



Town of Brookline, NH
Housing Opportunity Planning Grant Application

Application Submitted by
Town Of Brookline
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Brookline, NH 03033

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Relevant Master Plan Chapters

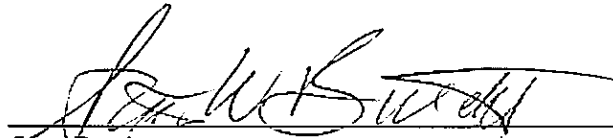
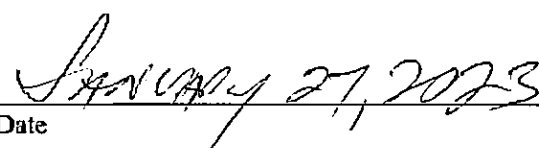
Full Master Plan revision adoption 2012 (first Master Plan adopted 1990)

- Housing chapter within Master Plan update adopted 2011
- Land Use chapter within Master Plan update adopted 2011
- Vision chapter within Master Plan update adopted 2011

Link to current version of the Master Plan: <https://www.brooklinenh.us/planning-board/pages/master-plan>

Application Phase 1: Needs analysis and Planning

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI): #JDW5BM12GRD3

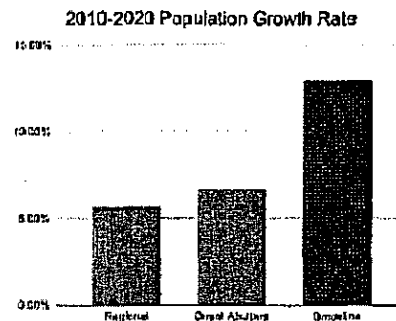
Scott Butcher Date
Town Administrator

Dated signature of municipality's chief executive officer or other authorized representative of the local governing body.

Application Narrative

Housing Challenge and Project Goals

Brookline has several housing related challenges including a rapidly growing population and a lack of diversity of housing stock. How do we, as a community turn our aspirations, as stated in our 1990 Master Plan and echoed in the 1997 and 2011 updates, for a diverse housing stock into a reality? How can we encourage developers to build diverse housing? How do we know this is still the desire of the community since the population has grown tremendously since 2012?



Brookline is a wonderful place to live, and everyone wants to move here! Brookline's growing quickly. The population data from 2020 U.S. Census Bureau shows that Brookline grew at a rate of 12.98% over the last 10 years, the highest growth rate in the Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) region.

In the last 13 years, Brookline has TWICE enacted a growth management ordinance to slow growth. The type of housing that is being added is generally single-family houses. Since 2017, nearly 90% of the housing added in Brookline has been single family housing and the remainder were accessory dwelling units added to single family housing. This percentage of single-family homes has remained similar in Brookline since 1990.

Brookline has no public water or sewer utility so residents and businesses are served by onsite wells and septic systems. This has limited the commercial and industrial uses in Brookline.

In 2017, NRPC performed a Land Use and Regulatory Policy Audit to determine where there was "consistency and conflict" between the Ordinance and Regulations and the Master Plan.

The first area of review was the Vision of Affordability which focused on housing. There were many findings in the audit and 5 recommendations. These recommendations echoed the recommendations as far back as the 1990 Master Plan Housing and Land Use chapters that both called for more diverse housing including adding more housing for Older Persons (or Elderly) and affordable "missing middle" housing. To date, only one change to the Ordinance was the change in the Workforce Housing Ordinance.

In September 2022, the Planning Board agreed to update the Master Plan starting with the Vision Section and sought members for a Steering Committee from various boards and the public. The Steering Committee will soon work to craft a community survey and, based on what is learned from that survey, host Vision Sessions with the community. Vision Sessions will be held in an in-person and virtual format to encourage high participation.

Outcomes and Deliverables

Outcomes

Brookline had a Regulatory Audit from Nashua Regional Planning Commission (NRPC) in 2017 highlighted ways to increase the diversity of housing stock – one of the goals of every Master Plan from Brookline since 1990. But with so many new faces in Town and changing socioeconomic conditions, it is time to update that vision, ask questions about barriers that may exist to diversifying housing types, and build community engagement in supporting the Master Plan Goals and

Recommendations. The skills built through the Housing Academy will be critical to building the capacity of the core team to engage the community in rich and meaningful ways around some big topics.

Nashua Regional Planning Commission, and Town Staff, will work with other boards and community members to develop a Community Survey and following on that, Vision Sessions to dig deeper into the results of the survey to develop a comprehensive Community vision for Housing and Land Use. The survey will build on recent survey tools used in Brookline that had excellent participation and data collection results.

The Master Plan has traditionally been updated as a whole document every 10 years or so and has taken approximately two years to complete with mixed involvement from the community. Smaller, more focused updates to community vision and goals had more community involvement and support. Updating the Master Plan structure to allow for more frequent updates as data becomes available or conditions change, may allow for more community involvement since it will likely involve shorter time commitments and be more focused. This will be a benefit to the outcome to the whole Master Plan with the Housing and Land Use chapters as demonstration cases.

Deliverables

1. Housing Academy Participation by town staff, Planning Board members, and community members.
 - a. The skills learned at the Housing Academy will be used to engage with the community in thoughtful and dynamic discussions at the Vision Sessions and the Master Plan chapter development.
2. Community Survey questions focused on the community's vision for housing and land use and the responses to the Community Survey.
 - a. The Planning Board will create a Vision Steering Committee. The Committee will consist of Planning Board Members, community volunteers, representatives from other Boards and Committees, the Town Planner, and NRPC.
 - i. Deliverables: Committee Membership, public notices, minutes
 - b. This Committee will craft survey questions, publicize the survey, execute the survey in concert with the Planning Board, Town Planner and NRPC
 - i. Deliverables: Survey, survey results, analysis of results, conclusions.
3. Vision Sessions planned and executed to further define the community's vision for Housing and Land Use.
 - a. The Vision Sessions will be determined, in part, by the results of the community survey.
 - i. Deliverables: Vision Session announcements, public notices, minutes or results, attendance
4. An updated Vision Chapter that includes an updated Vision for both Housing and Land Use, among others.
 - a. The results of the Vision Sessions will be used to update the Vision chapter of the Master Plan.
 - i. Deliverables: Public notices, minutes, Vision Chapter drafts and subsections that are specific to Master Plan chapters.

5. An updated Housing Chapter.

- a. Edit the chapter to make it easier to update on a regular time frame and be able to include current housing data such as the Census and American Community Survey data.
- b. Recommendations and strategies to address Brookline's housing challenges and needs.
 - i. Deliverables: Public notices, minutes, updated housing information, Housing Chapter drafts and, if time permits, official adoption of the Chapter

6. An updated Land Use Chapter

- a. Edit the chapter to make it easier to update on a regular time frame and update as needed based on implementation of recommendations.
- b. Recommendations and strategies to address Brookline's housing challenges and needs where they intersect with Land Use.
 - i. Deliverables: Public notices, minutes, updated housing information, Housing Chapter drafts and, if time permits, official adoption of the Chapter

Scope of Work & Budget with Timeline

Task	Name/Time Frame	Details	Cost
Task 1	Housing Academy Participation – Q1 & Q2	Three volunteers and Town Planner will attend. Stipend for Volunteers 3 volunteers x \$250 stipend	\$750
Task 2	Community Survey – Q2 April & May	Form Vision Steering Committee with Planning Board members, representatives from other Boards, community members and NRPC. Determine format of survey, develop questions, execute survey. 20 hours x \$75/hour	\$1500
Task 2	Vision Session – Q2 – May & June	Vision Sessions planned and executed to further define the community's vision for housing and land use. Supplies such as tablets, sticky notes, pens, name tags, etc. will be funded from the Planning Board budget. 20 hours x \$75/hour	\$1500
Task 4	Update Master Plan Chapter Vision Q2 & Q3 - May	Approximately 50 hours x \$75/hour, remainder to be funded by current 2023 budget	\$4000
Task 5	Update Master Plan Chapter Housing Q3 – August start	Approximately 100 hours x \$75/hour	\$8,000
Task 6	Update Master Plan Chapter Land Use Q4 – start but may be 2024	Approximately 100 hours x \$75/hour	\$8,000
	Administrative Costs	Invoicing, Reports (including final) – 1.9%	\$450
		Total	\$24,200.00

Community Engagement Plan

The last time the Master Plan was updated in 2010 and 2011, it was transformative for many community members. This inspired many to join local boards, run for public office, and become more active in the community.

Attempts to change the Zoning Ordinance without adequate community engagement have been unsuccessful. For example, a few years ago, the Planning Board tried to add a multifamily overlay district to the Zoning Ordinance. This would have been in line with the stated goals of the Master Plan and the 2017 Ordinance Audit. The Planning Board held an informational session on a proposed multifamily overlay district, provided a draft ordinance and sought community input. The consensus was that the community was not in favor of a multifamily overlay district.

Community engagement is labor intensive and will be most successful with well-trained, creative, and consistent (perhaps persistent!) leaders who can help everyone feel heard and engaged in making change. It also needs to be long-term – the community needs to understand that change is continuous process, not a single event or forum.

Survey & Vision Sessions

With the assistance of NRPC, the Planning Board will work with the Vision Steering Committee to craft a set of questions to gain a sense of the Vision of the community. These questions will be used to inform the Vision Sessions. The Vision Sessions may be topic specific or used to unpack questions that provided unclear or mixed information. In-person and virtual Vision Sessions will be held to maximize participation.

Media and Outreach

Brookline has a community access TV station. This is an easy way to reach people with cable access. The Town website (BrooklineNH.us) can host video content created for public access TV.

Brookline no longer has a print newspaper but the Hollis Brookline News Online functions as our community newspaper. This is an excellent way to share both “print” and video news.

Consistency with Master Plan

The Goals for the Housing chapter of the 2012 Master Plan were:

Goal 1—Balance the demand for land to be used for housing with the demand for land to be used for other needs.

Goal 2—Allow for the provision of a variety of housing, in terms of types and costs, in Brookline. This is consistent with Zoning & Land Use Ordinance 621.0, which states “provide safe, affordable housing opportunities.”

Goal 3—Consider the housing needs for all ages. This is consistent with Zoning & Land Use Ordinance 2201.00, which states “promote the development of housing designed to meet the special needs of older persons.”

Goal 4—Maintain community character within the Residential/Agricultural zone.

Goal 5—Allow for a sustainable residential growth rate that does not overwhelm municipal and school services.

In concert with these goals from the Housing Chapter, the Land Use chapter emphasized creating overlay districts such as a Village Center and a Mixed Use Overlay District to encourage mixed use and multifamily housing. As part of these overlay districts, the Master Plan recommended a Town Center Master Plan.

One of the other five goals from the Land Use chapter was to encourage specific types of residential development in five key areas in Brookline. One of the five areas was the Village Center, and an additional area was in the northwest of Brookline where the goal was to encourage residential building.

These goals are very similar to the recommendations from the first Master Plan in Brookline. And generally the goals of both chapters remain largely unmet.