups – formal and informal	H	
• Skateboard Work Group (Operational Plan)	H	In process
• Better integration of Senior community with municipal gov't and youth	M	In process
• Events clearinghouse / calendar	L	

GOAL 3: Encourage continued growth that is consistent with the other goals for the Village. Promote development that enhances economic opportunity and community well being while considering the resources upon which our economy and our community depend in the long-term (“sustainable development”). Through sustainable development we aim to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of our community to meet its needs in the future.

Current Activities supporting goal:

- RestoreNY and NY Main Street Grant Programs, among others Village sponsored
- Updated Zoning to Match Comp Plan Objectives Village sponsored
- Generally have separate efforts by various Groups in this area which could be better integrated N/A

Needs/Possibilities	Priority	Action
• Enhance access to municipal services by commercial entities, better involve the business community in municipal efforts	H	

	Priority	Action
• Taxes need to be regularly considered in order to foster local economic development opportunities; i.e. avoid undue tax burden on business	M	discuss with Bill McCarty
• Increased focus on sustainability (economic, etc.)	M	
• Explore no/low cost incentives to Sustainable business development	M	
• Retain/attract business	M	

GOAL 4: Develop lasting and affordable solutions for community water and wastewater needs. These are the primary limits to the economic and environmental health of the Village.

Current Activities supporting goal:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| • High quality source and supply of potable water In Village | Village supported |
| • Mix of on and off system users (some still have private wells or points for potable water) | N/A |

Needs/Possibilities	Priority	Action
• Seek solutions to waste water issues (i.e. no municipal sewer)	H	
• Support maintenance / seek opportunities to partner with Water Company in order to sustain and improve the water system	M	

GOAL 5: Maintain the character and enhance the vitality of the three existing commercial / mixed-use nodes along Main Street (around the intersections with Union Street, the railroad tracks, and Park Street). Ensure that these areas remain the focal point for business, social, cultural, and civic activity in the Village and the region. Address parking, transportation, pedestrian mobility, infrastructure, business development, historic resource preservation and community character concerns to allow these areas to thrive as the heart of the community. In addition to the commercial nodes along Main Street, make available well-defined areas along North and South Park Street (Route 22) and Gilbert Street (Route 313) for well-designed commercial and mixed-use development. Enhance the sense of arrival to Cambridge by improving the “gateways” to the Village. Support efforts to discourage sprawl and enhance agriculture in the region.

Current Activities supporting goal:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| • Zoning Law that now matches Comp Plan | Village sponsored |
| • Municipal Parking Lot | Village sponsored |
| • Main St Pedestrian Improvement Project | Village sponsored |
| • Zoning Board Members | Village sponsored |
| • Planning Board Members | Village sponsored |

Needs/Possibilities

- | | Priority | Action |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| • Improved understanding of the Zoning Law | | |
| • Among the ZEO, ZBA & PB | URGENT | In process |
| • Fully and well staffed ZEO, ZBA and PB, | | |
| • With enhanced communication and consistency | H | In process |
| • Check into legality of combined ZBA and PB | | |
| • Not an option | | done |
| • Gateway signage, ‘advertising’ the wonders of The village | M | In process |
| • Sidewalks –Rt 313 | L | |

Goal 6: Ensure the protection of all of the Village’s important natural resources, and in particular the stream corridors, wetland systems ,and scenic qualities of the valley. Enhance access to and understanding of these resources. [dovetails with Goal 2]

Current Activities supporting goal:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| • Village "Dump" for compost and yard waste | Village sponsored |
| • Beautification projects (Chamber) and the garden club activities | Village supported |
| • Parks | Village sponsored |
| • Zoning Board Members | Village sponsored |
| • Planning Board Members | Village sponsored |

Needs/Possibilities

- | | Priority | Action |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| • Establish Parks and Rec Advisory Group | M | |
| • Improved pedestrian/ walking access to | M | |
| • Village resources (sidewalks, trails, etc.) | | |
| • Enhance responsible access to Village natural resources | M | |

Goal 8: Celebrate and continue to nurture the arts, history, and other cultural offerings in the Village. These resources benefit residents, and bring many visitors and tourism dollars to the community.

Current Activities supporting goal:

- Freight Yard / Hubbard Hall Projects capital improvements and operating spaces Village supported
- Performance stage in Durrin Memorial Park Village sponsored
- Balloon Festival / Apple Festival Village supported
- Bike Races Village supported

Needs/Possibilities

- Historical preservation efforts
- Clarification/ enhancement of Archives / Records
CHS&M / DAR - relationships and access

Priority

L

L

Action

Goal 9: Provide for a range of housing options to suit the Village’s economically and demographically diverse population – seniors, young adults, families, etc. Ensure that the rental housing stock is well maintained and in compliance with applicable codes.

Current Activities supporting goal:

- Senior housing options Village supported
- Rentals supportive of various income levels Village supported

Needs/Possibilities

- Improved oversight of rental property maintenance and operation (health and safety)
- Multigenerational housing options
- Accessible senior rental properties

Priority

M

L

?

Action

Goal 10: Encourage inter-municipal dialogue about issues that transcend the boundaries of the Village. Seek opportunities for collaboration, and solutions that benefit the Village and its neighboring municipalities.

Current Activities supporting goal:

- Revision of shared service agreement between Cambridge and Greenwich PD's Village sponsored done
- Necessity of interacting with the three Towns because of geographics and School district boundaries Village sponsored

Needs/Possibilities

- Increased attendance at Town, County And other Village meetings as well as School Board

Priority

URGENT

Action

- Opportunities for collaboration- BOLO
(be on the look out)

L

Goal 11: Expand the supply and variety of public spaces available in the community – parks, squares, playgrounds, trails, etc. Public spaces provide opportunities for recreation, formal and informal interaction, and civic activities that improve quality of life and sense of community. (Dovetails with Goal 2)

Current Activities supporting goal:

- Three parks Village sponsored
- McClellan trails Village supported
- Preliminary interest of some landowners in the greenways Village sponsored
- Many walkable sidewalks Village sponsored
- Walkable Cemetery Village supported

Needs/Possibilities

- Sidewalk enhancement -repair & replacement
- Parks and Rec Advisory Group [dovetails with Goal #6]
- Programming
- Community swimming pool
- Full trail system with signage
- Tennis Court (Lions)
- Skating rink

Priority

- H
- M
- L
- L
- L
- L
- L (Others on this)

Action

Goal 12: Foster cooperation among all of the diverse groups and interests in the Village toward the common vision identified in the plan.

Current Activities supporting goal:

- Commitment of the current VB to sustain
Healthy dialogue with residents and non-residents
who are impacted by VB decisions Village sponsored

Needs/Possibilities

More formal structures to accomplish community dialogue, e.g. quarterly open house

Priority

M

Action

Goal 13: Improve, as needed, the delivery of critical public safety services such as fire and police. Expand public access to village offices and meeting areas, and create new mechanisms for providing information about village-sponsored and community wide events.

Current Activities supporting goal:

- Recently renovated municipal building with increased Public meeting spaces Village sponsored
- Municipal website with planned improvements to increased Sharing of information Village sponsored
- Fire House and Police Station Project Village sponsored
- Municipal Center Renovations Village sponsored
- Employee Manual Review and Update Village sponsored

Needs/Possibilities

- Monthly VB column in newspaper (separate from The Eagle reporting)
- Continue to increase communication about Village events, including agendas for meetings with information as to why people should come
- Produce monthly web-based “blue paper” that provides facts related to some timely village issues
- More formal structures to accomplish community dialogue, e.g. quarterly open house

Priority

H
H
H
M

Action