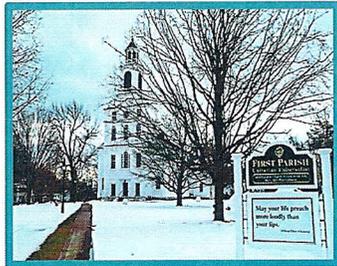


**The Bedford We Want:  
Shaping Our Future**

**Comprehensive Plan  
COMMENTS**



**Bedford Planning Board  
February, 2014**

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## *The third volume of the Comprehensive Plan:* **Comments Overview**

This Comments document is the third volume of the Comprehensive Plan. General public and board and committee comments in regard to the Comprehensive Plan and its companion Appendix were solicited upon publication and posting of the document in early December, 2013. The official period for submission of written comments ran from December 9, 2013 to January 17, 2014, although the latter date was slightly extended to Monday, January 20 due to staff being notified in advance that one set of comments from an elected official was coming “on or around” the January 17 date.

Following this written comment period, the Planning Board provided two more opportunities for anyone to offer their thoughts, at special public sessions held on January 28, 2014 and February 11, 2014. The minutes of those two sessions are included in this Comments volume. In addition, a short section is included for remarks from elected officials whose comments came in after the official period, in deference to their special knowledge and heavy community commitment.

All comments received are arranged by the individual respondent, rather than by topic, because many of the respondents touched upon several topical elements in the Plan. In all cases, responses prepared by staff and reviewed by the Planning Board are offered to one degree or another, ranging from short acknowledgements for the record to longer, more detailed explanations and remarks. The whole chronicle is arranged and formatted for convenient reading, with a clear visual connection between individual comments from each respondent and the corresponding explanations offered by the staff and Board. There is also a helpful synopsis of the issues raised by each respondent.

There is one more piece to this third volume: an “appendix within an appendix” where relevant material of a length too great for the two column tabular format is included.

Written Comments Received  
post-Plan publication  
December 9, 2013 to  
January 17, 2014 (+/-)  
*[with Planning explanations,  
responses & acknowledgements.]*

## SYNOPSIS OF COMMENTS

Name and affiliation (if any)	Outline of comments
Sue Baldauf, Director of Youth & Family Services	General support; specific support for pedestrian/bike connectivity, transit, Complete Streets, solar array; questions about population loss after 1970s, and mansionization; minor edits
Diane Bujalski	Support for sidewalks, greenways and mixed residential/business areas, but concerns about high density housing, school quality, perceived loss of open space and deer issue; suggests overhauling houses in disrepair
David Sukoff, ORASC	Corrections re ORASC's recommendations on playing fields
Bob Dorer, Transportation Advisory Committee	General support; intent to follow through on transportation/mobility
Frances Bigda-Peyton, Transition Town Bedford	Suggests promoting economic resilience via support for small businesses and buying local; also promoting local food production with hands-on coaching
Beatrice Brunkhorst, Board of Health	Would like to see parks and playgrounds for new developments, esp. on Middlesex Turnpike; also linked sidewalks
John Stella	Advocates lower property taxes to stimulate economic growth; suggests office parks for small businesses
Carla Olson, Healthy Bedford	General support, especially integration of healthy and active living initiatives
Michael Barbehenn, Trails Committee & Land Steward	Would like to ensure pedestrian access in new developments and elsewhere; comments on trails in relation to historical interpretation, outdoor equipment, other transportation and business; mentions need for recruitment of stewards; suggests Trails Committee participation in update of OSR Plan; comments on housing (walkability and density)
Matt Heid	Supports Complete Streets approach; urges moving

ahead with pedestrian and bike improvements on The Great Road

William Moonan,  
Selectman

General support, plus suggestions for clarification or improvement, including: mention recession in discussion of tax base; distinguish National and Local Historic Districts; add Town Center operations to Recreation in goal for improving communications; recognize Recreation Commission's involvement in addressing water quality issues

Carol Amick,  
Volunteer Coordinating  
Committee, but commenting as  
individual resident

General support, plus comments on housing, historic resources, idea of a solar farm, transportation, recruitment of volunteers, and selection of action priorities; errata list

Michael Rosenberg

General appreciation, plus corrections/detail on history of VA Hospital and Middlesex Community College

Ed Pierce, Chair, School

Economic development and need for revenue, alternative transportation lowering busing costs, long term capital investment planning, Coast Guard housing and avoiding school impacts

NAME OF COMMENTATOR: *Sue Baldauf, Director, YFS*

DATE SUBMITTED: 12/19/13

ISSUES COVERED (BRIEF SUMMARY): *Population, Housing, Transportation and Connectivity, other factual adjustments*

Comments Submitted	Staff/PlanBd Responses/Explanations
Credit Page – My name is Sue, not Susan.	<b>So noted, with due apologies.</b>
Population #s – In 1-3 & 2-2, Bedford population is listed as 13,500. When I started here in 1997 population was 12,500 or thereabouts. In 3-1 population is listed as 12,595 & shows an increase from that to 13,320 between 2000 & 2010. Seems as though we lost people from 1970 to 2000 & graph 4-3 seems to indicate that as well. Do we know why?	<b>We do know why, in a general way. The construction rate of new houses dropped off dramatically from 1970 to 1990, plus Family size has declined steadily over the years.</b>
5-9 – I like the term “connectivity master plan” & will attempt to try to use that with both the pedestrian and bicycle master plan discussions. It ties in with your 6-3 goal of connectivity.	<b>No comment needed.</b>
Transportation – this whole section is terrific, specifically; 7-2 & #4 focus on infrastructure for connectivity 7-3 & #8 transit fragmentation & goals related to connectivity & reducing motor traffic, both of which are in line with Healthy Bedford goals 7-7 & complete streets suggestion timely & a good one Transportation snapshot & tables & maps in this section especially helpful	<b>No comment needed.</b>
Housing – 8-10 & 11 Any thoughts about limiting the square footage for new construction to prevent further mansionization & perhaps tear downs?	<b>State zoning law (MGL Chap. 40A, section 3) doesn’t allow restrictions on the interior floor area of single family homes. You can chip away at it with modified dimensional requirements but you can’t put a ceiling on house size.</b>
9-10 – under YFS, the Corner is listed as a YFS program & it is technically a program of the Recreation Department & under their budget though our YFS Peer Leaders	<b>So noted for the record.</b>

work with them on some programs. YFS has some middle school after school programs that are run separately at JGMS & BTV.	
9-17 – love the suggestion of a solar array at the landfill – great idea!	<b>No comment needed.</b>
9-21, 10-5, 10-11, 10-13, 10-15, 10-17, 10-18, & 10-24 – all include goals we will support & work on with respective boards & committees.	<b>Duly noted, with gratitude.</b>
Appendix – p. 10-11 Where is the Town of Bedford as an employer – I did not see?	<b>The Town of Bedford employment is actually listed there.</b>
P.42 What does the red mean in the graph at the top?	<b>The red key item did drop off in the formatting; red = <u>2010</u>.</b>

*Scroll down to see comments of next respondent.*



NAME OF COMMENTATOR: David Sukoff, former Chair,  
Outdoor Recreation Area Study Committee

DATE SUBMITTED: 1/02/14

ISSUES COVERED (BRIEF SUMMARY): *Economic Development, Revenue Generation*

	Staff/PlanBd Responses/Explanations
<p>I finally had a chance to peruse the Comprehensive Plan. I read the following paragraph regarding ORASC:</p> <p>Another ORASC recommendation was construction of two playing fields at the so-called St. Michael's property purchased by the Town in 2004, leading to further discussion over the synthetic versus grass playing surface issue. It has now been determined that the new fields will feature natural turf. Another proposal is to use the 41-acre Town-owned site off Concord Road, formerly known as Princeton Properties, for a blend of activity, with about 10 acres devoted to new athletic fields and the remaining land permanently protected as a natural area.</p> <p>To be clear, ORASC did not recommend constructing fields at St. Michael's. The only field we made a recommendation on was Sabourin. We provided the Selectmen with a list of field construction possibilities. St. Michael's was one of them. The list of possibilities also included converting other natural fields to synthetic turf, and reconfiguring H field.</p> <p>I am also not certain that it "has been determined" that IF there were to be fields there, that they would be natural. That was seemingly the preference of the Selectmen, but I do not believe it was ever determined. If it had, it would not have been from a recommendation of the ORASC. We did not recommend either way. We only recommend that they go ahead with the study of grass fields. We also clearly recommended that no new grass field should be built until best practices have been implemented on existing fields. Again, the key thing is that the Plan implies a recommendation was made by the ORASC to build fields at St.</p>	<p>See page 37 of this document for excerpt from ORASC Study.</p>

Michael's. This did not happen.

Thanks.

Dave (Sukoff)

*Scroll down to see comments of next respondent.*



NAME OF COMMENTATOR: *Michael Barbehenn, Chair, Trails Committee and head of Land Stewards*

DATE SUBMITTED: 1-17-14

ISSUES COVERED (BRIEF SUMMARY): *Population, Housing, Transportation and Connectivity, other factual adjustments*

Comments Submitted	Staff/PlanBd Responses/Explanations
<p>Zoning and Regulatory Changes: I would like to help promote a more walkable town. Is it feasible to include some language about ensuring pedestrian access through or adjacent to new development? Or to have language in support of this goal in the decision process, perhaps in consolation with existing and proposed conservation and municipal lands? For example, it would be good to have wider sidewalks in front of strips like the Blake block. The planned access trail to Robinson drive may have been lost.</p>	<p><b>There are several existing provisions for pedestrian access: Subdivision Reg.'s require sidewalks or footpaths and specify a width but not a requirement for off-way footpath easements; Zoning Bylaw in Mixed Use requires pedestrian access to buildings and between sites; Limited Business &amp; General Business districts refer to pedestrian-friendly site design. There is some room for improvement in these documents. However, there are also some constraints: difficulty of coordinating access between private parcels if not being developed concurrently; legal objections/ compensation for 'takings' in some cases; and protected use rights limiting review of some developments. Where the regulations can be applied, careful review with creative advice early in the design process, and follow-through on compliance can make a difference.</b></p> <p><b>A plan for a connected network to aim for can also help to identify opportunities.</b></p> <p><b>The idea of an overlay district for parts of The Great Road (LU#5/ ED#4) is partly to coordinate redevelopment of commercial properties with street improvements and with adjacent properties.</b></p>

<p>LU#6. What is the process by which we learn of such needs and how and when are the different committees engaged? Or is this LU#7?</p>	<p><b>Plan lists various committees (incl. Trails) to get involved in a pedestrian/bicycle connectivity plan, and some initial steps being taken (see LU#10/TR#9). Many permitting hearings, such as subdivisions and special permits, are advertised in the Bedford Minuteman, and agendas posted online.</b></p>
<p>LU#8. The proposed Circuit Trails are planned to integrate with historical points of interest. If there are other places of significance, they could be integrated into the towns "Walking Plan".</p>	<p><b>So noted and made part of the record. Other committees may be able to offer suggestions as well.</b></p>
<p>LU#9. The Trails committee has been discussing the use of QR codes along the Circuit trails and in literature (e.g., Trails Map).</p>	<p><b>So noted and made part of the record.</b></p>
<p>LU#10. Trails has discussed include outdoor equipment near trails, perhaps at playgrounds for parents to use while watching children.</p>	<p><b>Fair comment, duly noted; it is hoped the Comprehensive Plan will encourage people to pursue these kinds of coordinated projects.</b></p>
<p>LU#12. Consider Land Stewards and proposed Trail Stewards.</p>	<p><b>Suggestion noted and endorsed for future consideration.</b></p>
<p>Economic Development: walk/bike access increases business opportunities for both employees and customers. The proposed Circuit trail has planned links to businesses.</p>	<p><b>Suggestion noted and endorsed for future consideration.</b></p>
<p>NC#4. Trails participation.</p>	<p><b>Trails Committee will be welcome to contribute to an update of the Open Space and Recreation Plan.</b></p>
<p>TR#14. Trails is almost complete with initial draft of this.</p>	<p><b>Update noted and welcomed.</b></p>

<p>H#4. Consider whether key groups perhaps should be biased towards locations near (walking to) amenities such as Government and Shopping.</p>	<p><b>Housing need studies could consider this possibility; it can also be addressed in any revisions of the Mixed use overlay zoning districts.</b></p>
<p>H#7. I was thinking if Lot sizes were small, then house sizes would be limited. But there could be common areas. But higher density is good for some businesses like nearby restaurants.</p>	<p><b>No comment.</b></p>
<p>S&amp;F#7. Balance needs. I.e., slow family traffic on minuteman extension (vs. high speed traffic if it is paved when an improved shoulder along 62 will serve the high speed traffic).</p>	<p><b>Concern for accommodating a variety of users is noted. There will be a need for public consultation on design choices.</b></p>

*Scroll down to see comments of next respondent.*



NAME OF COMMENTATOR: <b>John Stella, citizen</b> <span style="float: right;">DATE SUBMITTED: <b>1/15/14</b></span>	
ISSUES COVERED (BRIEF SUMMARY): <b>Economic Development, Revenue Generation</b>	
<b>Comments Submitted</b>	<b>Staff/PlanBd Responses/Explanations</b>
We need to lower property taxes for business, small business in only in business and commercial (corporate) districts in the town of Bedford. This would provide more revenue stream to Bedford 's tax base.	<b>So noted for the record.</b>
We need to lower residential, business, and corporate property taxes in Bedford. This will create more jobs and economy growth to those who live and work in Bedford.	<b>So noted for the record.</b>
We need to lower residential, business, and corporate property taxes in Bedford. This will create more jobs and economy growth to those who live and work in Bedford	<b>So noted for the record.</b>
I have a lot of new ideas how to simulate Bedford economy growth	<b>Ideas welcomed.</b>
In 1984 i have a bumper sticker from the chamber of commerce ( <i>reading</i> ) " Bedford means business " .	<b>No comment needed.</b>
We need new campaign to encourage corporations and small business to relocate to Bedford by lowering property taxes to encourage economy and investment growth in our town future.	<b>No comment needed.</b>

*Scroll down to see comments of next respondent.*



ISSUES COVERED (BRIEF SUMMARY): *Historic Resources, Cultural/historic resources as economic development tool, Housing for older residents, Transportation, Designation of priority Actions*

Comments Submitted	Staff/PlanBd Responses/Explanations
<p>Dear Chairman Cohen and Board members:                      Enclosed are my comments on the December, 2013 Comprehensive Plan. Thanks to your efforts, and those of the Planning Department, the Advisory Committee, and many other committee members, town staff and residents, the Plan identifies a variety of challenges as well as thoughtful suggestions for improving Bedford's future. My overall reaction to the entire Plan is highly favorable, but for the most part, I am not commenting on those positive aspects. Because of the quantity of comments that you may be receiving, my written comments focus primarily on areas where I think improvement to the Plan is needed.</p> <p>My comments stem principally from my deep interest in the Town's wonderful historic resources, my love of the environment and the sustainability of our natural resources, and my concerns for Bedford's significant aging population. My comments are my own, and do not represent any local committees or organizations of which I am a member. I also noted a number of errata while reading through the document, and I have attached a list to this letter.</p>	<p><b>So noted and Board and staff are grateful for the thoughts.</b></p>
<p>I believe the Plan should include a stronger emphasis on the need for housing for seniors, empty nesters and residents looking to downsize.</p>	<p><b>So noted for the record.</b></p>
<p>The Executive Summary (p. 1-5) makes a good statement that Bedford "can better identify the needs of underserved sectors, such as empty nesters..."</p>	<p><b>There is a distinction between income-independent older residents who would like to leave their residence but stay in the community, and seniors who are income-eligible for subsidized senior housing. No surveys and special studies document these needs in detail, and one of the policies promoted in the Plan is to engage in such analysis to better understand the needs.</b></p>
<p>But this concept is not repeated everywhere possible in other chapters of the Plan. For</p>	<p><b>In recommending "housing for seniors and/or assisted living complexes" in this area we were</b></p>

<p>example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The “area vision” for a “North Road Center” identified in the Land Use chapter (p. 4-7) mentions the idea of encouraging “housing for seniors and/or assisted living complexes” but fails to include any reference to housing for empty nesters and downsizers. Perhaps the Plan drafters consider “housing for seniors” and housing for “empty nesters” and/or “downsizers” as interchangeable terminology. If that is the intent, I recommend inserting an explanation of such in the Glossary, or using all three terms together, throughout the Plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>mindful of the fact that it could be problematic to introduce additional traffic taking access off Route 4/225 on the short stretch between two busy intersections. These types of housing generate low numbers of trips. The distinction between housing for “empty nesters” and “seniors” is not totally clear cut but there can be different age thresholds (often 55 versus 62), and unrestricted dwellings of different types are suited to different mobility levels, for example townhouses versus single story houses or elevator-accessible apartments.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While the Housing chapter “Discussion” section (p. 8-11) mentions the potential that accessory apartments and the Pine Hill Road Coast Guard housing can provide additional low-cost housing options for Bedford, there are no complementary strategies related to these ideas. I recommend the addition of two bullets in the Housing “Strategies” section and complementary items in the Action Plan section. One bullet could appear under “Zoning and Regulatory Changes” and include language similar to: “Consider regulatory changes that would allow unattached accessory apartments under certain conditions.” The second bullet could be included under the “Housing Planning and Advocacy” strategies list and provide for the establishment of a formal effort between the Selectmen and Housing Authority to proceed immediately to plan a small, cottage-style home development (using the existing structures) for seniors and empty-nesters using the Pine Hill Coast Guard housing. Action Items to effectuate these strategies should be added to Chapter 10.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Revision of accessory apartment zoning rules probably didn’t make it through to the action items because of mixed feelings from participants about the likely potential. The practicality of having units separate from the main dwelling is likely to vary with lot size, but the subject can certainly be reviewed.</b></p> <p><b>A specific proposal for the Coast Guard housing was not made, although the potential opportunity was flagged, because the property is still under federal control. Since the Plan was written, the Selectmen have hosted a preliminary public discussion regarding future use of this property, which is a desirable initial step toward discussions with federal agencies and engagement with their property disposition processes.</b></p>
<p><u>Historic resources as an important tool to shape land use decisions, economic development and enhancement of cultural resources:</u> While the Plan discusses the importance of</p>	<p><b>The relevance and economic and community character value of historic resources to new development is recognized in the Natural and Cultural Resources element, see Issue #5 on p. 6-3, protection of community character and Goal #8 on</b></p>

<p>protecting the Town’s historic resources, I recommend that the discussion specifically emphasize that our historic resources can benefit future land use, economic development and cultural resources decisions. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The “Land Use” chapter lists a number of “Issues and Opportunities” on p. 4-3. One such opportunity (#3) states: There is an opportunity to better utilize natural resources and protected open space areas as a green framework or template for Bedford’s development and redevelopment.” The same can be said about using the Town’s historic resources. I suggest the addition of a similar comment as a new #6 on this list.</li> </ul>	<p><b>p. 6-4, craft and strengthen zoning framework to better organize compact, multi-purpose development around cultural/historic resources.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The last paragraph on p. 4-6 should be re-written as follows: “Since the town is mostly built-out, change will largely result from redevelopment, infill development, and infrastructure improvements. Zoning and public investment should be used to enhance the town’s vision of interconnected neighborhoods, commercial centers, <u>historic buildings</u>, and municipal services, leveraging private investment in support of shared goals.”</li> </ul>	<p><b>So noted for the record.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Economic Development chapter fails to mention the positive economic effects of tourism in enhancing small businesses that operate near tourist sites. (More people come to Bedford via the Minuteman Bikeway than by any other means.) The idea that historic properties in the Depot Park and Town Center areas can attract tourists that will benefit businesses in those areas is a reason for including a “strategy” for enhancing and promoting historic buildings and sites. A complementary Action Item should appear in Chap. 10, the Action Plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Plan does mention these issues. The Natural and Cultural Resources element contains Issue #6, <u>economic benefits of cultural resources</u>. The Economic Development element vision includes “the Depot area supports a village center with small businesses that serve...museum and park visitors, and bicycle path users” and the more general: “Bedford’s assets offer competitive advantages that attract employment growth...” It is acknowledged and accepted that the respondent would like to place even greater emphasis on them. Also see response to follow.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Natural and Cultural Resources chapter should better emphasize the importance of historic resources. For</li> </ul>	<p><b>The phrase “cultural resources” is often used in the plan to include historic resources; they are used almost synonymously, although cultural is the more</b></p>

<p>example, the 6<sup>th</sup> item listed under “Issues and Opportunities” (p. 6-3) should be titled “<u>Economic benefits of cultural and historic resources.</u>”</p>	<p><b>broadly encompassing term. The text of this Issue begins with the statement “<i>Cultural and historic buildings and features are underutilized as an economic resource, and as a planning tool in retaining and building community character.</i>”</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The “Strategies” section of the Natural and Cultural Resources chapter should include, under “Regulatory Tools and Incentives” (p. 6-9), a new bullet: “Consider extending the one-year demolition delay bylaw to a longer period to discourage destruction of older housing stock and allow greater opportunities for negotiation and town action.” A complementary Action Item should be added to Chapter 10.</li> </ul>	<p><b>This idea would need to be evaluated cautiously because a delay of long duration could be onerous, and in some circumstances be legally challenged as a taking (subject to compensation), and might not help to achieve creative, viable solutions. Case studies of experiences with the one-year rule might help to inform a discussion.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The “Strategies” section of the Natural and Cultural Resources chapter should include a new bullet, under “Partnerships” (p. 6-10): “Consider creating a new non-profit entity or a partnership between the Historic Preservation Commission, the Historic District Commission, the Land Acquisition Committee and the Historical Society to take the lead in acquiring historic properties or arranging for State and/or Federal Register status to protect the properties from destruction if/when eventually purchased privately. In addition, an Action Item should be added for this strategy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>This is a valid comment. There could be benefit in the existing committees discussing the need for a stronger, more proactive partnership.</b></p>
<p><u>Additional economic development strategy:</u> One initiative not mentioned in the Plan, that may help bring new business to the Crosby Drive or Middlesex Turnpike area, would be a solar farm developed through a partnership with the Town, the state, NStar and the landlords in this part of town. Such a farm would provide lower-cost energy to new industries locating in this area. I suggest adding to the “Capital Investment” portion of the “Strategies” section in the Economic Development chapter (p. 5-12 and 5-13), a bullet to investigate such an idea, and add a complementary Action Item in Chapter 10.</p>	<p><b>A photovoltaic array is likely to be a suboptimal use of valuable industrial/office/R &amp; D land in the Crosby Drive/Middlesex Turnpike/Burlington Road area. However there may be potential in town for large solar panel installations where they do not interfere with other uses, such as industrial/commercial roofs, parking lots and the old landfill on Carlisle Road.</b></p>

<p><u>Additional transportation strategies:</u>  The Plan discusses the need to improve traffic flow, but does not consider one possible solution that may work in some locations in town. I do not know the precise transportation term for this proposal, but it would entail opening up the parking lots at some businesses (particularly those on The Great Rd.) so that cars would travel from lot to adjacent lot and then exit out one curb cut, instead of many as is now the case. This is currently done by the owners of the Bedford Funeral Home, who must have an arrangement with TD Bank that allows funeral home parking to exit through TD Bank's parking lot, and out onto Webber Ave. There are other areas in town where the same concept could work, and potentially move cars more effectively. For example, if the parking at Old Town Hall could flow into the two adjacent Great Road business parking lots, fewer curb cuts might result in better traffic flow. To this end, I suggest adding another bullet to the "Strategic Planning and Multi-Modal Concepts" section of "Strategies" in the Transportation chapter (p. 7-15) – as well as an Action Item for Planning Board and DPW review -- to identify locations where this concept would reduce congestion.</p>	<p><b>The problems caused by multiple curb cuts for individual businesses have received attention in discussions. Means of achieving improvements (whether physical or operational) on private property are limited, especially when there needs to be agreement between adjacent owners, but staff and boards often make suggestions when reviewing permitting applications, and the mixed use zoning provisions that favor designs for large sites that minimize curb cuts and encourage pedestrian circulation. Further zoning initiatives and adjustments may be helpful. In other words, "chipping away" at the problem through the regulatory process might offer the most practical way of opening up access between properties.</b></p>
<p>In addition, I also suggest adding another bullet under the "Education, Marketing &amp; Advocacy" strategies (p. 7-16) that involves working with business and industry representatives and the Chamber of Commerce to encourage the establishment of ride-sharing, bicycling-to-work and work-at-home plans for local employees. This strategy also should be included in an Action Item in Chapter 10.</p>	<p><b>The concept of Transportation Demand Management, extensively discussed in the transportation element, and carried into the action items, covers these types of employer initiatives and public/private partnerships.</b></p>
<p><u>Addressing the problem of "McMansions" in old neighborhoods:</u>  The Plan includes some excellent discussion points on the "mansionization" activities that are drastically changing the character and face of many older residential neighborhoods. (See p. 8-3, #8 and p. 8-10, bottom paragraph.) However, various sections of the Plan appear</p>	<p><b>MGL Ch. 40A Sec 3 is generally interpreted as prohibiting a direct limit on the regulation of floor space of single family dwellings, although zoning setbacks, side yards and height limits that are geared to the impact of buildings on neighbors can have at least some positive effect. A small number of towns in eastern MA have passed so-called "Mansionization" laws, but none of them actually</b></p>

<p>to be inconsistent regarding this activity. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neither the “Strategies” section of the Land Use chapter (p. 4-9) nor the Action Items in Chapter 10 propose any regulatory tools or incentives to eliminate or reduce the McMansion syndrome.</li> </ul>	<p><b>place a ceiling on the floor area of new or expanded dwelling. In discussions on this subject, opinions have varied considerably as to whether it is undesirable for older small houses to be replaced with larger new ones. Demographic predictions suggest an increased demand for small homes but market practice is supporting a variety of unit sizes, including large single family houses, and some owner, builders and realtors would not support tighter constraints that could affect their property values.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The “Strategies” section of the Land Use chapter (p. 4-10) suggests the development of policy measures and zoning provisions “that better protect the character of Bedford’s pre-World War II neighborhoods,” but does not mention steps to eliminate or reduce the McMansion syndrome.</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Plan specifically proposes consideration of Neighborhood Conservation Districts, which can help to preserve the character of older neighborhoods by adjusting dimensional, bulk and massing standards. Also see preceding response.</b></p>
<p><u>Support for improved strategies to encourage more local volunteers:</u>  Several places in the Plan (p. 4-4, #6; p. 4-10, last bullet; p. 10-6, LU#12) suggest strategies for improving the Town’s ability to identify and recruit volunteers. I heartily endorse these proposals!</p>	<p><b>So noted for the record.</b></p>
<p><u>Chapter 10 Action Plans:</u>  Nowhere in this chapter, or elsewhere in the Plan, is there an explanation of how the Action Plan items were categorized, resulting in some labeled as a “Critical Priority within the Whole Plan” and shown by check marks on the right hand column of the Action Plan tables. Because the Plan was prepared by the Planning Board and the Town’s Planning Department, it is understandable that many of the Action Items attributed to these two groups are listed as “critical priority.” However, to allay concerns that the “squeaky wheel” syndrome translated into certain items being labeled as such, I suggest including an explanation about how these decisions were made.</p>	<p><b>The critical priority checkmarks, while not “scientific” in their designation, nevertheless represent a conscientious and sincere attempt to reflect the priorities that emerged from the public participation process that drove the Plan. This includes the preliminary phase with board and committee dialogue with the Planning Board and the two structured public workshops, followed by the formal drafting and review process with the Board and the Citizens Advisory Committee, through two complete line-by-line draft reviews.</b></p>
<p><b>[ALSO SEE ERRATA SHEET AT REAR OF THIS DOCUMENT.]</b></p>	

*Scroll down to see comments of next respondent.*



NAME OF COMMENTATOR: William Moonan		DATE SUBMITTED: 1/20/14 (extended with permission from 1/17/14)
ISSUES COVERED (BRIEF SUMMARY): Tax Issues, Historic Resources, Regulatory Jurisdictions, Factual Clarifications		
Comments Submitted	Staff/PlanBd Responses/Explanations	
I want to complement the Planning Board and, in particular, Planning Director Glenn Garber, for creating the very extensive and thoughtful Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Bedford. You have asked for comments. While I support the vast majority of what you have written, I believe it would be most useful for your purposes to point out areas that might be improved.	<b>So noted and Board and staff are grateful for the thoughts.</b>	
Page 5-6, TAX BASE: While it is true, as stated in the last line on that page, that the increased shift in the tax burden is due, in part, "to the fact the business growth has not kept pace," the reason it hasn't kept pace is due to the effects of the recession that started in 2007. By not mentioning the recession, the reader is left to come to incorrect conclusions about the cause, such as lack of marketing on the part of the Town.	<b>Fair and valid comment. The recession is mentioned in other post-Plan documents issued by the Planning office. but should be made part of the Plan itself.</b>	
Page 5-11, 2nd Paragraph: The desire to revise overlays to "minimize the jurisdictional redundancy that was manifest in the construction of the Blake Block project" may be a good idea. But the Blake Block is located in the Historic District. Because this was an LIP, the Planning Board was legally the controlling body. But the HDC always controls design issues within the District. The Planning Board could have ignored the HDC, but this would have been politically undesirable. I would suggest, therefore, that the Blake Block was not a good example of "jurisdictional redundancy" in that it would seem to be hard to see how revising the overlay would have changed anything in this case.	<b>Mr. Moonan used the term "LIP" in his comment. It is probable that he meant "special permit," because the Blake Block to our knowledge has no LIP status and the PB is not the authorizing authority for a LIP under Ch. 40B; the Selectmen are. Comments are fair, but there actually was considerable overlap with regulation of certain features of the development, both on private site and the public domain, variously involving Planning Board, HDC, DPW, and sometimes Selectmen as Road Commissioners. Other actors included Bicycle Advisory Committee, Police Department, Code Enforcement and others. The point is that an internal regulatory agreement at the <i>beginning</i> of the permitting process would have helped to avoid such difficulties.</b>	
Page 6-7, HISTORIC/CULTURAL ASSETS: The statement that the National Register Old Town Center District will be enlarged soon is true. However, most people don't understand that the Town Center District is also a Local Historic District subject to control by the HDC. The buildings falling within the new National District, but outside the original Town Center District, will not be under the oversight of the HDC. I believe this difference should be made clear to avoid misconceptions on	<b>Agreed, so noted for the record. Sometimes in trying to strike a balance between making substantive points and controlling the length of the document, some thoughts are not optimally expressed.</b>	

the part of the reader.	
Page 8-7, 2nd Last Paragraph: The description of the number of units managed by the Bedford Housing Authority fails to mention the 12 units of family housing located on Elm Street.	<b>This information is included in the Housing Appendix.</b>
Page 9-1 (Reverse side): The Town Facilities Overview fails to list the Town storage and composting site located at the old Town Dump on Carlisle Road. If the reference to “DPW Seasonal Storage” is meant to refer to the old Town Dump, this should be more clearly stated and placed with the other DPW facilities.	<b>So noted for the record.</b>
Page 9-3, GOALS: There probably should be a No. 8 which uses the same words as No. 7, but substitutes the words “Town Center operations” for the word “Recreation” .... So noted for the record.	<b>So noted for the record.</b>
Page 9-12, 1st bullet point: Water quality issues have, indeed, been addressed by the DPW. But this work has been initiated and overseen by the Recreation Commission, and, in some cases, funded by Recreation’s revolving fund. The Town Center, Inc. manages all the rentals of Town facilities to third parties on behalf of the Town, the same communication requirements exist for Town Center, Inc. as do for the Recreation Department. Commission’s involvement should be noted.	<b>Valid point, so noted for the record. The Commission’s involvement should be noted.</b>
I hope you find the above comments useful. I offer them in the spirit of making something that is quite good a little better, not as negative comments. Thank you for a prodigious effort well done.	

*Scroll down to see comments of next respondent.*



NAME OF COMMENTATOR: *Bea Brunkhorst, Co-Chair, Board of Health*

DATE SUBMITTED: *1/15/14*

ISSUES COVERED (BRIEF SUMMARY): *Population, Housing, Transportation and Connectivity, other factual adjustments*

Comments Submitted	Staff/PlanBd Responses/Explanations
<p>I am co-chair of the Board of Health and would like to make a few comments. Primarily I am concerned over the lack of park and or playground for the new developments in town especially along Middlesex Turnpike. I would like to get into the plan somehow language that encourages future planning boards to take this into consideration for any new development.</p> <p>On page 39 it does mention Middlesex Turnpike vision play lots- which I am not sure what that means. Park development along Middlesex Turnpike would help attract businesses as well giving their employees a place to exercise for example.</p>	<p><b>Ms. Brunkhorst makes some excellent points about the need for more parks and playgrounds in town, especially with developments that abut the Middlesex Turnpike. We would assume that she means the three multi-family developments on that road, i.e. Village at Taylor Pond, Heritage at Bedford Springs and Village at Bedford Woods, although in her 5<sup>th</sup> sentence (“Park development along Middlesex Turnpike would help attract businesses...”) she seems to infer properties and uses other than the 3 multi-family projects. While only Taylor Pond was within Planning Board jurisdiction—the other two are 40B projects granted by Comprehensive Permit from the ZBA—her overriding point seems clear: the regulatory process or other means should be used to achieve more parks and playgrounds, as an aesthetic amenity, a health and wellness benefit, an attraction for business and sometimes to provide a unifying connection between separate properties or land uses. We embrace this thought. She would also like to create more parks elsewhere in town, and Ms. Brunkhorst further underscores the importance of a linked sidewalk plan.</b></p>
<p>Perhaps mixed use discussion could include parks like on page 101.</p> <p>On page 127 the lack of parks could be mentioned On page 136 section 9-21 a linked sidewalk plan could be emphasized.</p> <p>Action Plan</p> <p>Parks could also be mentioned under CD#1 and 2.</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Thank you for considering my comments. Kind Regards, Bea</i></p>	

*Scroll down to see comments of next respondent.*



NAME OF COMMENTATOR: <i>Matt Heid, 4 Ruben Duren Way, Citizen</i> <span style="float: right;">DATE SUBMITTED: 1/17/14</span>	
ISSUES COVERED (BRIEF SUMMARY): <i>Complete Streets, Bicycle Commuting</i>	
Comments Submitted	Staff/PlanBd Responses/Explanations
<p>I am writing to express my great support, enthusiasm, and appreciation for the "Complete Streets" approach and focus of the Comprehensive Plan's long-range transportation and development plan. For a multitude of reasons, this is absolutely the correct approach and direction the town should take in its efforts to mitigate traffic issues, improve the health and quality of life of its residents, and reduce its global warming emissions.</p> <p>I represent the small percentage of Bedford residents who bike commute year-round to work, and take MBTA bus 62 on the few occasions that weather makes riding difficult or unsafe. The benefits of this are clear, both to me personally and to the town overall. By riding daily from Bedford Center to Harvard Square in Cambridge, largely via the Minuteman Bikeway, a 28-mile round-trip, I enjoy regular exercise that helps keep me healthy and fit. I do not drive, and thus represent one less vehicle on Bedford's roads. And by bike commuting, I produce exactly zero carbon emissions, helping to reduce the town's global warming footprint.</p> <p>And yet despite my commitment to cycling whenever possible, I do not ride from my home in Bedford Center to complete basic errands along the Great Road because I do not consider it safe to do so. I am thrilled to read that the Comprehensive Plan seeks to address this by working to steadily improve the Great Road corridor to better, and more safely, integrate bicycling and walking opportunities so that more residents, including myself and my family, will have the option to keep the car in the driveway and hop on bicycles or walk instead.</p>	<p><b>Comments accepted with agreement and gratitude.</b></p>

*Scroll down to see comments of next respondent.*



NAME OF COMMENTATOR: *Bob Dorer, Transportation Advisory Committee*

DATE SUBMITTED: 0/1/11/14

ISSUES COVERED (BRIEF SUMMARY): *Transportation*

Dear Bedford Planning Board members and staff: First, congratulations on a great Comprehensive Plan document. We on the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) were very impressed with it, both the content and the quality of the writing. Unfortunately due to our TAC meeting schedule we were unable to discuss a unified group of comments from the TAC prior to your deadline of January 17<sup>th</sup>. We do intend to discuss it at upcoming TAC meetings and our goal is to help the Planning Board, and the rest of the town, make this plan a true living document where tangible concrete progress is made in the various transportation areas discussed within the plan. We were impressed with not only the plan's transportation sections but also all the other areas of the plan that acknowledge the importance of a robust and diversified transportation network and transportation options for the citizens of Bedford and surrounding communities (over a 100 references to "transportation" if we counted correctly!).

Comments accepted with agreement and gratitude.

We wanted you to know we are committed to utilizing the material in this plan as we continue to work towards fulfilling our purpose as described in our charter ; *"To examine, evaluate and advise the Selectmen regarding board actions and measures that will improve overall resident mobility, expand the use of non-automobile based methods of local and regional transportation, and improve traffic circulation and availability of transportation services that implement the transportation-related recommendations of the Town's Vision Statement and Comprehensive Plan."*

Comments accepted with agreement and gratitude.



NAME OF COMMENTATOR: *Diane Bujalski, , Citizen*

DATE SUBMITTED: *1/17/14*

ISSUES COVERED (BRIEF SUMMARY): *Residential growth, school impacts, other issues*

<b>Comments Submitted</b>	<b>Staff/PlanBd Responses/Explanations</b>
<p>Having just read through the town plan I, I agree with most proposals i.e.: sidewalks, green ways, mixed residential/business areas. I do, however, think the town should think long and hard about implementing "cluster" and "cottage" and "high density" living spaces. Look around town!!! We already have way too many apartments, condos and 40B units. This increase of units is putting a HUGE strain on our school systems in town Not one word was mentioned regarding our HUGH drop in school ratings this past year. Desirable towns have EXCELLENT school systems i.e.: Lexington, Concord, Carlisle etc. there are many neighborhoods that have homes on disrepair that would benefit from overhauls and meet the needs for "affordable" housing and beautify the town. We need people to want to live in Bedford, contribute to our tax base and educational programs. In addition, we have already taken away a large percentage of our green space already, forcing in the deer population into our yards and roads. I strongly feel a "less is more" approach is what this town needs at this point. Improvement is needed but increase in population, cluster housing and 40B are not the solutions now.</p>	<p><b>See public information package entitled "Fact Sheet" at the end of the Comments Volume for full explanations and responses to Ms. Bujalski's commentary. The Fact Sheet was published in January/14 in local print and online media and posted on the town website, with links on Planning Facebook page. It was prepared for the purpose of offering factual information for citizen concerns expressed outside of the Comprehensive Plan, while Ms. Bujalski's comments were submitted wholly in regard to the Plan.</b></p> <p><b>The basic assumption that school growth and performance issues are wholly attributable to multi-family housing is not supported by factual information learned from data gathered during and after publication of the Comprehensive Plan, as well as performance statistics from the Schools through 2013. School management &amp; performance is also not customarily a part of community plans such as this one.</b></p>

**Public Outreach Comments**  
(post-Plan publication meetings,  
January 28, 2014 and February 11,  
2014, excerpted minutes)

**BEDFORD PLANNING BOARD**  
**Regular Session Minutes**  
**Town Hall—Selectmen's Meeting Room**  
**January 28, 2014**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeffrey Cohen, Chair; Shawn Hanegan, Clerk; Sandra Hackman; Amy Lloyd and Lisa Mustapich

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Glenn Garber, Planning Director; Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner; and Cathy Silvestrone, Planning A.A.

STAFF ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: See Attached

**Emergency Evacuation notice** read by Shawn Hanegan

*Note: All submittals are available for review in the Planning Office.*

Chair Cohen convened the meeting at 7:30 PM

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SESSION**

Public Outreach: Post-Comprehensive Plan Commentary (all plan elements)—

During the Comprehensive Plan (CP) Public Comment period, the following individuals submitted written comments: (details of these comments, plus a summary prepared by Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner, will be included in Volume 3 of the CP as explained in the next paragraph)

- Sue Baldaulf, Director of Youth and Family Services-December 19, 2013
- Diane Bujalski, Resident-December 29, 2013
- David Sukoff, ORASC (Open Recreation Available Space Committee)-January 2, 2014
- Bob Dorer, Chair, Transportation Advisory Committee-January 11, 2014
- Frances Bigda-Peyton, Transition Town Bedford-January 14, 2014
- Bea Brunkhorst, Co-Chair Board of Health-January 15, 2014
- John Stella, Resident-January 15, 2014
- Carla Olsen, Healthy Bedford-January 16, 2014
- Michael Barbehenn, Chair, Trails Committee-January 17, 2014
- Matt Heid, Resident-January 17, 2014
- Carol Campbell Amick, Chair Volunteer Coordinating Committee-January 17, 2014
- William Moonan, Resident/Selectman-January 20, 2014

Board members agreed that overall the Comprehensive Plan (CP) thus far has been well-received. Chair Cohen announced that the Board is in its final stage of collecting public comment prior to adoption of the CP. Chair Cohen reported that over the past couple of years, the Board has interviewed and met with several town boards, committees, staff, held two public workshops, and hosted many joint work sessions with the CP Ad Hoc Advisory Committee when creating the CP. The final plan will consist of three volumes: **Volume 1:** The Bedford We Want: Shaping Our Future, CP—December 2013; **Volume 2:**

The Bedford We Want: Shaping Our Future, CP Appendices—December 2013; and **Volume 3**: CP, Collection of Comments—January 2014. Volume 3 will consist of all written comments and responses to those comments, and minutes from two post-CP commentary discussions— this evening being the first and February 11 the second. Mr. Cohen further reported that the Board is targeting its February 25 meeting to adopt all three volumes of the CP, and once adoption takes place, the CP will be used as a tool to begin implementation. Mr. Cohen said time will be provided on future Planning Agendas to further discuss implementation of the CP, and that the public is always welcome to attend.

Sue Baldauf, Director of Youth and Family Services, commented that she was involved in the process of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan and asserted that the current document exceeds that plan. Ms. Baldauf added that although the process to create a new plan was intensive for the Board and staff, it has been produced expeditiously. Ms. Baldauf articulated that the current document is well organized and detailed and that it will serve as a guide for boards and committees now and well into the future. Ms. Baldauf said she particularly appreciated how the action items were collaboratively presented; and then asked how the designated committees/boards will be encouraged to implement the actions.

Planning Director Garber said some communities create an implementation committee or in many cases the Planning Board oversees implementation of actions. Director Garber reiterated that time will be available on future agendas for ongoing implementation discussions.

Sandra Hackman suggested that Planning Board liaisons could play a role in working with other boards/committees on implementation. Board members favored this suggestion.

Director Garber noted that Ms. Baldauf's question regarding why the population in Bedford dropped during 1970 – 2000 was good; and then shared the following response: the construction rate of new houses had dropped off dramatically during 1970-1990, and over the years the size of families also declined.

Director Garber mentioned that Ms. Baldauf's comment on limiting square footage for new construction to prevent further mansionization and possibly teardowns also raised a matter of general interest, but there are legal constraints to consider, as well as a variety of opinions.

The Board had a brief discussion regarding mansionization and teardowns and conveyed the following comments:

Chair Cohen suggested limiting the height of houses.

Amy Lloyd asked, in the General Bylaws, what is the construction year before which you need to delay demolition of an existing structure. Ms. Lloyd thought it was around 1945, and then asked if this date ought to be moved up as time goes on.

Mark Sieghenthaler said he believes the reason the General Bylaws state a specific period (1945 or earlier) for demolition delay is because there are a limited number of buildings remaining from that period in Bedford, whereas moving the date forward could affect a large number of properties, which tend to have less distinctive character.

Amy Lloyd debated whether the decision to demolish an existing old structure should be based only on historic preservation reasons.

Lisa Mustapich commented that caution should be used when setting rules that may infringe upon individual property owners' freedom/rights to maximize the value of their property when developing it.

Shawn Hanegan said it's sad to see some small Cape-style homes (or other small homes) torn down and replaced with larger homes instead of remodeling; but in some instances teardowns are necessary and it's important that the economics work.

Sue Baldauf discussed the importance of connectivity and how it relates to developing a Pedestrian/Bicycle Master Plan. Ms. Baldauf also spoke about seeking DLTA (District Local Technical Assistance) funding and wondered if taking steps toward Bedford becoming a Complete Streets Community might help.

Mark Siegenthaler said he was not familiar with what it would take for Bedford to become a Complete Streets community.

Sandra Hackman said that it might be appropriate for the Selectmen (with Department of Public Works involvement) to pass a resolution to initiate Bedford as a Complete Streets community; and that the town should inquire about getting a Complete Streets toolkit. Ms. Hackman also suggested reviewing the Smart Growth Alliance website to get examples of some Complete Streets communities and a toolkit with suggestions on how to create an ordinance.

Catherine Perry clarified that Complete Streets is not a fixed designation with certain requirements like Green Communities, but the CP uses this term to establish the idea of considering the needs of all users. The action items in the transportation section are designed to apply it in a Bedford context, acknowledging that progress needs to be planned and there may be constraints in some locations.

Sandra Hackman shared that she thought Frances Bigda-Peyton's comments regarding promoting economic resilience by means of supporting small businesses and purchasing locally are insightful and important to Bedford. Ms. Hackman further shared that Ms. Bigda-Peyton's supplemental comment, to promote local food production and provide hands-on coaching is equally important.

Staff commented that it was acknowledged in discussions that Bedford has very little remaining agricultural land but there was interest in community gardens.

Chair Cohen asked Karen Kenney, Chamber of Commerce, if any of their members operate agricultural businesses; and if it were difficult for those businesses to get started in Bedford.

Ms. Kenney commented that currently the agricultural businesses she is aware of in Bedford are Chip-In Farms and Bedford Blueberry Goat Farm. Ms. Kenney explained that in general it's difficult to start a business and that you can't possibly (even if you do a lot of research) learn everything you need to know. Ms. Kenney said after she got her small businesses started in Bedford she eventually joined the Sign Bylaw Committee, which was a very useful approach in getting to know people and how local government works. Ms. Kenney expressed that the Chamber of Commerce is becoming much more active with both large and small businesses and that the Chamber is very excited about the Economic Development Coordinator position that the town has currently created and is in the process of filling.

Chair Cohen and Ms. Kenney both articulated that they hope the Economic Development Coordinator will play a significant role educating incoming business on best practices to follow when starting a business in Bedford.

Amy Lloyd asked if there's a checklist available for people/companies that are inquiring to do business in Bedford.

Ms. Kenney revealed that the Chamber did provide the Selectmen with a proposed checklist for new businesses inquiring to do business in Bedford and that some Selectmen seemed excited about the checklist while others weren't.

Ms. Kenney informed the Board that the Chamber reviewed other surrounding town checklists and found Burlington and Billerica's to be great examples.

Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner, shared that Lincoln's Planning Department compiled a Land Use Permitting Guide with information from a range of departments, including processes and timeframes that would be helpful to incoming small businesses and other inexperienced developers. She noted that permitting requirements vary between towns.

Mark Siegenthaler pointed out that the town currently has on its website a process document/checklist for new businesses, and added that many people are looking forward to having an Economic Development Coordinator.

Planning Director Garber, returning to the discussion regarding Ms. Bigda-Peyton's comments on long term economic, environmental and social issues related there's a place for this type of thinking. Director Garber said although resilience and local sourcing principles did not emerge during the public process, and when drafting the CP, some areas of the CP do touch upon policies that would be compatible with these principles. Director Garber gave complete streets, alternative infrastructure, and renewable energy generation as examples.

Sandra Hackman inquired about ways to encourage and educate people regarding how to grow their own food; and then suggested creating a link between Planning and Transition Town Bedford webpages to further promote economic resilience and sustainability within the community.

Amy Lloyd briefly discussed current uses for open space and emphasized that uses other than just untouched conservation land, including agriculture as a potential additional use, would be beneficial. Ms. Lloyd said it would be economically beneficial to the community if the Town would allow some of its acquired open space land to be used for agricultural purpose and be willing to lease that land to a producer. Ms. Lloyd said other surrounding towns have done this and it appears to be working. Catherine Perry commented that these are usually areas that have maintained continuous agricultural use; it would be difficult with land that had reverted to woodland, for example.

Sandra Hackman asked Mark Siegenthaler if the Selectmen (not including Mr. Moonan's personal written comments) had any comments to share with the Board regarding the CP.

Mr. Siegenthaler reported that the Selectmen have not discussed the CP as a group; however, he would mention to them that Planning would like to know their thoughts.

Amy Lloyd expressed that it would be good to have the Selectmen's feedback on the CP; and it would be especially good to have Selectmen support.

Mr. Siegenthaler said, in his opinion, he believes the Selectmen are more interested in the implementation/action process post adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

Board members shared that they were anxious to know what the Selectmen's thoughts are regarding implementation and wondered how the Selectmen prioritize their goals in relation to implementation of the CP.

Mr. Siegenthaler said that the Selectmen discussed priority goals for the year and noted the CP wasn't really referenced. Mr. Siegenthaler mentioned that in the past, the Selectmen usually refrained from supporting Transportation Management Association initiatives; however, they seem to be in a different place now that the Middlesex 3 Coalition has evolved.

Sue Baldauf suggested asking the Selectmen to review all action items and suggest priorities, for a joint meeting with the Planning Board to discuss moving forward with implementing these actions.

The Board discussed comments submitted by Michael Barbehenn regarding the importance of promoting pedestrian access through or adjacent to new development. Board members agreed that it's important to ensure that maximum connectivity is considered when reviewing subdivisions, special permits and site plans; and that they will consider whether changes are needed to the subdivision rules and regulations, the zoning bylaws or the process in which plans are reviewed to achieve this.

Director Garber suggested requiring developers to seek ways to create maximum connectivity to/from the site in which they are proposing to develop.

Amy Lloyd pointed out various examples of constructed sidewalks in town that don't appear to meet any standard. The Board agreed that proper standards for sidewalks should be implemented.

The Board discussed written comments received from Carol Amick and William Moonan. Chair Cohen asked if some of the acronyms provided in these comments need to be better defined in the glossary. Board members felt that wouldn't be necessary.

Board members had a brief discussion regarding staff's replies to written comments and agreed that some responses may need to be curtailed because they could be construed as being defensive whereas others were clearly informative.

Staff asked Board members to share their individual thoughts/recommendations (via email) regarding responses that need to be cut back.

Mark Siegenthaler asked if any of the substantial written comments provided would be incorporated in the relevant section of the CP.

Director Garber said the short answer is no, and then explained that making any changes to the existing plan, besides referencing the compilation of comments and corrections in Volume 3, would cause a

ripple effect. Mr. Garber further explained that there are some technical issues, as well as cost factors involved if changes to the existing plan were required.

Amy Lloyd pointed out that there are very few, if any, substantial errors in the CP and therefore it wouldn't be worth opening the plan up to make these changes.

Director Garber stated that staff will go through the comments received and reference them to the relevant sections of the plan as far as possible to maintain clarity.

Board members agreed to begin discussing implementation of the CP and Planning Board priorities at the next scheduled meeting if there is nobody present to share any further public comment.

**Adopted by Planning Board  
(Adopted by a 4-0 vote,  
February 11, 2014).**

**BEDFORD PLANNING BOARD**  
**Regular Session Minutes**  
**Town Hall—Selectmen’s Meeting Room**  
**February 11, 2013**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeffrey Cohen, Chair; Sandra Hackman; Amy Lloyd and Lisa Mustapich

MEMBERS ABSENT: Shawn Hanegan, Clerk

STAFF PRESENT: Glenn Garber, Planning Director; Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner; and Cathy Silvestrone, Planning A.A.

STAFF ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: See Attached

**Emergency Evacuation notice** read by Amy Lloyd

*Note: All submittals are available for review in the Planning Office.*

Chair Cohen convened the meeting at 7:30 PM

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Public Outreach: Second Post-CP Commentary on all plan elements discussion--

Chair Cohen explained that this evening’s discussion is the final opportunity for the public to share their comments about the CP and have them incorporated in Volume 3, the Collection of Comments—January 2014. Chair Cohen commented that he was surprised by the low number of people in attendance (Carla Olson and Mark Siegenthaler) and then asked if they would like to share comments.

Carla Olson, Healthy Bedford, articulated that she is impressed with the entire CP process; and then mentioned that low attendance this evening may be attributed to people feeling content with the CP and that’s a good thing.

Planning Director Garber spoke about the formation of Volume 3, the Collection of Comments. He suggested that this would be a good time to receive an update on Healthy Bedford initiatives.

Carla Olson informed the Board that Healthy Bedford (HB) was awarded a Healthy Communities implementation grant and that there are two tracks they are pursuing: **1)** The Pedestrian Master Plan—Ms. Olson mentioned that the Pedestrian Master Plan is on the Annual Town Meeting warrant as a Community Preservation Act item. She commented that it’s also good timing in relation to the Bicycle Master Plan; HB could work hand and hand with both of these groups; **2)** Local transportation options—Ms. Olson spoke about a “survey monkey” online survey that HB created regarding transportation needs in Bedford. This survey can be found on the town’s website and HB plans to share the outcome of the survey with other town committees and groups that work on transportation issues.

Board members and Ms. Olson discussed various transportation options for Bedford that came to mind as follows: 1) Try to get more service to/from the Boston area to the Middlesex Turnpike area; it was reported that the Middlesex 3 Coalition has obtained a grant to assist with this; 2) Explore the possibility of Bedford joining collaboratively with Lexington on some of their current transportation services such as the REV Bus which provides transportation from Alewife to the Hartwell Avenue area. Ms. Olson said the problem with using shuttle services is parking provision. Ms. Olson said this area of concern could be explored by our new Economic Development Coordinator.

Sandra Hackman asked if the Pedestrian Master Plan will include the Middlesex Turnpike area and Ms. Olson replied, yes. Ms. Olson also said that HB is meeting with Roy Sorenson, DPW Director to discuss process. MAPC is one potential source of advice and matching funding (without the need for a full procurement process).

Director Garber asked who is creating the scope of service for the Pedestrian Master Plan. Ms. Olson said probably the DPW.

Mr. Garber asked how far the consultants would be allowed to go in terms of detailing land taking for sidewalks or if the plan would be created at a conceptual level. Ms. Olson replied that it depends on priorities. Ms. Olson said she pictures this plan as a template; first you prioritize areas, and then branch out into means of improvement. Ms. Olson also mentioned that she was shocked to discover that there is a low annual budget for sidewalk maintenance.

Mark Siegenthaler said he is supportive of a Pedestrian Master Plan; however, he is hoping that within the scope of services the document would include some information on trails and signs and not just on the creation of new sidewalks. Mr. Siegenthaler added that funding for sidewalk maintenance should be handled in the same manner as funding for road repairs.

Catherine Perry stated that there is a good base of information available regarding existing sidewalks; they have been mapped, which makes it easy to identify gaps; however there may be a need to look in detail at property rights, constraints and opportunities to obtain sidewalk connections. Ms. Perry agreed that there may be a need to review locational priorities because a variety of suggestions were put forward in discussions on the Comprehensive Plan.

Director Garber said it's important to be design specific for an area when creating connections.

Catherine Perry commented that a strong effort should be made to explore ways to create pedestrian connections into and between developments when possible.

Amy Lloyd asked if other areas of town are being looked at beyond school area connections; and then noted that the section of South Road that runs from Freedom Estates development toward the center of town needs sidewalks. Ms. Lloyd pointed out that this section of roadway also connects to school areas.

Ms. Olson explained that HB would work with key stakeholders to decide where funding would be best used. Ms. Olson said she thinks of this plan as a "connectivity plan" and that the plan should be responsive to the community and includes practices to encourage people to be healthy and use other alternatives for getting around town besides a vehicle.

Ms. Hackman agrees that a town-wide discussion to get community consensus is important.

Ms. Olson said it is undesirable to create pedestrian connections that involve a lot of land taking because it takes up a lot of the consultant's time and the town's money.

Chair Cohen asked how often the town takes land by eminent domain when a property owner is unwilling to grant an easement, when the town is trying to create a sidewalk for public safety reasons. Other board members thought this was rare, and that owners' opposition has prevented or complicated plans for sidewalks in some parts of town.

Amy Lloyd expressed that she would rather the town allow "checker board" pedestrian connections (connections that switch sides of the road and have missing links) than to not move forward in creating connections because of not wishing to use eminent domain. She added that missing pieces may become available over time.

Sandra Hackman voiced that she wishes the town would take more of a stance when it comes to eminent domain practices.

Mark Siegenthaler voiced safety and legal concerns about a checker board approach for creating connections, as the town would essentially be inviting people to use a sidewalk that could potentially direct them into traffic.

Amy Lloyd, referring to pedestrian/bicycle safety, asked if the Selectmen have recently discussed proposed road improvements in the segment of roadway along 285 Great Road (former Travel Lodge site). Ms. Lloyd mentioned that she and others are concerned that those improvements would not provide bike lanes.

Mr. Siegenthaler explained that the Selectmen briefly raised this issue at its last meeting; however, because of the open meeting law, as the matter was not posted as an agenda item, the Selectmen refrained from further discussion. Mr. Siegenthaler reported that the Selectmen will discuss this matter at its next scheduled meeting.

Chair Cohen reported that written comments on the Comprehensive Plan have been received from Michael Rosenberg, Selectman and that they are of a historic nature, relating to the history of the VA Hospital and Middlesex Community College. He also outlined some comments offered verbally by Edward Pierce, School Committee Chair. A summary of these comments, written by Planning Director Garber, will be included in Volume 3.

Sandra Hackman asked Mr. Siegenthaler if the Selectmen discussed implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Siegenthaler suggested that the Planning Director and Town Manager schedule a joint session of the two boards to discuss implementation.

**Adopted by Planning Board  
(Adopted by a 4-0 vote,  
February 25, 2014).**

Additional Comments Received  
from Elected Officials  
*[with Planning responses]*

**From:** Mike Rosenberg [mailto:mike@maimonides.org]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 08, 2014 8:13 PM  
**To:** Garber, Glenn  
**Subject:** comprehensive plan

Glenn, I finally am taking the time to absorb the draft of the comprehensive plan. Please convey my admiration and appreciation to the board and ad hoc committee and in particular to you and your staff. The document is breath-taking in its scope and vision.

One thing I wanted to point out, although perhaps it is too late. There is an early reference to the VA Hospital coming onto the scene in the period of rapid growth in the 1960s and 1970s. The VA Hospital actually opened in 1928, and in the years after the war peaked at over 1,500 patients.

**This correction to the generalized history in the Executive Summary is welcomed. The main purpose of noting that the town contains several important institutional uses is unaffected.**

Also, just so you know, when Middlesex Community College opened in 1972 it was housed in two buildings at the VA Hospital. The current campus at the northern extremity of town was actually a preparatory seminary for priests of the Marist order for many years before it was purchased by the state for the college campus in the late 70s. It took several more years to actually build it.

**This interesting detail of the history of the Community College is noted.**

*--Mike Rosenberg*

**Memorandum Discussed and accepted at Planning Board Meeting of February 11, 2014.**

From: Planning Director  
To: Planning Board  
RE: Comments of School Committee Chair Ed Pierce  
Regarding Comprehensive Plan (at in-person  
meeting 2-6-14 at Superintendent's Office)  
DATE: February 10, 2014

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- 1) Likes ideas about more sidewalks and more public transit stops/transit promotion to help reduce busing costs for schools.
- 2) Coast Guard Housing—could have a small additional impact on schools if redeveloped as family housing, but keeping it to >55 housing likely would produce no impacts.
- 3) Endorses the idea of an ongoing structured dialogue between the town and major employers to explore present and future matters of mutual interest and business growth.
- 4) Transportation Demand Management/Transportation Management Associations—against imposing this on businesses; thinks it's too great and administrative cost and could be ant-business (*this is more Mr. Pierce's personal commentary*).
- 5) Asked for clarification of the policy recommendation to create a 20 year capital investment plan, in regard to how it differed from the annual 5 year capital budgeting as well as the schools' facilities planning. It was explained that the idea is to take a very long range, comprehensive and across-the-board look at all municipal facilities and infrastructure and related costs and tie it all together to better understand cradle-to-grave needs. This is quite different than the shorter term capital budgeting processes for the town and for the schools. The concept came from Richard Jones, former Facilities Director.
- 6) Feels that references to regional opportunities should more emphatically indicate areawide opportunities for the Schools.

**Additional Relevant Material**  
(in regard to comments of  
David Sukoff & Diane Bujalski)

**Excerpt from Outdoor Recreation Area Study Committee (ORASC) Report re: comments of David Sukoff:**

Stage 2 – Additional Large Rectangular Fields

While turfing Sabourin will have a tremendous impact on the supply shortfall of fields, there would still remain a residual shortfall. The excess demand would then be two large rectangular fields. Several options were evaluated to fulfill stage two, each with advantages and disadvantages. The plan is to increase the supply in this category of field by implementing amongst these options.

No particular order to the options has been recommended at the time of this writing. What is clear is that the supply needs to be increased to meet demand. Further information is required in terms of cost, and also the feasibility of various options. With additional information and deliberation, a clearer ranking can be compiled. However, the comprehensive plan overall certainly includes at least one of the following.

- **Development of the St. Michael's land** (highlight added)
- Reconfiguring H Field
- Turfing Existing Field(s)

Development of St. Michael's land

The Town of Bedford has created a proposal for development of the land it purchased from St. Michael's Church. The current proposal calls for the creation of two new full sized rectangular fields, which would be adjacent to the high school, and thus considered part of the school complex. The shortfall of two large rectangular fields could be met – presuming certain reconfiguration of the A Field baseball diamond. The fields would also add significant hours to the total supply –dependent on configuration and type. And the remaining shortfall after turfing Sabourin would be substantially diminished.

Development of this land requires a variance from the Conservation Commission given the existence of wetlands on the property. As a condition of the variance, the Town is required to replicate wetlands elsewhere. There is a cost associated with this mitigation that will be determined upon completion of a study.

The recommendation for any development of this land would be synthetic turf fields, the cost of which is estimated to be \$2,650,000. Of this amount, approximately \$1,525,000 would be eligible for CPA funding. Based on feedback from various sources, it is possible that a recommendation might be to only construct one field at St. Michael's.

**Responses to comments of Diane Bujalski--Fact Sheet Issued in January, 2014 as public information document:**

**FACT SHEET FOM BEDFORD PLANNING BOARD IN RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED ABOUT GROWTH IN HOUSING, NUMBER OF RESIDENTS AND RELATED ISSUES**

This Fact Sheet is the result of research and data compilation by the Bedford Planning Department in response to questions and concerns raised by residents in regard to housing growth, types of housing, population increases and resultant impacts, since approximately 2000.

**1) WHAT WERE THE COMPONENTS OF BEDFORD'S RESIDENTIAL GROWTH IN THE PAST 10 TO 15 YEARS?**

The growth of Bedford's population and housing in the past 14 years stems from housing that ranges from million dollar-plus single family homes to townhouses to apartments.

**A. Single-Family Detached Houses Built in Bedford-2000 to Present**

Number of single-family detached houses built, Jan. 1, 2000 to Jan. 8, 2014:	<b>299</b>
Number that were teardown/replacement houses	122
Estimated number of residents resulting from 299 new houses (based upon Bedford's median family size, 2000-2010, US Census)	900
Average number of bedrooms per houses built Jan. 1,2000 to Jan. 8, 2014	4.1
Average number of bedrooms per houses built 1950-1999	3.4

*Sources: Bedford Assessor's Office; Bedford Code Enforcement; US Census, 2000 & 2010; Assistant Town Manager.*

**B. Single-Family Detached Houses Sold in Bedford-2000 to Present**

No data bases or special studies are available documenting the number of existing, single-family detached houses that turned over during this period or correlating them with the number of new families or households with school age children. However, we know that hundreds of homes were sold during this time period and that a substantial portion of those transactions involved new families or other households that had not previously resided in Bedford, and who brought with them children who enrolled in Bedford schools.

**C. Multi-Family and Attached Housing Built in Bedford-2000 to Present**

Number of units built under Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permits (2002-2007)	<b>439</b>
Number of affordable units @27% (for occupancy by income-eligible households)	117
Number that are rental units (count 100% toward State subsidized housing inventory (SHI))	297
Number that are ownership units	142
Estimated number of <b>non</b> -Comprehensive Permit units built in projects with some affordable units eligible for SHI under <i>other provisions of the Chapter 40B law</i> (Taylor Pond Apts., Hartwell Farms town-houses, Habitat for Humanity,* Shawsheen Ridge townhouses)**	303
Number of these units now counted on the Subsidized Housing Inventory	188

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 \* 6 of the 8 are single family detached homes.

\*\* Have been counted on the SHI, utilizing the Local Initiative or Local Action provisions of Ch. 40B.  
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The great majority of multi-family and affordable units in Bedford created in the past twelve years came in under Mass General Laws Chapter 40B and related programs, and did so in an extremely short time span from 2002 to 2008. The MA legislature passed the Chapter 40B law in 1969. This act trumps local zoning restrictions on use and density and sometimes dimensional requirements, allowing only limited regulation of site plans by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The ZBA's decision in such developments is known as the 40B Comprehensive Permit. The law has always been one of the most aggressive affordable housing laws in the nation. The building of these units was not the town's doing but the actions of the private market operating under this law.

Data on the number of school children generated by these multi-family or townhouse developments is limited. A 2005 study by John Connery Associates examined three projects containing nearly 500 units (Avalon Bay, Heritage at Bedford Springs and Village at Taylor Pond) and then extrapolated rates of .13 students per unit for market rate 2-bedrooms, .40 students per unit for affordable 2 bedrooms, and a multiplier barely above zero students for 1 bedroom and studio units at any income level. This converted to 62 students. However, data gathered for the FY12 school year for the same three developments indicates an

enrollment about 30 students higher, **which converts to an overall average of .18 students per unit.** This ratio is of particular importance in discussions regarding student generation rates.

## 2) WHY DID BEDFORD'S SUBSIDIZED HOUSING INVENTORY (SHI) SPIKE SO SHARPLY IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?

As noted, the big spike in Bedford's SHI (compiled and administered by the MA Department of Housing and Community Development) was largely attributable to Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permits and other projects under Chapter 40B built in a very short time frame. From 2002 to the end of 2007, the official SHI percentage soared from less than 5% to more than 18%. The SHI percentage then dropped to 16.1% and rose back to the high 16's in the last year.

The SHI percentage is not a quota for which a town or some board within it sets annual or periodic targets, and over which it exerts control. Bedford's SHI reached the level that it did largely because the aforementioned private developers and some non-profits built housing under Mass General Laws Chapter 40B and its related programs.

A town's Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) can try to find grounds to turn down a comprehensive permit if the community's SHI is under 10%, but a developer can appeal the denial to the Housing Appeals Committee, part of the MA Department of Housing and Community Development, the overseers of 40B. The great majority of HAC appeals overturn the ZBA ruling, because the grounds for local regulation are so limited in the first place. A ZBA, in other words, cannot readily turn down a Comprehensive Permit application. In some instances, Bedford's ZBA has been able to negotiate downward density adjustments in Comprehensive Permit projects, but rejecting an entire development is a risky matter likely to end up incurring major legal expenses; as mentioned, 40 B is intended to supersede local zoning restrictions. However, communities above 10% SHI have much more latitude to resist 40B developments.

Another fundamental aspect of the Chapter 40B act is that under the law's regulations, 100% of all rental units—not just the units set aside for income-eligible households—count on the SHI. This is due to the fact that DHCD considers the creation of rental units an important strategy in addressing a major inadequacy in the state's housing market. A typical scenario is that a minimum of 75% of the units in a rental project command high market rents, even though only one in four units is actually an affordable one. A minimum of 25% of rental units are required to be set aside for income-eligible households.

## 3) WHAT OTHER TYPES OF MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING EXIST IN BEDFORD?

While Chapter 40B and related projects are the biggest driver of affordable housing in Bedford, some other types of units count on the SHI as well. Units owned and managed by the Bedford Housing Authority, MA Depart of Mental Health/Mental Retardation & the Veteran's Administration Hospital add approximately 225 units to the SHI.

The Housing Authority owns and manages more than 100 units, the earliest ones built close to 40 years ago. A total of 80 of these units, at Ashby Place, are for seniors, while another 20 are located at smaller, scattered site locations in the Depot Park and Town Center areas. The BHA also a total of 22 rental housing vouchers, most of them at a single location east of the Town Center. There are other affordable units owned and operated by higher governmental jurisdictions; these include the MA Department of Mental Health/Mental

Retardation's 63 units, and the Veteran's Administration Hospital's 60 units of single room occupancy units for veterans.

A project with about 70 units of housing for veterans has been in the works for at least a year and a half at the VA Hospital. The town has no jurisdiction here: the project is on federal land. However, the town has persuaded the developer to offer a voluntary site plan review before the Planning Board. This review is at best a process for tinkering with the site details; the town cannot turn down the project or control its occupancy. The developer has not yet submitted this project to the PB and delays have been frequent.

Finally, some mixed use zoning in Bedford requires a percentage of affordable housing when developers build other housing. *The only such project actually constructed is the Village at Taylor Pond on Middlesex Turnpike; it was built under mixed-use zoning and contains 188 units, 47 of which are affordable (i.e., set aside for income-eligible households) and counted on the SHI.* The project is further authorized to convert space to another 12 market-rate units and 3 affordable units. The other two residential developments on Middlesex Turnpike—Heritage Springs and Village at Bedford Woods—were built under Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permits, not under local zoning.

Two other developments permitted in 2013, 54 Loomis Street and 100 Plank Street, have 63 units between them, with 13 of those affordable. Approximately 46 of these units are one-bedroom units or studios. The Loomis and Plank Street projects have not yet submitted building plans or broken ground.

#### 4) WHY DOES THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN NOT ADDRESS CONCERNS ABOUT STUDENT PERFORMANCE?

Historically, Comprehensive Plans are about land use and bricks-and-mortar facilities and do not address school performance, curriculum or special programs, due to the strongly autonomous tradition of school boards and departments. Even if it had not just created a new Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Board has neither the authority nor the expertise to intervene in such matters; they are the domain of the School Committee and School Department.

#### 5) SHOULD BEDFORD APPROVE A FREEZE ON RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT?

Although Bedford's zoning bylaw contains a provision allowing the town to modulate of the rate of residential development, that provision is moot, for two reasons. First, Bedford is unlikely to ever again reach the minimum level of housing construction that would activate that provision. Second, a landmark 2004 court case—Zuckerman v. Hadley, MA—strongly affirmed that towns could set only temporary moratoria on development, and only when tied to a major and compelling public purpose, such as a crisis in wastewater capacity, widespread problems with the quality or quantity of the water supply, or anything else that might compel special studies or long-range planning efforts. Unless such conditions exist unequivocally in Bedford, a freeze on residential development is highly unlikely.

#### 6) DO CLUSTER ZONING and "OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT" CONNOTE ONLY ONE TYPE OF HOUSING?

The Comprehensive Plan calls for a long-overdue open space residential development (OSRD) bylaw to replace the outdated cluster-type sections in Bedford's zoning. OSRD is the widely accepted and more advanced form of such techniques. Such provisions are fundamentally about preserving open space: they require a developer to preserve the most significant land and other natural resources on any given site. Bedford's Huckins Farm is an outstanding example of what such approaches can achieve in balancing residential development with open space preservation.

One commenter on the new Comprehensive Plan offered remarks that assumed that "cluster" always equals attached or multi-family housing. However, the Plan does not stipulate particular types of housing that cluster zoning and OSRD might allow.

## 7) CAN BEDFORD'S MAIN HOUSING STRATEGY BE TO "OVERHAUL HOMES IN DISREPAIR?"

One commenter on the Plan suggested that Bedford's principal housing strategy should be rehabilitation of existing older houses. The question then arises: who will pay for that? The private market won't do it: builders much more profit tearing down older, smaller houses and putting up much larger ones. Or they just build new homes on vacant or subdivision or frontage exemption lots. The public sector will not readily pay for rehabilitation: Bedford is not eligible for Community Development Block Grant/Small Cities funds, which is the usual source of funding for rehabilitation programs. Hypothetically, town Community Preservation Act funds might be employed for this purpose, but rehabilitation of multiple homes would represent costs of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

## 8) WHAT ARE RESPONSES TO OTHER HOUSING-RELATED CONCERNS AND COMMENTS ON THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A) A large share of people who desire housing alternatives in Bedford are not "outsider low-income people" but existing residents, including empty-nesters, retirees, and Bedford's own daughters and sons.

B) Executives of companies in MA have long stated that the high cost of housing and a lack of housing choices damages the state's economy, and that their labor force needs an array of housing options. As noted, Bedford's business and retail areas are becoming functionally obsolete and need invigoration through creative, modern development incentives. Such development might potentially include modest amounts of housing in some areas of town. Without such incentives, Bedford will not be able to stabilize the residential tax burden and provide revenue to keep Bedford's services, facilities, and schools first rate.

## 9) CAN BEDFORD DO ANYTHING ABOUT TAX INCREASES?

Since the recession, the contribution of the business sector to the town's tax revenues has declined, putting a greater burden on residents. About 20 years ago, the town also began modernizing or replacing many of its major facilities, including DPW, schools, the library, Town Hall, Old Town Hall, and what is now the yellow Town Center building. Unlike many surrounding communities, Bedford funded these projects with tax surcharges rather than tax overrides. Under "debt exclusion" provisions, this means that when the projects are paid off, the taxes dedicated to those projects will disappear, rather than become a permanent part of the tax levy. Overall, Bedford's taxes remain somewhat lower than in many towns with comparable services and school systems.

State law limits a community's tax levy annual increase from exceeding 2.5% after accounting for new growth, and that Bedford has never exercised an override of this provision. No particular actions or policies in Bedford are driving up the tax levy beyond historical norms; rather, the disproportionate increase in residential taxes is largely a function of a smaller commercial tax base, which we hope to improve in future years.

Bedford is taking active steps to strengthen its business base to raise the tax contributions from that sector. These include participating in the Middlesex 3 Coalition, hiring an economic development coordinator, and trying to revitalize aging jobs centers—by working cooperatively with developers who want to upgrade properties, and by modifying zoning to give the market incentives to invest. The Comprehensive Plan is full of strategies and actions for achieving those objectives.

## 10) CAN ANYTHING BE DONE ABOUT TRAFFIC?

Of course, more business development in Bedford means more cars on the road, in a town with limited public transit options. The town is constantly trying to pursue new transportation opportunities. For example, the town worked hard to obtain state funding for widening Rte. 3 and Middlesex Turnpike, both to take traffic off local roads and to spur business development and revitalization.

As in most suburban communities, traffic has long been a major problem in Bedford, and it is a tough one to solve. Addressing it will require creative, long-term efforts (see more on this in the Comprehensive Plan). The basic strategy is to chip away at the problem with multifaceted approaches. These include working diligently toward creating an “alternative infrastructure” for pedestrian and bicycle travel; working with businesses to expand transportation demand management programs to reduce auto trips; working to retain and expand local and regional public and private transit options, such as shuttle buses; and encouraging land-use patterns that lessen auto-dependency, including home occupations and mixed use where appropriate.

## 11) HAVE THE TOWN AND OTHER ACTORS TAKEN AWAY SO MUCH GREEN SPACE THAT DEER HAVE BEEN FORCED INTO YARDS AND ONTO ROADS?

One commenter on the Comprehensive Plan expressed that concern. However, as the Plan and an Appendix document, Bedford’s record of acquiring or gaining development rights to open space in the modern suburban era has been formidable. All told, public and private actors have permanently protected one in four acres in Bedford since WW II. A more advanced open space residential bylaw could help strengthen those efforts.

The deer problem occurs in nearly all suburbs outside Route 128/I-95. It reflects extensive overall development—especially of single-family subdivisions on large lots—which encroaches on former habitat for deer and other wildlife.

# Errata Sheet

On maps, in note relative to the boundary of Town Center: Delete “s” on “extents.”

P. 2-1, last bullet: Insert quote marks around the word “empty-nesters.”

P. 4-5, 1<sup>st</sup> full paragraph, line 4-5: Insert “was” after “population.”

P. 4-10, 1<sup>st</sup> bullet under “Information and Public Outreach, line 3: Insert “use” after “land.”

P. 4-10, same section, last bullet, line 1: Insert “to” after “program.”

P. 5-3, line 2: Insert “to” after “opportunity.”

P. 5-4, top line: Amend spelling of “dialogue.”

P. 6-10, top bullet: Insert “of” after “utility.”

P. 7-3, last sentence under “local traffic patterns”: Insert “to” after “opportunity.”

P. 7-3, last line: Add “s” to the word “network.”

P. 7-7 and elsewhere: Capitalize “complete streets.”

P. 7-8, top line: Add comma after “commuters...”

P. 7-8, bullet 3: Delete “Rt. 225.”

P. 7-13, top full paragraph, line 5: Insert comma after “obstructed.”

Housing Snapshot, pie chart on Housing Affordability in Relation to Household Incomes: Amend label of green “\$300K- \$600K” portion in the right-hand pie to “\$400K - \$600K.”

P. 8-5, 2<sup>nd</sup> full paragraph, lines 8-10: Delete description of the Carleton-Willard complex (to avoid repetition on P. 8-6)

P. 8-6, bottom paragraph, line 5: Insert the word “be” between “can eligible...”

P. 9-6, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, last line: Change “Dee Island” to “Deer Island.”

P. 9-9, 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph, line 1: Delete duplicative “in.”

P. 9-11, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, line 6: Insert “and” between “youth adults...”

P. 9-13, top paragraph, line 5: Substitute “Meeting” for “Center.”

P. 9-16, 2<sup>nd</sup> to last paragraph, line 8: Delete the second “also.”

P. 9-17, 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet is really part of bullet #2.