

NORTH ANDOVER MASTER PLAN

DRAFT VISION

March 8, 2018

North Andover is a caring, connected and scenic community with a wealth of defining centers, natural resources, recreational opportunities and historical assets. Its vision for the coming decades is to preserve and celebrate these assets and provide the highest quality of life for all residents while maintaining its fiscal health and protecting and sustaining its inherent environment. The future will see a North Andover that:

- Remains a welcoming, inclusive and engaged community possessing highly regarded public schools; excellent public facilities and programs; and a mix of businesses, both large and small, that leverage local talent and provide a variety of employment opportunities.
- Provides readily- available commercial and retail destinations throughout town, anchored by a thriving downtown that offers shopping, dining, entertainment, as well as art, music and cultural opportunities, making it the heart of the community.
- Offers a variety of accessible and affordable housing types that foster neighborhoods, revitalize commercial areas, build on the character of North Andover through reuse and repurposing of structures, and equitably serve residents of all ages, abilities and incomes.
- Enjoys an enhanced and efficient network of roadway, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure that promotes alternative and green modes of travel, an active and healthy lifestyle, and safely connects residents, workers and visitors to the town's neighborhoods and amenities.
- Exemplifies the principles of sustainability to preserve, protect and enhance ecological assets and historical heritage which will meet the needs of the present without compromising the well-being of future generations.

NORTH ANDOVER MASTER PLAN
DRAFT GOALS AND STRATEGIES
March 8, 2018

Included in this document are the DRAFT goals and strategies for each chapter of the North Andover Master Plan. The draft strategies are organized underneath the goals to which they seek to implement. The strategies are not in any particular order, nor are they prioritized.

LAND USE GOALS

Goal 1: Focus new development in locations currently served by adequate public infrastructure that encourages the reuse or redevelopment of existing buildings or land.

- Review the Osgood Smart Growth Overlay District and update the Zoning Bylaw to ensure the district encourages the types of uses that are attractive in today's market and consistent with the direction of this Master Plan.
- Create a new base zoning district for Downtown North Andover that is consistent with the goals of the Master Plan and encourages and incentivizes reinvestment. This should include, but not be limited to:
 - Replace the existing Downtown Overlay District and the General Business District with a new base zoning district.
 - Review and update the boundaries of the Downtown Overlay District to include additional redevelopment sites along Sutton Street from I-495 to High Street to create a gateway into North Andover.
 - Allow uses that add flexibility and desirability for buildings downtown which could include uses such as co-work space, breweries/distilleries, food trucks, or creative maker space.
 - Continue to allow building heights up 45 feet as stated in the current General Business District.
 - Consider setting a minimum and maximum front setback for buildings along Main Street that provides space for improved landscaping, pedestrian gathering spaces, benches, wider sidewalks, and other public amenities.
- Review the usefulness and effectiveness of the Corridor Development Districts (CDD) along Routes 114 and 125. Consider creating a new consolidated highway-oriented commercial district, and a second that may be more appropriate for higher-density mixed-use development at key nodes or intersections along these travel corridors.



- Review the Special Permit requirement for buildings over 3,000 square feet in size. That threshold may be too low and create a barrier to entry if an applicant views the Special Permit process as a negative.
- Consider allowing taller buildings toward the rear of deep lots with lower building heights toward the front of the lot as a way to incentivize redevelopment. This would require a change to existing height restrictions in the districts.
- Review minimum lot size requirements to determine the appropriate minimum lot size should the CDD districts be consolidated.

Goal 2: Update the Town’s Zoning Bylaw to be consistent with the goals and recommendations of the Master Plan.

- Review the current Zoning Bylaw and compare the current regulations to the desired vision and goals of the Master Plan. Ensure recommendations that can be tied back to zoning changes are identified, prioritized, and completed.
- Simplify and consolidate the number of zoning districts in the Town’s Zoning Bylaw, and update the Town’s Zoning Map to reflect these changes.
- Ensure the Town’s Zoning Bylaw is current with federal and state case law, including any updates needed to the sign bylaw.
- Review existing lot size requirements and dimensional regulations for Residential Districts to determine if they are consistent with the vision and goals of the Master Plan and desires of North Andover’s residents.
- Undertake a series of area plans for key commercial and mixed-use nodes to establish desired visions and outcomes for each location and craft zoning to implement those desired outcomes.

Goal 3: Ensure natural resource protection districts continue to serve as effective measures for protecting the Town’s critical water supplies and natural habitats.

- Undertake a thorough review of the Town’s Water Resource District Bylaw to ensure the regulations are still accomplishing the goals that were established in 1987. Ensure the Bylaw is consistent with any applicable state guidelines and regulations, and determine if the Town wants to exceed those guidelines.
- Review the existing residential cluster zoning for applicability on remaining undeveloped parcels of land in town, and ensure the existing zoning will aid in accomplishing the preservation of open space on those parcels.
- Consider the establishment of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to protect open space and transfer density to other more appropriate sites around town.

- Establish a lake and watershed oversight committee with representatives from existing Town departments and committees. Committee should include members from public health, planning conservation, public works, police, fire, education and recreation departments, and historical society.



HOUSING GOALS

Goal 1: Provide for a diversity of housing choices at a variety of price points across North Andover.

- Encourage the development of multi-family and mixed-use residential buildings in Downtown.
- Increase the Town's percentage of affordable housing, using the 10 percent 40B state requirement as the minimum standard.
- Review the recommendations from the Merrimack Valley Regional Housing Plan for consistency with the Master Plan. Prioritize recommendations that overlap both plans.
- Pass an Inclusionary Zoning bylaw that would provide for a percentage of deed restricted affordable housing as a component of new market-rate residential development projects.
- Determine the supply and demand for senior market-rate and affordable housing and plan for housing to meet the need.
- Identify financial and staff resources to facilitate the construction and/or preservation of affordable housing in North Andover.
- Utilize CPA and Housing Trust funds to offset housing costs for households at the lowest income brackets (households up to 30 percent of Area Median Income).
- Work with the owners of Royal Crest on a mixed-use redevelopment or rehabilitation plan that includes a mix of market-rate and affordable residential units.
- Continue to work with the owners of Osgood Landing to renew the 40R district and market and promote a mixed-use concept for a portion of the site that includes a variety of housing types and price points.

Goal 2: Limit the construction of large tract subdivisions and encourage smaller clusters of housing with an emphasis on open space preservation.

- Review and update the Town's Planned Residential Development bylaw to encourage the clustering of homes on smaller lots, while still preserving open space and views along roadways.
 - Consider lowering the minimum parcel size threshold of 10 acres.
 - Consider allowing smaller lot sizes than 22,000 square feet (half-acre) in the R-1 and R-2 zones, especially where adequate sewer and water service is available.
 - Consider tiering the usable open space requirement based on the size of the parcel.
- Consider zoning changes to low-density residential areas in Out Country to preserve more land and limit large tract subdivisions.

- Work with the Department of Public Works to identify locations where the expansion of sewers could encourage cluster development in locations that would otherwise develop as a traditional subdivision with limited provisions for open space provisions.

Goal 3: Focus new housing development in locations that are adequately served by public infrastructure.

- Update the Town's Zoning Bylaw to promote a mix of uses in areas already served by public infrastructure such as downtown, Route 114, Route 125, and Sutton Street.
- Create an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaw that would allow small accessory residential units on existing residential parcels.
- Evaluate the sale or lease of surplus Town-owned land as a way to support the Town's housing goals.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Goal 1: Encourage a local economy which includes employment opportunities for residents in a variety of business sectors and occupations and provides a variety of goods and services to meet the needs of residents and visitors.

- Support existing businesses in the community through outreach and listening sessions.
- Ensure existing commercial and industrial land is not converted to support only multi-family uses, but instead a mix of uses promoting vibrant commercial centers and corridors.
- Focus business attraction efforts on opportunities which are consistent with the character of the community and which can be reasonably supported in appropriate locations within the Town.
- Evaluate whether the creation of a quasi-public entity for economic development would offer the Town increased flexibility to negotiate with potential new employers and to be more pro-active in creating economic development opportunities for the community.

Goal 2: Evaluate the potential for increasing density and visitation in the downtown area, through increasing the number of mixed-use buildings which support both residential and commercial uses.

- Look for opportunities to enhance visitation to the downtown area through special events and activities (such as the farmer's market).
- Invest in infrastructure and streetscaping to enhance the downtown area as a pedestrian friendly economic hub.
- Encourage the development of mixed-use buildings which support both residential and commercial uses.
- Interview individual property owners in the downtown area to identify potential interest in increased density, façade improvement programs, burying electrical infrastructure, and changes in use.

Goal 3: Support existing businesses and business development activities in the community and attract viable uses for the redevelopment of commercial and industrial districts and buildings.

- Work cooperatively with the owners of Osgood Landing to identify and attract a mix of uses for the redevelopment of the Osgood Landing property.
- Consider whether the Town or a Town-related quasi-public entity might acquire vacant or underutilized business/commercial/industrial land for economic development purposes.



- Evaluate the commercial potential of the Stevens Estate for hospitality and accommodation uses.
- Establish a business visitation and outreach program to solicit input from business owners and managers in terms of what the Town is doing right, what the Town is doing wrong, and whether the business has plans to expand (or contract) in the Town or the larger region.
- Create an inventory/database of available commercial/industrial development sites in the community for marketing/economic development purposes.



TRANSPORTATION GOALS

Goal 1: Improve transportation connectivity, with an emphasis on sidewalks, to make it safer for residents to access open space and recreation areas, civic buildings and schools, and commercial centers in town.

- Evaluate sidewalk gaps and prioritize new sidewalks based on their ability to connect residents to schools, activity centers, civic spaces, and recreation and open spaces in town.
- Leverage the Town's sidewalk maintenance funds with Community Preservation Act-eligible projects to expand the amount of funding available to improving connections to and from open space and recreation areas.
- Knit together Out Country with the commercial and civic centers in the northern portion of town by improving signage, sidewalk and trail connections, and bike facilities.
- Adopt a Complete Streets Policy and apply to MassDOT's Complete Streets Funding Program to secure funding for a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.
- Continue the practice of working with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission and MassDOT to identify and fund Safe Routes to School infrastructure improvements.
- Evaluate the feasibility of increasing crosswalk frequency and visibility on major travel corridors such as Route 114, Mass Ave, Route 125, and Chickering Road.
- Work with FONAT (Friends of North Andover Trails) to evaluate and prioritize off-street trail development and connections to and through open spaces and recreation areas.
- Couple sidewalk and crosswalk improvements with pedestrian-scale lighting to increase visibility and safety.

Goal 2: Reduce vehicular congestion and improve safety along key travel corridors, at major intersections, and along connecting roadways that provide access to North Andover's residential neighborhoods.

- Discourage traffic in residential neighborhoods using context-sensitive roadway design and traffic calming solutions.
- Work with MassDOT to incorporate welcoming and beautification improvements to the anticipated improvement project along Route 114.
- Evaluate safety and congestion improvements along key roadway corridors and intersection improvements to promote safer travel speeds, improve safety at key intersections, and create a safer and more connected sidewalk network.

- Evaluate the potential for including wider shoulders on roadways to improve safety for cyclists where dedicated bike lanes or multi-use pathways may not be feasible.
- Develop stronger zoning language and incentives to encourage shared access points, curb cut consolidation, and connected parking across developed parcels.
- Conduct a transportation corridor study for each of the entry points off I-495 into North Andover to create a coordinated transportation solution for access into town.
- Pursue a more proactive approach to securing funding every five to seven years for local North Andover transportation projects through the Merrimack Valley Transportation Improvement Program.

Goal 3: Focus on making Downtown a more walkable, pedestrian-friendly place with connected sidewalks, safe crossings, public gathering spaces, and a consistent streetscape.

- Extend high visibility crosswalks to additional intersections and mid-block crossing locations along Main Street and Water Street.
- Evaluate the possibility of changing on-street parking configurations as a way to increase sidewalk widths, landscape buffers, or add on-street bike facilities along parts of Main Street.
- Look for opportunities to construct curb bump-outs, particularly for mid-block crossing locations along Main Street.
- Hire a consultant to evaluate and recommend possible streetscape improvements along Main Street and Water Street.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of changing zoning along Main Street to vary front setbacks to provide additional space for wider sidewalks, enhanced landscaping, and pedestrian gathering spaces.
- Use consistent streetscape treatments and wayfinding signage to connect Downtown with the Mill District to encourage walking, gathering, shopping, and dining between both areas.
- Repair existing brick sidewalks in Downtown to reduce tripping hazards and ice buildup.
- Review pedestrian ramps and building entrances for universal accessibility and prioritize accessibility improvements.

Goal 4: Improve public transportation options to provide residents and employees with choices for how they get around and access opportunities in North Andover.

- Explore innovative ways to increase transportation services for seniors. This could include:

- Expand the hours of operation for Council on Aging transportation services.
- Explore regional options such as sharing vehicles, drivers, and dispatchers with nearby communities.
- Explore the feasibility of offering ride vouchers to seniors who could use ride sharing services to get to medical appointments.
- Continue to push for a new MBTA commuter rail station at the Osgood Landing site if and when a redevelopment proposal is in place that matches the communities vision and goals for the site.
- Improve MVRTA circulator routes and frequency of those routes as a way to increase ridership.
- Evaluate potential ridership and cost impacts of adding a second (later) departure time for commuter buses to Boston.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOALS

Goal 1: Promote awareness of North Andover's open space resources, from its farm lands to its conservation areas and trails, to encourage the continued preservation of the community's natural landscape.

- Work closely with FONAT to design and install a wayfinding system for North Andover's publicly-accessible conservation areas.
- Create an Open Space and Conservation Committee supported by planning staff with education/outreach as one responsibility. Include membership seats for FONAT and representation from other organizations, as appropriate.
- Develop online educational opportunities and activities such as suggested itineraries, maps that suggest routes based on resources or distance, and family activities that promote interacting with nature.

Goal 2: Expand recreational opportunities in the Town's waterfront areas, from its many ponds and Lake Cochichewick to its underutilized riverfront access, as appropriate and without impeding the protection of water quality and habitat.

- Investigate establishing public recreational access to the Merrimack River via the Shawsheen River trail and boat ramp.
- Consider how the Town can best make use of the Merrimack River's close proximity and recreational opportunities by establishing a riverfront trail system, waterfront parks, and/or public canoe or boat launch areas.
- Assess feasibility of Stevens Pond as a year-round recreational area with ice skating, along with kayak, paddleboard, and sailing lessons and rentals.
- Investigate, through a lake or watershed oversight committee, what level of recreational activity can be allowed on Lake Cochichewick without adversely harming the water supply and consider how to provide public recreational opportunities on and around the Lake within those limitations.

Goal 3: Promote and create interconnectedness of open space by advancing a network of trails and sidewalks that provide access to a wide range of recreation and natural amenities throughout North Andover.

- Identify locations and create handicap accessible walking paths in natural areas and create management plans for each conservation area that address access for persons with disabilities.
- Develop a trail rating system that rates level of difficulty, accessibility, availability of benches, barriers to wheelchair access, and more.
- Develop a conceptual plan for the North Andover Rail Trail that could then be designed and funded in sections over time.

- Continue to support the work of the Friends of North Andover Trails, Essex County Greenbelt, Bay Circuit Alliance, Trustees of Reservation, Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, and others create trail connections throughout North Andover and connecting to neighboring communities. Priorities should include:
 - Leonhard Farm connection through to Anderson Drive in Boxford
 - Windrush Farm
 - Stevens Estate at Osgood Hill to Lake Cochichewick¹
- Continue to support the work of the Bay Circuit Alliance to install and improve wayfinding signage along the Bay Circuit Trail through funding, political assistance, and technical assistance.
- Create sidewalks and crosswalks at strategic locations throughout North Andover to foster access to and between existing conservation areas, trails, parks, and playgrounds. For example, the need for crosswalks at the following locations should be explored further:
 - Rt. 114 at Harold Parker Rd
 - Salem Road
 - Sharpner's Pond Rd.

Goal 4: Develop athletic and outdoor facilities and programs that address the needs and interests of North Andover residents of all ages from pre-school and toddler programs to youth sports to senior classes and activities.

- Continue to consider the creation of more athletic fields to support youth sports including potential for use of private property.
- Consider options to expand space available for youth services programs either at the youth center site or off site in shared facilities.
- Implement the Middle School fields redevelopment plans.
- Organize more community-wide events in the Downtown area and other central locations (e.g. Town Common).

¹ Funded May 2017 through a CPA grant to add boardwalks and signage.

HISTORIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES GOALS

Goal 1: Comprehensively identify, prioritize, and protect North Andover's character-defining historic and natural resources, including buildings, structures, documents, artifacts, areas, landscapes, views, and scenic roadways.

- Acquire priority open space parcels as identified through the most current Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Identify properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and possible locations for new Local Historic Districts or Neighborhood Conservation Districts.
- Complete an Historic Structures Report for the Stevens Estate including outbuildings and landscapes, as well as possible reuse options.
- Ensure proper conservation and archival storage for historic town records by conducting a multi-phase digitization of historic town records.
- Develop a program for displaying North Andover's historical artifacts from the former Lowell American Textile History Museum. Artifacts could be loaned to the Town and displayed through rotating galleries at Town Hall, the Library, or other locations across town.
- Create design guidelines for the Old Center Local Historic district.

Goal 2: Raise community awareness and foster preservation by creating opportunities for North Andover's youth, families, and residents of all ages to experience and learn about the community's historic, cultural, and natural assets.

- Nurture and support an ongoing relationship between the Historical Society and school department, especially regarding the third-grade local history curriculum to create opportunities for local field trips, classroom guests, and other educational opportunities about local history.
- Organize clean-up days for historic burial grounds and clean-up/community service days at the Historical Society properties.
- Strengthen technical assistance, support for, and outreach/educational efforts of the Historical Commission, LDC, and NCD through creation of a professional Preservation Planner position.
- Use the community's historic spaces and resources as venues for community events and arts programs.
- Develop a partnership between the Town's historic sites, parks, and open spaces and its performing and visual arts programs.
- Consider establishing a Cultural Committee to promote the arts within the community in cooperation with a new economic development entity.

Goal 3: Develop stronger connections between the Historical Society, town government, and local residents by supporting the Society's community stewardship and education programs and publicizing their role in the preservation of North Andover's public history.

- Partner with Trustees of Reservation and the Historical Society to expand the visibility of North Andover's publicly-accessible historic resources by coordinating events, holding joint house and facilities tours, and collaborating on joint programs and volunteer activities.
- Establish a seat for historical society board member(s) on the Cultural Council, Historical Commission, and Machine Shop Neighborhood Conservation District.
- Consider adopting an economic development entity and include a seat for a Historic Commission and Historical Society board member.

Goal 4: Protect the quality of natural resources including North Andover's hilltop topography, natural landscapes, intact ecosystems, biodiversity, and water quality, especially Lake Cochichewick, the community's source of drinking water.

- Create an Open Space and Conservation Committee.
- Establish a clear set of policies and procedures for communicating regularly with property owners enrolled in the state's three current-use Chapter 61 programs to enhance the possibility of permanent conservation solutions.
- Seek additional funding to preserve and maintain the Town's conservation lands and Lake Cochichewick by pursuing private funding sources, such as corporate partners, university research projects, or creating an open space improvement fund developers can pay in to.



PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOALS

Goal 1: Continue to provide a high-quality range of services and public utilities, including the continued modernization or replacement of aging facilities.

- Continue to prioritize the update, repair, and renovate the Town's public schools as needed.
- Support the Police and Fire Departments to shift and/or expand resources to meet the increasing needs of elder residents and those of all ages suffering from opiate addiction/overdoses.
- Support the Fire Department to renovate the Salem Street Station.
- Complete a Fire Protection Gap Study and prioritize recommendations that increase fire protection across all parts of North Andover.
- Provide a garage or carport to the Police Department to protect vehicles.
- Work with local internet and cell service providers to improve signal strength and coverage, but is done in a way that is visually appealing and sensitive to the character of neighborhoods and the Town.
- Continue to implement the 5-year Pavement Management Program and expand the sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure to create connected networks.
- Complete the inventory of shade trees located throughout the Town in order to help identify locations where more might be needed.
- Complete the Stormwater Management Plan and make improvements and replacements.
- Continue to upgrade and replace aging pipes for sewer and water systems.
 - If there are areas in the watershed without access to public utilities, make plans to provide for these in order to prevent contamination.
 - Complete identification and assessment of remaining leaching systems, and opportunities to connect to the sewer system within the watershed to protect the lake and drinking water supply.
 - Evaluate expansion capabilities to residents and neighborhoods that are not currently served by sewer and water infrastructure.

Goal 2: Care for residents of all ages including providing opportunities for recreation and community gathering for all age groups.

- Provide appropriate facilities and services for an increasing aging population.
 - Support the construction of an expanded relocated Senior Center and explore strengthening connections between the Council on Aging, the School Department, and the Youth Center to expand the opportunities for inter-generational off-site programming (wellness, recreation and opportunities to socialize). Especially for Young Energetic Senior (YES) population interested in fitness and wellness.
 - Encourage affordable and appropriate housing for seniors in walkable locations, including upper stories (above retail) in the downtown.

- Encourage creation of additional assisted living units.
- Consider pursuing an AARP designation as a dementia friendly community (including creating a “memory café”).
- Support the COA outreach to isolated seniors including the Meals on Wheels program.
- Support the Youth Center to expand space and programming (consider both on- and off-site options).
- Prepare a plan for adding more athletic fields and implementing the Maintenance Plan for existing fields.
- Upgrade equipment and expand programming at Stevens Pond, such as kayak, paddleboard, sailing lessons and rentals, and ice skating.
- Develop a vision for maximizing the potential of the Stevens Estate.
- Support the Library to provide needed additional programming (this may occur on- or off-site). This may include additional programs in early literacy, digital literacy, citizenship, STEM, “homework help centers”, and maker spaces in satellite locations.
- Make improvements to the Downtown so that it provides more opportunities for socializing and community gathering for all ages (including making the area more pedestrian-friendly, providing benches, plazas, pocket parks, etc.).
- Continue to support Veteran’s Services so that they may provide needed services to veterans (including to a younger veterans).

Goal 3: Improve the ability of Town government to promote sustainability.

- Lead by example by making “green” or environmentally-friendly improvements to Town buildings.
- Continue to encourage the use of renewable energy sources such as solar.
- Provide educational materials to residents and commercial establishments with information regarding how they can take measures to protect the environment.
- Provide incentives to home-owners and business owners to make environmentally-friendly decisions and choices.
- Provide recycling bins in the downtown area and in municipal buildings (e.g. Town Hall, Senior Center, schools, etc.).

Goal 4: Improve communication and participation in Town government.

- Actively recruit volunteers that represent a greater gender, age and ethnic diversity.
- Establish a Master Plan Implementation Committee to oversee and advocate for the implementation of the Master Plan over time.
- Continue to provide information on-line and to use technology to communicate between departments and with residents and explore additional ways to use technology to communicate with residents and to make the provision of services most efficient.

