



Project History and Context

Streets should not be efficient traffic sewers. They are places for human encounter
Robert Campbell, Boston Globe

If freeways solved transportation problems, Los Angeles would be heaven"
Paul Basha, Scottsdale's Traffic Engineer, in The Arizona Republic,

...she comes pulling out in a Blazer. I start pedaling and she comes up and she whacks me and she's goes 'Ohh!' She got all like scared and everything, and then tells me that I should watch where I'm going! It's a tough town if you don't got a car. Can't get around.

Ed Martinez, a bicycler, from the film
Making Sense Of Place, Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

With such thoughts in mind, but tempered by a pragmatic viewpoint of what is attainable, the Lexington Transportation Element held its kickoff meeting on September 9, 2002. An intensive program of public participation occurred over the next several months, fueled by the extensive research that staff and consultant were assembling in support of this process. Education and research efforts funneled into discussions about alternative transportation policies and mitigation measures.

It is important to understand that the Transportation Element is a part of a larger comprehensive planning effort that was begun by the Planning Board, at the behest of Town Meeting, at the end of the year 2000. These efforts have continued to date. *With the adoption of the first part of the Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Board on January 30, 2002—consisting of four elements (Land Use, Natural And Cultural Resources, Housing and Economic Development, plus part of the Implementation Element that integrates in detail all of these topical sections)—this transportation piece, with its related implementation measures, completes the Comprehensive Plan for Lexington.* These six elements are required in the state planning statute, Chapter 41, Section 81D. On August 22, 2002, the adopted elements received official certification by the Commonwealth as an acceptable community development plan, under the Executive Order 418 planning and housing initiative originally signed by Governor Cellucci in January, 2000.

It is equally important to discuss the Board of Selectmen's Vision 2020 process, an intensive, citizen-driven visioning project that involved scores of residents and which took place over a period of approximately 18 months throughout 1999 and into 2000. Vision 2020 pursued a slate

of community goals and objectives in five topical areas, one of which was transportation. The conceptual framework and consensus that emanated from Vision 2020 has been drawn upon directly and extensively throughout the Planning Board's comprehensive planning work, both in the multiple elements adopted in 2002, and in the present transportation element. The Board's Comprehensive Plan became the ideal, more detailed follow-up to the more conceptual Vision 2020, with each complementing the other in a well timed segue.

In summer, 2002, the engineering firm Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB), of Watertown, MA, was hired to assist the Board and staff with this complex and technical transportation project. After a contractual scope of services was established, a broad-based advisory committee was set up to drive the process. This group, referred to as the Transportation Element Advisory Committee (TEAC) included representatives of business, key departments of town government, pertinent committees, particularly the Transportation Advisory committee, and the full Planning Board. The TEAC participated in five themed, structured workshops organized around the different transportation modes; these workshops were: 1) Overview and Analysis of the Existing Transportation System, all modes; 2) Transportation Demand Management and the Land Use Connection; 4) Traffic Analysis/Infrastructure Improvements; 5) Bicycle/Pedestrian Modes. Following this phase, the TEAC worked interactively with staff on the drafting of each part of the document, offering detailed comments throughout the drafting process. All such comments were incorporated or otherwise addressed in the multiple revisions of the chapter drafts by staff and consultant.

The Transportation Element is organized as follows:

CHAPTER I: PROJECT HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Important background information on where the Transportation Element fits into the larger long-range planning activities of the Town of Lexington. Includes a brief summary of process, participants and the workshops and meetings that drove the effort.

CHAPTER II: EXISTING CONDITIONS

A detailed description and critical analysis of the local and regional transportation system in all travel modes—automobile and roadway network; transit and paratransit; transportation demand management; bicycle and walking.

CHAPTER III: CONSIDERATION OF TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

The key planning phase connecting the analysis of existing conditions with the detailed future implementation plan. It is driven by the goals and objectives of the public participation process and structured around debate over alternative transportation improvement and mitigation measures in all modes, as well as land use policies.

CHAPTER IV: IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

The final slate of recommended implementation measures offered by the TEAC and Planning Board, organized strategically around goals and objectives, prioritized in terms of ease of implementation (and secondarily by time duration), and identifying likely primary and secondary players who might logically lead the effort around each proposed transportation measure.

APPENDICES

Various helpful information too detailed, lengthy or peripheral to the process to warrant inclusion in the main body of the document, but still necessary to provide to afford greater depth to the Plan.

Composite Goals and Objectives from Vision 2020 and Comprehensive Plan (original, pre-process version)

The following composite goals and objectives are included for background reference, to make clearer the conceptual wellsprings of this Element. They are provided in their original, unedited form, as they appeared at the beginning of this transportation planning process. To see how they were incorporated, modified or expanded in this document, see the chapters further on entitled: Consideration of Transportation Strategies, and Implementing Actions, chapters three and four, respectively.

COMPOSITE GOALS & OBJECTIVES FROM VISION 20/20 & COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

1. Preserve the quality of life in Lexington through improved traffic management.
 - Reduce peak hour commuter traffic and tie-ups
 - Improve transit services
 - Promote public transportation
 - Pursue TDM/trip reduction techniques
 - Monitor and attempt to mitigate impacts from all proposed development and air travel expansion at the Hanscom civil airport
 - Ensure that Lexington will stay in the information loop on all Hanscom matters.
 - Require tie-in of expansion with road improvements and environmental coordination.
 - Improve traffic safety in high-accident locations
2. Increase transportation alternatives available to single occupancy vehicles
 - Increase availability of public transportation (local, regional and intercity).
 - Increase number of routes to major work sites and circumferential highways.
 - Better coordination of routes (with neighboring towns, “T”, commuter rail).
 - Work to establish more employer-based transit links & shared transit links.
 - Increase use of bicycles.
 - Educate public.
 - Encourage students to bicycle to school through incentive programs and secure bike parking.
 - Designate a bicycle route system and implement it.
 - Increase employer based transportation demand management programs and employee incentives to use them.
 - Increase pedestrian activity.
 - Improve infrastructure.
 - Increase school bus usage and reduce traffic at schools. Discourage driving to school by providing incentives to use other modes.
3. Use parking strategies to help achieve transportation goals at certain locations
 - Amend parking requirements so as to avoid excessive parking requirements for commercial and industrial uses.
 - Reduce vehicular trips from High School.
 - Increase parking fees (yearly fees, add parking meters).
 - Encourage use of buses and alternative modes; provide early education in the use of Lexpress.
4. Improve and better maintain the infrastructure

- Institute a capital improvements plan for traffic calming at strategic locations.
 - Improve road conditions.
 - Adhere to town study for 5-year repair and reconstruction plan.
 - Repair in a timely fashion.
 - Improve and expand sidewalk network.
 - Survey conditions and prioritize repairs.
 - Repair in a timely fashion.
 - Survey existing network and develop plan for expanding network.
 - Improve bicycle path conditions.
 - Survey bicycle path conditions and prioritize repairs.
5. Involve Lexington in local and regional transportation planning
- Adhere to the process to evaluate Lexington's transportation infrastructure.
 - Use the existing infrastructure survey process consistently.
 - Increase Lexington's involvement in regional planning.
 - Participate in regional planning organizations (HATS, MAPC/MAGIC, MAPC, Minuteman Group or other inter-local coordination).
 - Establish intermodal transportation routes connecting Lexington with transportation centers.
 - Improve access and coordination with regional transportation centers and airports (i.e. Woburn, Alewife, Route 128)
6. Investigate Land Use Policies that can assist with Transportation Goals
- Identify nodes and areas served by public transportation that might be logical for prudent planned development designations and greater mix of uses.
 - Update home occupation provisions in zoning, to reflect changing economic activity and eliminate commuters (but with protective controls).
 - Consider feasibility of adding limited housing uses at certain non-residential locations.

PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Initial Planning Board Meetings on Comprehensive Plan

May 6, 8 and 15; June 15 and 19; August 7 and 21, 2002

Planning Board and Transportation Element Advisory Committee Thematic Workshops

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|-------------------|---|
| September 9, 2002 | Kickoff Meeting, Discover Perspectives, Look for Common Themes |
| October 15, 2002 | Transportation Demand Management/Land Use-Transportation Connections |
| November 14, 2002 | Transportation Demand Management/Transit |
| December 18, 2002 | Traffic/Infrastructural Improvement Program/Policy Development |
| January 22, 2003 | Bicycle-Pedestrian Improvement Program/Final Land Use/Transportation Policies |

External Groups

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| November 20, 2002 | Presentation to the Annual Meeting of the South Lexington Transportation Task Force |
| February 4, 2003 | Presentation to the Lexington Business Partnership |

Active Participants

Planning Board and Staff

Sara Chase, John Davies, Anthony Galaitsis, Thomas Harden and Karl Kastorf, Planning Board; Glenn Garber; Elizabeth Macheck, Maryann McCall-Taylor; Elissa Tap, Planning Staff; Mary Jo Bohart, Economic Development Officer; David Carbonneau, Assistant Town Engineer; Gail Wagner, Transportation Coordinator; Michael Young, Management Intern

Consultants

Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. Watertown, MA: Howard Muise, Project Manager; Heidi Richards; Susan Sloane-Rossiter; Steve McNeill; William Cranshaw; Ken Schwartz and Galeeb Kachra

Transportation Element Advisory Committee (TEAC)

Residents: Lawrence Belvin, Robert Burbidge, Julian Bussgang, Richard Canale, Jacquelyn Davison, Thomas DeNoto, Elaine Dratch, Ed Ganshirt, Donald Graham, Ed Grant, Marita Hartshorn, Stewart Kennedy, Jeanne Krieger, William Levison, Wendy Manz, Michael Schroeder and Jerry Van Hook

Business: Charles Kalauskas, BSC Group; Alison McLaughlin, F. W. Dodge; Peter Nichols, The Beal Companies; Melissa Riccio, Ipswitch, Inc.; James Rosenfeld, Boston Properties; Roger Sudbury, MIT Lincoln Labs