



TOWN OF HARWICH LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

April 26, 2011
SUMMARY

VISION STATEMENT

We the people of Harwich have come together to create this vision statement for the 2011 Local Comprehensive Plan which will direct the energies of the Town's employees, volunteers and elected officials for the next five years.

Our vision has efficient and effective delivery of Town services as the top priority. It directs us to optimize the economic potential of all Town owned assets. Safety and security for all is paramount. We must have a superlative educational system for our students and rewarding activities for our seniors. We cannot fail to recognize, protect and enhance the vitality of our cultural, recreational and natural assets that are so essential to our residents, non-resident taxpayers, and seasonal guests alike.

To be effective, Harwich must be supported at the County, State and Federal levels. Harwich officials are charged with ensuring that the Town receives fair and equitable treatment and with pursuing legislative remedies when needed.

Pursuit of this vision pays homage to our unique coastal environment and vibrant New England traditions of independence and self-determination.

INTRODUCTION

The 2011 Local Comprehensive Plan (LCP) for the Town of Harwich describes the process of achieving the town's vision. In this plan, we summarize the most important issues facing the town for the next five years. The plan identifies important issues, recommends actions to be taken to address them, and assigns actions to responsible town entities. Where appropriate, measures of success are provided.

This plan has evolved over a two-year period from initial discussion by the Planning Board in May 2009 to presentation at Town meeting in May 2011. At the outset, the Planning Board made clear its intention to create a focused plan that would omit long descriptions and would detail specific actions to be pursued over the next five years. A vision statement sets the tone of the document. The first four sections of the plan – population, town services, town assets, and intergovernmental relations - are organized in accordance with the words of the vision statement. Additional required elements of a local comprehensive plan are presented in the next two sections on growth management. The next section addresses communication and technology, themes that run throughout the entire plan.

With a focus on specific actions, this plan repeatedly follows a process of ideation, study, debate/evaluation, consensus, and ratification. Throughout, plans must be developed and agreed upon before funding and other implementation techniques are identified and pursued. Repeatedly, the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board are listed as responsible parties. Often the role of these two boards is to provide guidance while many others are involved in plan development and implementation. All recommendations in this plan are advisory, but the Planning Board believes that the town will be well-served if these recommendations are pursued.

With the goal of producing a plan that is readable and usable, the main body of the document has been kept at about 40 pages. For those readers who seek more detailed information, several appendices are available. Appendix A provides a list of hyperlinks to other resources. Appendix B describes the planning process used to develop this plan. Appendix C contains important review comments by other parties that the Planning Board did not include in the main body of the plan. Appendices D and E contain two recently approved plans that offer extensive policy direction for the town – the Housing Production Plan and the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Appendices F and G contain two items required for regional certification of the plan – Consistency with Regional Plan Goals and Build-out Study.

As directed by the Town Charter, the Planning Board will report annually on the status of the master plan. Guidance for short-term and longer-term actions is provided in the implementation section. Implementation efforts, led by the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board, should begin immediately after approval of the plan. The annual review will address the status of high priority actions and will highlight new or continuing priorities for the next year.

8) IMPLEMENTATION

This plan includes numerous goal statements supported by objectives and actions. The actions are summarized in this section in three categories – top priority, short-term – 2011/2012, and longer term/ongoing. Responsible parties are listed for all actions. The Planning Board will review the status of these actions in its annual update of the Local Comprehensive Plan.

Top Priority

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY ¹
Section 2 (box)	Determine wastewater treatment options and associated costs to aid in growth management decisions	WQ, BoS, PB
2.5.1	Prepare a plan of activities, facilities, staffing and funding sources for youth services	School, Rec, Youth, CC, Lib
5.1.1	Propose new zoning provisions/design guidelines for E. Harwich	PB, EH, CCC
5.3.1	Propose new zoning provisions that direct growth to the E. Harwich village and protect open space in the surrounding area	PB, EH, CCC
5.6.1	Provide at least one direct route, suitable for pedestrian and bicycle travel, between Harwich Center and Harwich Port; also study an extension of the rail trail, separate from vehicle routes	Plan, CCC, Bike, Trail, Traffic, PW, Rec
5.7.2	Pursue acquisition of the Downey property adjacent to Saquatucket Harbor	BoS, TA, RE, ConsCom, Plan
5.8.1	Conduct a cost/benefit analysis of sewerage Harwich Port; include build-out projections and harbor economic development findings	PB, WQ
6.6.1	For economic development, pursue a range of direct and spin-off activities relating to beaches, harbors and the rail trail	BoS, Chamber, PB, Rec, Water, Bike
7.1.1	Employ a webmaster to make organizational and accessibility improvements to the website and to maintain it regularly	TA, BoS

Short Term - 2011/2012

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY ¹
2.4.1	Appoint a committee to study opportunities for reuse of the middle school building	BoS, School
2.6.1	Establish a subcommittee to review facility needs, costs, and funding sources for senior activities; include a swimming pool.	CC, CoA, Friends of CoA, School
3.1.1	Review parcels to be added to the historic district	Historic, BoS
3.2.1	Update the list of historically significant buildings	Historic
3.3.1	Complete and adopt the 5-year Recreation Plan and ensure compatibility with the Open Space and Recreation Plan	Rec, ConsCom
3.4.1	Identify priority land management areas and prepare land management plans	ConsCom, Trails
4.1.1	Establish a subcommittee to improve local influence and communication with legislators	BoS, PB
5.2.1	Submit E. Harwich build-out projections for inclusion in the town's wastewater planning	Plan

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY ¹
5.3.2	Prepare a plan depicting open land in and around Hawksnest State Park with trail connections to the village center	PB, ConsCom, Trails, Plan, EH
5.5.1	Consider applicability of new zoning provisions and design guidelines to Harwich Port, Harwich Center and other villages	PB, Plan
5.6.2	Pursue funding of routes from item 5.6.1	Plan,Bike,CPC,PW
5.7.1	Establish timelines for follow-up on the 2010 harbors report prepared by Cape Cod Commission staff	BoS, Water, Plan, Harbor, Bike
5.9.1	Pursue local parking, transportation and wastewater treatment options to assist local businesses in Harwich Center	Historic, TA, Eng, Plan
5.9.3	Initiate planning and site preparation for the land adjacent to Brooks Academy; determine suitable historic buildings	Historic, Eng, Plan
5.10.1	Review potential boundaries of village districts in West Harwich, South Harwich and Saquatucket Harbor	PB
5.11.1 to 5.13.1	Amend zoning standards as needed to accomplish commercial and industrial siting and design review objectives	PB
6.3.1	Encourage village housing through E. Harwich zoning revisions	PB
6.3.3	Adopt stronger cluster development provisions for any development proposed in outlying areas	PB
6.4.1	Pursue funding sources to design and fund bicycle and pedestrian priorities from previous plans	PW, Plan, Bike, Rec
6.4.2	Explore opportunities for remote parking lots and shuttle bus service for harbors, beaches and other seasonal sites	PB, Chamber
6.6.3	Appoint an ad-hoc committee to pursue economic development that takes advantage of Open Cape infrastructure	BoS, Chamber, PW
6.7.1	Pursue "branding" and provide "wayfinding" signage	BoS, Chamber
6.7.2	Prepare a package of bicycle and pedestrian maps and signage for use by local residents and visitors	Plan, PW, Bike, Chamber, HCT
6.8.1	Work with Cape and Vineyard Electric Cooperative to install a solar power plant on the capped town landfill	BoS, Utility

Longer Term/Ongoing

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY ¹
2.1.1	Determine baseline services for all municipal departments and prepare annual budgets	TA, Depts
2.1.2	Explore options for delivering services more efficiently	TA, Depts, Others
2.2.1	Prioritize new facilities and services, seek use of revenues not related to property taxes, and consider overrides or exclusions	BoS, FinCom, K Outlay, PB
2.3.1	Monitor the type and frequency of emergency medical calls and other public safety services; provide regular reports	PD, FD, TA, BoS
2.7.1	Continue and expand efforts to provide meals, nursing care and other senior services	CoA
3.5.1	Establish priorities for new open space acquisitions; determine funding sources, impact on taxes, and other means of protection	BoS,PB,CPC,Plan, ConsCom,Trail,RE

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY ¹
5.2.2	Require new private wastewater treatment systems to be designed for easy future connection to a larger public system	BoH, PB
5.4.1	Plan carefully for intersections of new village roads with Routes 137 and 39; accommodate pedestrian/bike travel	PW, Traffic, Bike, Plan
5.9.2	Explore improvements, including traffic calming measures and re-designed or improved crosswalks, to enhance pedestrian safety	Traffic, Historic, Eng, Plan
6.1.1	Establish an annual procedure for reviewing existing affordable housing priorities and recommending new priorities.	HousC, HousA, BoS
6.2.1	Identify affordable housing projects, funding sources, and potential environmental and permitting issues	HousC, HousA, Plan
6.2.2	Encourage public and private provision of workforce housing and other low-cost housing regardless of SHI eligibility	HousC, Others
6.3.2	Propose higher residential density in village districts to encourage affordable housing projects	PB, WQ
6.5.1	Select a wastewater management plan that is technically sound, cost effective and successful in addressing water quality issues	WQ
6.5.2	Ensure that the wastewater plan supports the future growth needs of the town, with sewers available for village centers	PB, WQ
6.5.3	Anticipate public concerns and ensure that information is provided to address those concerns	Citizens Advisory, BoS
6.6.2	Encourage currently active job sectors, such as construction and service, but explore ways to reduce seasonal unemployment	Chamber

1) Responsible parties (abbreviated names):

Bike	Bikeways Committee	PB	Planning Board
BoH	Board of Health	PD	Police Department
BoS	Board of Selectmen	Plan	Planning Department
Chamber	Chamber of Commerce	PW	Public Works Department
CC	Community Center	RE	Real Estate and Open Space
CCC	Cape Cod Commission Staff	Rec	Recreation and Youth Comm.
CPC	Community Preserv. Comm.	School	School Department
CoA	Council on Aging	TA	Town Administrator
ConsCom	Conservation Commission	Traffic	Traffic Safety Committee
Depts	Departments	Trails	Trails Committee
EH	East Harwich Collaborative	Utility	Utility & Energy Committee
Eng	Engineering Department	Water	Waterways Commission
FD	Fire Department	WQ	Water Quality Task Force
FinCom	Finance Committee	Youth	Youth Services Committee
Harbor	Harbormaster		
HCT	Harwich Conservation Trust		
Historic	Historic District Comm.		
HousA	Housing Authority		
HousC	Housing Committee		
K Outlay	Capital Outlay Committee		
Lib	Brooks Free Library Board		