The Topsham Comprehensive Plan Update Committee has been working hard to compile all of the comments received during the lengthy comment period on the first draft of the Topsham Comp Plan Update. After releasing the draft in June of 2018, and holding robust public meetings to present and discuss the plan, the committee set up an online commenting forum for the plan, held two follow up public comment meetings, held public workshops with all Town standing committees, received direct submissions to the planning office, and displayed the “big idea” section for continued feedback at Town Hall.

This document summarizes all of the comments received as of November 16, 2018, and provides a response as to how the Committee will address the comment. Some comments are simply grammatical issues or typos. Some comments are merely editorial, and don’t require a comment. Others resulted in changes to text or policies, or resulted in new policies being added to the plan. This Comment/Response document will be attached to the Appendix for the 2019 Topsham Comprehensive Plan.

Comment Section – Part 1

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<td>Comment</td>
<td>I'm concerned about more traffic and more activity in residential areas. I am opposed to another street going parallel to Main Street through town.</td>
<td>#001</td>
<td>Pg. 7</td>
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</table>
Thank you for your comment, illustrative plans are conceptual versus development plans. As development/growth is anticipated in this region for the foreseeable future traffic management will be a key issue in the review of development plans.

Response

Comment 2018? #003 Pg. 7

Response Thank you...edit made to reflect 2017 Pg. 7

Is there a map depiction of the town's Designated Growth area - both the 2016 and in comparison the new proposed area? I am pretty active in participating in the Plan your Topsham events, and don't believe I have seen a map of this. For it to be called out right in the second paragraph, I want to see it. I am having a hard time searching in this tool - can someone recommend which plan part this can be found in, and what page? Thanks!

Comment Good comment, thank you. We will address this in the re-draft plan #004

Response And there is so much empty, haphazardly used space in those areas - particularly around the 201 / high school / annex / down to the town office corridor. Which of the neighborhoods that you have listed here correspond with this area? Can you help formalize / communicate these village names to residents? I don't know 'upper village'. Thanks

Comment These areas called out on this page correspond to the "catalyst sites" later in the plan...we will make that connection for the readers. #005

Response
OK! So I read through the whole thing and my big question is this; These are all great ideas, but how are we going to pay for all of this??? We have seen our property taxes skyrocket over the last few years and, for us anyway, this may cause us to have to think about leaving Topsham soon. We are life long residents of this area and volunteer in our community, help in the schools, etc. but the cost of owning a home in Topsham is rising so quickly. One reason we have stayed here is because it is affordable to "average" people... but the way the taxes are being raised we will be the next Kennebunkport or Cape Elizabeth! All these projects are admirable, but at what cost?

Comment
Most of this plan focuses on areas for private development/redevelopment. Other items that have been identified as community enhancement are only afforded if the town chooses to fund them via the annual budget...we anticipate those discussions to be focused and evaluated during implementation...there is no expectation that everything in this plan will be solely funded through tax dollars, but believe we would be doing a disservice by not identifying community desires at this point.

Response
You should include the time frame for Topsham's Back to the Future planning sessions...

Comment
Future planning sessions

Response
We discussed this, and felt that there were multiple planning sessions within the past few years that could also be mentioned...we will provide a list of planning efforts since the 2007 plan in an appendix.
Great feedback. I also am a life long resident and weary of lots of change. However, I do know that the town of Topsham will not be the agent of the change - they are not the developers, or the financiers of development. Those people will be knocking on our door (or already are and have been) looking to put up buildings and create growth. I believe we should look at this Comp Plan as the Town's response to this - how we as a town actually want the growth that might come to occur, if it does come. And with this vision document, representing as best as possible a ~majority/community view, if developers (from away or among us) want to create a project, something objectionable, something we'd call a behemoth like a 300 unit apartment complex, or a 35 lot subdivision in the rural region, or a big old business in a rural area, we have a plan to point to to remind people why that idea doesn't match the community vision, and of course what is truly important and enforceable - we have our codes and ordinances to point to, to yea or nay the project. One way this plan can shape future design is if residents bring forth proposed ordinances or support planning / zoning changes to encourage or restrict future projects. Hope my idea of the plan helps, cheers!

Response
Thank you

Comment
bedroom community or budding service center?
Yes
People will think twice about moving to Topsham/Brunswick if they have to commute on 295, which is becoming increasingly crowded and dangerous. We need good jobs in the area rather than just more commuters. I like Topsham being somewhat quiet and never understood why we had to build a huge new town hall, etc. Now are taxes are high, and we don't even have trash or recycling pickup.

The plan attempts to address this by focusing on growth area revenue values, and the allowance of job creating development to occur in a focused area.

Any chance at updating this chart to at least 2018? We have the data from the State showing total assessed value as of October, 2018.

We will work on this, thank you.

I don't want to attract more and more people to Topsham. I don't want to live in Massachusetts.

Noted, thank you for the comment.

How do you increase the density of housing/population without having it be perceived as dense?

More of an eye of the beholder issue, but the plan reflects "right sizing" projected densities...a good real example is the River landing senior housing on Elm Street where 36 dwelling units are embedded into a historic district fabric.

We definitely need to make neighborhoods more pedestrian friendly. Vehicles drive too fast through them regularly.

The action items within the big ideas section address this

Topsham Crossing was approved in 2002
Response: Thank you
I am not experienced in this area, but I wonder if I can comment -
that perhaps the age of the housing stock is one part of the story.
A collection of well-maintained and updated 1970's homes might
be a more valuable asset to the town than cheaply built boxy
homes in the 2000's boom. We might be lucky to have the
Comment: buildings we have

Response: Good comment - thank you. We will attempt to address via edits.
What is a 'non-family' household? Unmarried? Single? I wonder if
those people think of themselves as non-family??

Response: Census data terminology...live alone or share with unrelated
Comment: individuals
We need to get the nasty emissions from Crooker to stop polluting
the air and slow down traffic in residential neighborhoods as a
Comment: start to improving quality of life.

Response: Current regulations, both state and local, address emissions,
residential speeds are an issue for both business and residents
Agree. Perhaps even add ' and other cultural influences that keep
Comment: adults 55 and older active in full or partial employment
Response: Noted, thank you for the comment
It is taking longer and longer to commute to these areas outside of
Topsham/Brunswick because of too much traffic on the roads,
Comment: especially 295 south to Portland.
Response: Noted, thank you for the comment
More growth in these areas (mall, Lower Village, etc.) will increase traffic problems. Traffic already builds up trying to cross the bridge to and from Brunswick, and there is lots of traffic near the mall. That will have to be addressed if there is going to be more development and still have the area have a decent quality of life.

Comment

Response

Noted, traffic management and flow are described in the action items, and will be addressed as the plan becomes implemented.

This area offers the best potential for affordable housing. Being close to schools and retail makes it possible for residents to walk. If this attracts Topsham workers it will reduce traffic and provide a real village center.

Comment

Response

Noted, thank you for the comment

TIF districts can end up costing taxpayers more without a real benefit. You can give a business a tax break, and when that tax break expires, they go to a different town for another tax break, and the taxpayers in the first town get no benefit from the TIF.

Comment

Response

Although this may happen, we have not experienced this exactly in Topsham...TDI has monitored the TIF situations in Topsham, and they have had a beneficial impact during their maturation
mehhhhh self-diving cars............ I would put as #2 the increase in the information economy decentralizing the workforce - more remote workers, work from home and providing information and entertainment services shaping communities - and planning needs around that - change in hourly behavior in the community (changes in commuting / road traffic patterns and times at stores and expecting services) and the need for communications infrastructure. Apologies, this isn't a high-importance comment. Coming across the commend about self-driving cards more to me comes across more as bluff rather than it serving to give an allegory of future trends influencing how planners can meet the needs of the community.

Comment municipal building? Municipal Building was built in 2006
Response Point taken, will try to better articulate.

Comment Define TIF districts? is is an acronym? Is it a federal or state program?
Response Tax Increment Financing...perhaps a call out box for this?

Comment Is this the correct citation for this program?
Response Yes
Comment Is this the real name for this program?
Response Yes (according 36 M.R.S. §§ 1101-1121)
This title doesn't match the data - the title should be 'housing, 1900-Present'. It is not showing only new building permits from those time segments

Response Noted, thank you for the comment
I deleted my earlier comment but I should have kept it. Any history buffs able to check into the names of the forts through history? The fort was definitely named "Fort George" from my readings. (Not Fort Gorges). Can someone conform the fort names, and if 'Fort Andros' was indeed an earlier name for a fort at the site? Thanks!

Comment: Will check on

Response: Will check on

Comment: and other products

Response: agree

Add:" ..with the New England sheep farming boom and the .. "

(its important to add this to capture the 'sheep fever' mania that widely shaped New england 1810-1860s. The first wave, caused by the Embargo Act of 1807 and the Nonintercourse Act of 1809 where Wool factories could no longer buy wool from Britain and with the importation of a productive strain of wool sheep from Scotland. A second wave of Merino mania struck in the 1860s due to the Civil war and cotton shortages from the south. These factors greatly shaped our land - the species of trees that regrew, the terrain )

Response: agree

Comment: powder

Response: agree

Comment: plain

Response: agree
Comment
Did Topsham have a shipyard? Any historical fact checkers? I don't remember reading / learning about any ship building in Topsham along the Androscoggin

Response
Yes, Topsham Historical Society gave a recent presentation about the small shipyard along the Topsham shore (Lower Village area)...apparently the railroad trestle had a major impact on the industry that existed.

Comment
This neighborhood is called Ivanhoe. Please add it to the plan and seek input from residents.

Response
Noted, thank you for the comment (done)

Comment
'Upper Village' is mentioned earlier in the plan. Can this be added as an overlay, or its own label?

Response
yes

Comment
'Navy Annex' was also mentioned in the Comp Plan intro and should be added on this map

Response
Noted, thank you for the comment

Comment
This is the Jesse Road neighborhood. Please add it to the plan and seek input from residents.

Response
Noted

Comment
This neighborhood is called Birch Ridge. Please add it to the plan and seek input from residents.

Response
Noted, thank you for the comment (done)

Comment
Pejepscot Neighborhood should be included

Response
Noted, thank you for the comment (done)
Not a fan of speed bumps! Prefer the other traffic calming approaches that are plow and biker friendly, such as painting narrower lanes in lower speed zones, adding flags or other downtown street markers that are psychological triggers for slowing.

Response: agree...comments reflect public input...
I don’t see how adding food trucks, restaurants and stores would preserve the historic neighborhood or reduce problems with drivers speeding. Also, where would anyone going to these places park?

Comment: These were identified by the people who showed up from the neighborhood...

Response: Agree, its nice for each neighborhood to have a temporary (food truck) or permanent (store/restaurant) walkable from their home.

Comment: Noted, thank you for the comment

Response: Yes, traffic is too fast in this neighborhood and loud. There is also a problem with incessantly barking dogs and the smell from Crooker. Quality of life could be better. No more development or traffic! Kids walk to and from school there.

Response: This is further addressed in the Big Ideas section of the plan

Comment: and no public septic?

Response: Identified by those who live in neighborhood

Comment: I would like the natural gas pipeline to extend further down middlesex road

Response: OK...Main Natural Gas serves the Topsham area, and extends services based upon demand

Comment: Is the Ivanhoe/Coville Roads subdivision included in this River Rd section? I don't see it anywhere else.
Response: NO ...committee will discuss
Is there public water? Sewer? Any drainage or other consideration?

Comment: Neighborhood has public water and sewer, and private stormwater facilities

Response: Can we create two neighborhoods - 'Inner Foreside' and 'Outer Foreside / Middlesex Rds'?

Comment: Committee discussed and felt foreside was sufficient

Response: Noted, discussed and felt foreside was sufficient

Comment: For outer Foreside and Middlesex Rds neighborhoods, maintain rural character and natural areas considerations. Reduce fractional development

Response: Noted, thank you for the comment. Add 'The Cryer' article mention. Contact Charles for this article date / title.

Comment: Nice work on the public process. :)

Response: Thanks

Comment Section - Part 2

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<td>Comment</td>
<td>I can't find big ideas #1 &amp; 2....</td>
<td>#001</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Big Ideas start on page #50</td>
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The town doesn't own much water front property. What about the library property? Could that be developed in a way to add a carry in boat spot? Or better yet, the fields on the river at Foreside. Could a carry in boat launch work there?

Response
Committee discussed. There are resource issues at the library property for enhanced water access. Perhaps a study along the foreside fields area or Sewer District property?

Our town could totally use new trails. The new trail by the river is good, but the trail across from the Town Hall sort of dead ends at the bypass. One cross walk, or pedestrian bridge right there, and we could have a trail to the middle school and high school so kids could walk or bike to school? That by pass divides our town in terms of being pedestrian friendly?

Response
Noted, thank you for the comment

Why will enforcement not work? It certainly has on Elm Street. We just added another police officer to the budget. We don't need to redesign all our roads in town to slow everyone down to a crawl. Bicyclists also need to respect to the fact that they don't own our public roads.

Response
Noted, we believe design will assist in high priority areas, and enforcement may work in others.

Reduce the noise of vehicles going through residential neighborhoods. Reduce the air pollution.

Response
Noted, thank you for the comment

No additional street parallel to Main St. going through town.

Response
Noted, thank you for the comment...concept drawings are just that, concepts.
Need input from public works and fire department on restriping plan. We also have public utilities in streets. Need space in travel ways for maintenance of utilities. Need to think about big picture of these changes.

Comment

Response

Noted, thank you for the comment

Enforce speed limits. The committee should have a professional traffic engineer peer review all traffic and road design related statements in this section

Comment

Response

We agree that a traffic engineer should be involved, but believe that should occur during actual feasibility analysis and design projects (implementation)

What happens in the winter when you need to enforce street parking bans for public works to plow the roads? We need to enforce speed limits

Comment

Response

These seem to be separate thoughts. Topsham currently conducts parking bans in winter, and enforces speed limits throughout town.

Comment

Response

Explain what this refers to.

?

Bike paths need to be clearly separate from car lanes....along Foreside Rd in particular it is a marked bike trail but nowhere for bikes and cars to safely both use the road. While riding and driving I have been in dangerous situations where cars get caught behind bikes and through no fault of either party, have been unable to pass safely.

Comment

Response

Although may be perceived as dangerous, cyclists have a right to travel within roadways (State law)
Many rural roadways in town need more general maintenance of the tar and sides of the road that have been washed away. They are not safe for walking, riding, or driving in some areas if a car needs to pull over.

Comment  #012
Response  Noted, thank you for the comment

9 or 10 feet is very narrow. I think this needs review and consideration given to design speed and other criteria.

Comment  #013
Response  Noted, thank you for the comment

Regional road suggests higher speed limits

Comment  #013
Response  Noted, thank you for the comment

Explain what Chapter 185 is referring to. What is the scope of restriping? All streets in Topsham? What is the fire department and public works standard for emergency vehicle and snow plow access and travel lane width? We need to plan space for snow bank storage in Maine

Comment  #014
Response  Noted, thank you for the comment

Complete street improvements will be reviewed prior to any design changes, and the appropriate departments will be involved.

Stop signs = noise and emissions. Find other ways to calm traffic without disrupting the flow.

Comment  #015
Response  Noted, stop signs are one tool...implementation will look at all tools to achieve goals

Need to follow standard traffic engineering practices and follow design warrants and safety standards and design guidelines for specific applications and situations

Comment  #016
Response  Agreed
If there are no turn lanes I feel more rushed to get out of the way of the cars behind me and am more likely to rush through an intersection.... not the other way around....

Comment

We live in the outer reaches of Route 196--we need turn lanes to survive. Since we have lived in this area, there have been several fatalities. The speed limit has been lower, to no avail, because they are basically ignored. What works nearer to town, does not necessarily work for us.

Response

Cannot have one size fits all policy. Need to evaluate various criteria including location, crash history, speed, municipal services, etc.

Response

We need to add left turn lanes on Rt 196 westbound at Birch Ridge Avenue and Blueberry Lane similar to the lanes opposite the Ivanhoe neighborhood. I feel very uncomfortable waiting to turn left with traffic coming up behind me at high speed. Will those drivers be alert enough to stop or divert around me?

Response

The source of the accident data presented on the map and time range may be useful information to include and a color legend relating accident # range to color on map may be helpful.

Response

Also more education on driver inattention may help.
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<td>This should be reviewed by a licensed traffic engineer.</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
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<td>Agreed, this would be a part of implementation</td>
<td>This part of the plan is way too specific. Recommending 7 new stops on Main Street? No one wants to stop 8-9 times on their way to Brunswick. Please consider the business and heavy truck corridor on upper Maine Street. Stopping a commercial dump truck, school bus, or tractor trailer takes 27 gears and a jake brake. The noise increase would be ridiculous. The trucks are only trying to get to the intersection to head up 196 to the highway or to Rt 1. Idea- Let's REOPEN the old 95 off ramp on 201 and then the trucks wouldn't have to go on main st at all</td>
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<td>Recommendation is to look at feasibility of stop signs as a traffic management tool (committee agrees with your comment and will edit accordingly), agreed on ramp comment, but that is an FHWA decision</td>
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<td>Data source and time frame reference may be helpful</td>
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Shouldn't this portion of roadway be improved for biking as well as pedestrians. It makes sense to connect the Bay Park and Cathance neighborhoods to town without having to go all the way around Foreside road. This portion of road has a very narrow shoulder and combined with the fast speeds the cars travel it doesn't feel safe on a bike.  

Response: Noted, thank you for the comment

Comment: Priority vehicle. Major state highway

Response: Noted, thank you for the comment

Would be helpful for me and other readers to understand what criteria was used to assign dangerous roadway and intersection. Crash data and other studies?

Response: We will seek to reference data

Priority vehicle. Arterial state highway. Cite basis for dangerous road, speed, and visibility designation assignment

Response: See above

Some sort of affordable way to get to Portland transportation hubs (bus, Amtrak, airport) is so important.

Response: Agreed

Add some reference to the natural resource goals / content from the last plan also

Response: Noted, thank you for the comment

Reference the town's Natural Resource Plan

Response: Noted, thank you for the comment
Add to the intro of this section all of the benefits of open space and conserved lands - scenery, rural character, recreation and fitness, hunting and sport, wildlife habitat, maintain clean resources (particularly water bodies and tributaries).  

| Comment | Add to the intro of this section all of the benefits of open space and conserved lands - scenery, rural character, recreation and fitness, hunting and sport, wildlife habitat, maintain clean resources (particularly water bodies and tributaries). |
| Response | Conservation Commission is writing intro |

Conservation Commission is writing intro

Yes, more nature! Less traffic and development.

Noted, thank you for the comment

We moved to Topsham 3 years ago and love to be out hiking, kayaking, etc. We have found it extremely difficult to find information on what opportunities there are open to us. No trail maps/guides, no web site, no publication of where boat launches, trails, public lands are.... very frustrating.

Information exists, making it more easily accessible is a good idea which is discussed in the plan

I would add the Conservation Commission as an actor here.

Not every easement is appropriate for BTLT.

Agreed

Needs another section added - encourage private landholders to make land use and development decisions that maintain open space

Current incentives exist for open space subdivisions, and is stated in the plan

I think BTLT and the town work well together already. Developing and keeping updated a community concensus trail plan would be a valuable asset in coordinating conservation efforts.

Agreed
Possibly time for a town sponsored Topsham Trails Committee?

As separate from a bike/ped committee? There are existing organizations that work on trails in Topsham...(Trailriders, BTLT, CREA, NEMBA)

Check with Topsham Trail riders on snowmobile trail locations.

TTR trail data is embedded in maps and comp plan

This is actually a trailerable back in boat launch.

Noted, thank you for the comment

This area has about 100 acres of undeveloped land with some existing trails. It has been judged difficult to develop. I would like to see the Town work with the landowner to set this aside as permanent open space.

Noted, but currently this a commercially zoned area, and will likely be a difficult task given the landowner intentions. Past planning efforts have recognized this as a potentially developable parcel, perhaps there is room for both?

How would this be funded? Are there grant programs for any of these initiatives?

Grants will be sought (noted below)

These would be on the scale of the Eastern Trail and Down East Sunrise Trail, i.e. of state wide significance. They would likely become part of the East Coast Greenway as are the aforementioned trails. Much of the funding should be from the state considering the number of communities they would benefit.

Noted, thank you for the comment
The action item build it seems too bold of a statement without articulating funding expectations from the tax payers.

**Response**

*Noted, during implementation, feasibility study will be reviewed and possible costs and funding will be explored.*

Add protection of rural character and views. It appears from experience in other towns that a our current minimum of 30% open space is insufficient to preserve rural character and significant wildlife habitat. 60-70% is more inline with best practices. See Fred Snow's presentation at [https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/docs/Open_Space_Subdivisions_presentation_2010_10_07_withnotes.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/docs/Open_Space_Subdivisions_presentation_2010_10_07_withnotes.pdf)

**Response**

*Noted, will likely be a discussion for implementation*

Isn't that the role of the land trust?

**Response**

*Regional conservation is more of a land trust role, however we see ourselves as a partner on particular local projects of note. Where the Land Trust does not step in for a local resource value, the Conservation Commission plays an important role. BTLT's focus is in the rural areas and mainly seeks farmland and habitat preservation. It doesn't have the resources to deal with conservation in the developed parts of town. That's mainly the function of the Conservation Commission which currently has no funding.*

Agreed

I don’t think we need layers of more government and spending. We need to focus on efficiency, regionalization of various resources, and consolidation.

**Response**

*Noted, thank you for the comment*

Good. We need more protection of open space and scenic...
This is a wonderful suggestion. Would love to see more use of the river from this side of town. It is so beautiful and the area should be protected from industrial development.

Response: Thanks

Comment: This is addressed in local and regional mobility section

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Response: This is addressed in local and regional mobility section

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Would love a swimming pool! I am pro arts depending on the impact of development on residential areas and the traffic that accompanies arts/cultural activities.

Response: Noted, thank you for the comment

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It would be great to have an outdoor rink? My daughter skates. we have to go to Yarmouth to find a good outdoor town rink? If volunteer citizens could help, maybe the ice could get maintained better at Foreside? It's the perfect place, but it needs something more? Hot water and some squeegees?

Response: Noted, thank you for the comment

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Response: Noted, thank you for the comment

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As a non-profit organization with 85% of the budget supplied by the Town, fundraising is essential and a challenge.

Comment: As a non-profit organization with 85% of the budget supplied by the Town, fundraising is essential and a challenge.
Response: Noted, thank you for the comment #004

Good idea

Comment: Good idea
Response: Thanks #005

Such community groups might focus on specific groups or interests, e.g., youth, seniors, etc. See neighboring towns for examples.

Comment: Such community groups might focus on specific groups or interests, e.g., youth, seniors, etc. See neighboring towns for examples.
Response: Agreed #006

Winter is long and it would be good to have activities to do with kids. Other towns use their rec center in the winter and charge $5 per kid to go play for a few hours which is a great thing in the winter or for stay at home moms. They have bounce houses and toys and cars and bikes for kids to use. I am sure parents would donate toys and it would only take one staff person to oversee it. Parents help clean up at the end and just store it in a storage closet at the rec center.

Comment: Winter is long and it would be good to have activities to do with kids. Other towns use their rec center in the winter and charge $5 per kid to go play for a few hours which is a great thing in the winter or for stay at home moms. They have bounce houses and toys and cars and bikes for kids to use. I am sure parents would donate toys and it would only take one staff person to oversee it. Parents help clean up at the end and just store it in a storage closet at the rec center.
Response: Noted, thank you for the comment #007

I support more use of the fairgrounds as well. It's central location is perfect for events. I miss the indoor market.

Comment: I support more use of the fairgrounds as well. It's central location is perfect for events. I miss the indoor market.
Response: Agreed #008

YES!!!! I love this whole section. I should have said that at the meeting 11/8.

Comment: YES!!!! I love this whole section. I should have said that at the meeting 11/8.
Response: Noted, thank you for the comment #009
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Thanks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Include activities for seniors, or support People Plus in Brunswick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>the library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Noted, correction to come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Ski area? I am intrigued but don't know what it was. Skiing/Skating, etc., all good ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Sky Hy was located off of Bradley Pond. Noted, thank you for the comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>My dream, but then I went there and saw the vertical feet issue:)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>We should build bike trails at the transfer station. Specifically 4.3 miles of them that are flagged out. November 11 will be a trail building day and anyone reading this should show up:)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>OK...great turn out on the event!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>It's great to see that torn down:) Anything is better than that. It would also be great if the town could work well with the developer who owns the land to help residents for a good outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Agreed, we have thoughts in our catalyst site/illustrative plan section</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Great idea! So why not put a stage, seating area sort of thing at some unused, but visible from the road section of the Foreside fields? It's not an amphitheater on the river, but the town owns the land and it would give us a place to do those things?

Response

Noted, thank you for the comment

Comment

Again, could a hand launch area happen at either the library, or the Foreside fields?

Response

Can be looked into, but permitting issues may be a hurdle...something that implementation should follow up on (see previous comment on same issue)

Comment

Would love to see a more visible local market year round.

Response

Noted, thank you for the comment

Comment

Clearer access to the river from River Road for small boat use (kayak, canoe etc).

Response

Noted, thank you for the comment

These are wonderful ideas, an outdoor splash pad, adventure obstacle course on a trail, pool, ice rink... Any of these would be a great asset to the community.

Response

Thanks, these are all your ideas!
Comment: Not in favor of attracting a lot of people to town; don't want to live in a bigger city (moved to Topsham to escape that). Pro high-speed internet and people being able to work in Topsham rather than commute.  
Response: Noted, thank you for the comment

Comment: I'd love to see the percentage of people who live and work in Topsham rise. I don't see a lot in the plan other than "improve internet speed" to support job growth. There is more we can do to give Topsham more high quality jobs. A good starting point would be a job income and benefits survey deciding what are the conditions that are causing these businesses to reside and thrive in Topsham and how can we apply that in other places?  
Response: Great comment. Retention of existing business, and allowance for focused development are pillars of this plan.

Comment: Not sure how shared workspaces is being defined. Concerned about global zoning changes that might negatively impact residential neighborhoods with "shared workspaces."  
Response: Noted, thank you for the comment

Comment: More people and more development won't lead to lower taxes. Look at the taxes in Brunswick and Portland.  
Response: Noted, thank you for the comment
Comment: How does being near the Crooker Company property help the students? This comment does not make sense.

Response: Comment anticipates re-development of the property in the future

Comment: I think we have to be careful about defining home occupations and shared workspaces. They could negatively impact the quality of life in residential neighborhoods. Maybe a person doesn't want to live next to a daycare and listen to the noise or doesn't want to live next to a home business that attracts traffic. There isn't enough definition of these types of uses to make sweeping zoning changes.

Response: Noted, thank you for the comment

Comment: I am against higher-density development, especially in current residential areas.

Response: Noted, thank you for the comment

Comment: This is another potential use for the community centers. Home based businesses often need shared workspaces outside the home for meetings.

Response: Library offers this, and this is a good comment in regards to community centers

Comment: Affordable housing need is critical. Find ways to encourage affordable housing development, e.g, tax relief for affordable portions of mixed housing projects.

Response: Agreed
Comment: Let's be sure we are paying our teachers at competitive salaries so we attract high quality professionals to serve our schools.* #030

Response: Noted, thank you for the comment

Comment: I agree with not extending the sewer across 295. Noted, the language has been changed to reflect utilities (infrastructure), and having a cost benefit analysis done prior to accepting any infrastructure as public.* #031

Response: Noted, the language has been changed to reflect utilities (infrastructure), and having a cost benefit analysis done prior to accepting any infrastructure as public

A hot topic. I'm also interested to know where in town there is 1) water
2) sewer, 3) natural gas. Is there a map in one of these sections?

Comment: Thanks! #032

Response: Map of water and sewer are included, natural gas is not available

Comment: Consult with the Topsham sewer district on this action item language. Thank you, and we have met with SD to discuss, language changes have been made. #033

Response: Thank you, and we have met with SD to discuss, language changes have been made.

There is a large amount of commercial use property on western side of 1295 (i.e. business park and MUC-1 zones) that could benefit from sewer. This action item seems too restrictive. Language is being amended. #033
Is this necessary? Seems like a decided issue. The cost and public sentiment has stopped this from happening in the past, but why make such a specific recommendation for the future.
Also, does Topsham even have the authority to do this where we are involved in a district with another town and its own authority?

Comment
Response  See above

Perhaps a statement that Topsham won't pay for sewer extensions beyond the growth area would be more appropriate?

Comment
Response  Topsham Sewer District or the Town have not paid for extensions, and we assume that they would not pay for extensions in the future without conducting an analysis

I strongly support this item. We cannot allow infrastructure maintenance costs to get out of control.

Comment
Response  Noted, thank you for the comment

I don't want higher-density mixed-use development in residential areas or in areas that are already clogged with traffic (mall, Lower Village, etc.).

Comment
Response  Noted, thank you for the comment

I don't believe deliberately trying to make Topsham a bigger town/city is going to give it more of an identity or improve the quality of life.

Comment
Response  Noted, thank you for the comment
Comment: Boundaries are established by District chartered service area #040
Correct

Comment: Consult with sewer and water district #041
Done

So are you indicating we should promote smaller businesses or commercial buildings on small lots or expand development vertically to maximize value per acre? #042
As appropriate...not either or...rather, both and

Comment: How many jobs does Frosty's create compared to Home Depot? #043
Brunswick Main Street is not a good comparable for Topsham.

Good comment...we are attempting to point out the value of higher density versus lower density land use...many small businesses could fit within a home depot site to create comparable jobs(for example)

Comment: Yes, more walking and less traffic! #044
Thanks

Streets as public spaces? What does that mean? Update zoning carefully and transparently; do not negatively impact the quality of life in residential areas. #045
Streets serve multiple functions versus just vehicular transportation is the attempted articulation of public spaces...agreed with transparent and careful update of zoning

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Page 87
I believe the town needs to be very careful about TIFs; they can sometimes give all the benefits to businesses and none to taxpayers in the town. I think any TIF should be evaluated individually and carefully. Not the experience we have had in Topsham.

As a newer resident without kids (i.e. no direct school involvement) I would say that Topsham is a very hard place to move to and become active in the community. I have lived here two years and despite volunteering and trying to find community based businesses I am still feeling out of the loop. Some sort of old fashioned welcome wagon or something would be great to get these new residents feeling like they are home and want to stay …. can anyone point me to a good electrician???

Great idea…Noted

Be sure to include affordable housing. Noted, thank you for the comment (embedded in plan in tiny homes section as well as cottage courts, and multifamily development strategies)

We might want to point out that large developments are often suited to a single business and aren't easily reused when that business moves. Large developments can lay unused for a decade or more with little tax revenue.
Agreed, this is the value of higher density/high value development and why we reference a value per acre analysis.

I don't know what the international building code is or how it would be applied here, but I would be careful about cutting corners on building codes. Shoddy construction has very poor outcomes.

Comment

Agreed

Comment

What is an incubator building?

Shared workspace with a low cost threshold for startup businesses.

The retail industry is being gutted by e-commerce. Stores and huge chains of stores close daily. This is an outdated idea. There are empty storefronts at Cooks Corner. I would not quickly approve the addition of more retail stores or create TIFs for them.

Comment

Noted, Topsham has never used TIF to support retail development.

Comment

I do not want more high-density development in the town's core. The town's core is heavily residential, and we must preserve the quality of life and property values in residential areas.

Comment

Noted, thank you for the comment.

Topsham's core is where we get the most revenue per acre. Form based codes allow us to keep the residential nature of new development. Development in the rural area costs the town more than it generates in tax revenue.
Agreed

I am concerned about wholesale removal of "barriers" to small-scale development and the establishment of new businesses. I'm not sure what the perceived barriers are, but I think we need to be careful about too much development, development that will likely add more traffic to residential areas, development that is statistically likely to fail, the creation of TIFs, etc. And I oppose sweeping changes to make development easier. I am pro quality of life for residents over development.

Comment

These "broad ranges" of use should not significantly impact the quality of life of the residents who already live there.

Agreed

I need to understand why our current zoning and policies don't allow this. Please elaborate

Comment

Current densities within growth area should be reviewed to see if they may accommodate this action item

Comment

Really?? I have never had that impression

Comment

Should not conflict with maintaining rural character of rural zones
This is such an important move. Agree

I don't want to see big apartment complexes or condos all over town. I like the small-town character of Topsham and single-family homes as the dominant form of housing.

Noted, the plan references many mixes of housing types for future development.

NO! I don't want secondary homes on the same property as a single-family home. Very bad idea.

Noted, thank you for the comment

No, we should not allow tiny homes behind existing homes or anything else that increases density in current residential neighborhoods or creates a mess of clutter without zoning or housing projects.

Noted, thank you for the comment

Look at the parking nightmare Portland has become. Do you really want that in Topsham?

Noted, thank you for the comment

NO tiny units in residential neighborhoods in the core of town!

Noted, thank you for the comment
Again, I don't like the sound of removing all barriers!! Not sure what it means, but it sounds like it just opens the dam and lets anyone put up any kind of business they feel like just for tax money. It may not be the best, and all development should be carefully reviewed.

Comment

Noted, thank you for the comment

Tiny homes could go in existing mobile home parks.

Comment

Could be looked at during implementation

Not sure how easy it should be to locate Tiny units on existing developed property. Some thought is needed on this to evaluate property value impacts and marketability of property

Comment

Good comment. Agreed to have an impact analysis conducted as part of implementation

Again, be careful creating TIFs casually. They don't always result in the intended effects and can be negative.

Comment

Noted, thank you for the comment

The tiny house is a cute idea, but doesn't seem to add significantly to solving the crisis we have in the need for affordable housing.

Comment

Agreed, this is merely one of several options for affordable housing...will be looked at during implementation

We need single family housing to attract families and support our schools and local economy.
Agreed
Consider permanent tax relief for portions of mixed housing developments that are affordable.

Comment
I don't want dorms or apartments mixed in with single-family homes in already tight neighborhoods!

Noted, thank you for the comment (we don’t believe the plan states this)

This should include not rezoning to industrial near residential neighborhoods that already exist. It would not complement the character of the neighborhood.

Comment
Offer more ways to participate online like this one and sooner in the process. Many people can't attend meetings because of work, family life, etc.

Noted, thank you for the comment

Comment
Change from City Hall to Town leaders or municipal officers

Noted, change made

Comment
Elaborate on this. It's not obvious to many in the community.

Noted, thank you for the comment

Comment
Elaborate to justify adding a staff position.

May amend this as we just hired an assistant town manager

Comment
Great idea.

Thanks

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Page 96
It's unappealing for professionals that work in offices to attend a committee meeting in another office. We need casual meeting spaces with a kid friendly area for meetings. Another "community center?" 

Comment: Noted, thank you for the comment

Add public transportation as a means of reducing fossil fuel use

Comment: See local and regional mobility

I am in favor of reducing our impact on the climate and strongly believe that more development, more businesses, more people and more traffic are not the answer!

Comment: Noted, thank you for the comment

The Crooker asphalt operation pollutes the air and probably the groundwater. It should not be in town!

Comment: Noted

Yes! Our drinking water tastes terrible now, so we must do anything we can to protect all the water in the area and try to improve it.

Comment: Noted

Yes! Composting is very important. Also teaching ways to reduce consumption as well.

Comment: Noted, thank you for the comment

library

Comment: Will address
The Conservation Committee also has a role in educating the public about the value of green infrastructure.

Comment Section – Part 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>This is a neighborhood too. It is called Birch Ridge, and is adjacent to 100 acres of open land with trails.</td>
<td>Noted, added to plan</td>
<td>#001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Constrain growth to east side? What about the vacant business park land on the west side for sale and the mixed use commercial land for sale on the west side of 295?</td>
<td>Agreed, constrain may not be the appropriate term...perhaps use enhance/ or focus?</td>
<td>#002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Even if Crooker moves from this site, it is not a bygone industry, so it does not seem appropriate to me to keep the silos. There would have to be upkeep to them also, which seems an unnecessary task for the town to take on.</td>
<td>Noted, thank you for the comment (removed from drawing)</td>
<td>#003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>I'm not sure what new street connectors would relieve congestion at 196 and Main, BUT they should not go through existing residential neighborhoods like Woodside and Elm.</td>
<td>Noted, thank you for the comment</td>
<td>#004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Indoor recreational options are good ideas if we can afford them and they are not duplicated already in the area. #005

Response
Noted, and likely a discussion during implementation

Please also do not push more traffic on to Winter St. & River Road as a 196 bypass. #006

Response
Noted, we do not recommend this

This will all add traffic, congestion, emissions from cars, parking problems, etc. #007

Response
Noted, thank you for the comment

What about the public safety issue of retaining these batch plant silos and the maintenance? Are painting and maintenance costs by the Topsham taxpayers? #008

Response
Noted, drawing edited to remove silo art...

Comment
Retail is a dying breed. #009

Response
Noted, thank you for the comment

Comment
Skate parks are great, but they can call for more public safety resources. #010

Response
Noted, thank you for the comment

Comment
Parking garages can have impacts on public safety. #011

Response
Noted

Comment
I don't prefer to use them. They seem less safe. #012

Response
Noted, thank you for the comment

Hannaford has just expanded. Do you think they have more plans to upgrade? #013

Response
Long term - Hannaford has not added new square footage since 2000

Or open air malls with pervious pavement and green roofs? LEED buildings? Solar power? Does Hannaford have an interest in building a parking garage??? #014
Response: Noted, thank you for the comment

Comment: Where?

Response: Thanks for catching...there are two number 5's on the plan...the 7 corresponds to the area that resembles an amphitheater on the drawing

Comment: I like the idea to use Foreside, which we already have and is more central, for ice skating.

Response: Agreed...but we heard some sort of public amenity in the mall vicinity is important.

Comment: how about making for decent outdoor ice at Foreside? How do we make that happen? Other towns do this. I've been told members of the public can't help, but the town is floundering making ice. Build it big, and then you can rent out the snack shack?

Response: Noted (see above)

Comment: Monument Place is a badly designed road that doesn't need more development. You can't see cars coming up the hill from the mall, and there is already traffic turning into several businesses and streets.

Response: Noted, thank you for the comment (concept plan shows re-alignment)

Comment: I don't see how parking on Main Street would work or lead to better traffic patterns.

Response: On street parking facilitates breaks in traffic allowing cars to egress better, and slows traffic speeds...of course this would need further analysis prior to implementation.

Comment: Roundabouts are confusing and result in accidents. They used to be everywhere in the 1960s, and they were problematic, so they went away but are coming back. NO!

Response: Noted, removed from drawing
Comment: I don’t think Upper Village needs more development; negative impacts on residents in that area.

Response: This illustrative concept seeks to add residents to the area...

Comment: Not sure we need more mixed-use buildings on Main Street; depends on what they are.

Response: We heard resoundingly that people wanted mixed use buildings in this area.

Comment: I vehemently oppose a new road added parallel to Main St. It would either affect Elm St. neighborhood or Woodside; both bad ideas and very unfair to current residents. The fire station and town all already encroach on part of Woodside and add light pollution and noise pollution. Don’t lower the quality of life in those neighborhoods.

Response: Noted

Comment: I thought the curves actually slow traffic in my experience traveling this road. The intersection at Walgreens could be improved to reduce crashes. The blinking light helps but improving site distance looking toward the mall would be a good enhancement.

Response: Good comment...Noted. The re-alignment is more towards Main Street versus towards the Mall.

Comment: A common park area should be considered as part of mixed use in this area to connect to the Municipal facilities and trail system.

Response: Expanding upon the Main street plan of 2008, we have placed the public park at #10 and #11 on this illustrative concept.

Comment: Utilizing the Grange hall would be nice for the area to bring people together.

Response: Agreed

Comment: We could use a new post office

Response: Agreed
Parallel parking on that street while people are trying to drive down it in narrower lanes will be problematic!

On street parking facilitates breaks in traffic allowing cars to egress better, and slows traffic speeds.

More housing and businesses in Lower Village will mean more traffic going down Main Street and across the bridge, where there are already problems .. that will not be solved by adding parallel parking. BUT I oppose another street going parallel to Main St. through a residential neighborhood like Elm or Woodside.

Comment Section – Part 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>resident (?)</td>
<td>#001</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>resident preference (versus human preference)</td>
<td>#002</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>spell out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Inland Fisheries and Wildlife...seek to change acronyms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>for clarity, perhaps areas outside of Tops should not be in color.</td>
<td>#003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Env. Systems should not be limited by governmental boundaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Not all of us want more growth in the core of the town.</td>
<td>#004</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Response: Noted

Comment: what about areas with sewer/water outside of proposed growth zone
Currently sewer does not extend beyond proposed growth area...special districts may acknowledge this issue.

Response: Increased education is needed in the town for people in these rural parts to know about the water table - how our well work and how septic systems work. What land use can impact the safety of our wells - since there is low chance we are getting water and septic service extended any time, we don't want to depend on that as a solution for if our wells become contaminated

Comment: spell out

Response: Limited data, but perhaps public workshops with local well drilling companies?

Comment: "is" instead of are

Response: TDI - Topsham Development Incorporated

Comment: OK

Response: Expanding public sewer is expensive, so it should only be done if there are clear economic benefits to residents without reducing the quality of life!

Comment: Topsham Sewer District works with developers on any expansions...
Adding more high-density residences (like tiny homes, apartments, etc.) to neighborhoods with single-family homes and adding more businesses and traffic to current neighborhoods like Elm, Woodside, Lower Village is not a way of improving the quality of life!! I oppose this love affair with development. I don't want this place to look like or feel like Massachusetts!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Noted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>use sprawl instead or pattern?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>perhaps add...resulting in a sprawling pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>districts with special character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Sector to be capitalized...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More development does not equal enhancements in everyone's eyes!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Noted</th>
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<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Noted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Noted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where are the current heavy industrial businesses located? It is very hard to tell?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Map needs to be more legible...will address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Is this realistic? You have 3/4 of the town in "potential conservation."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Need to clarify between rural lands and potential conservation...needs to be distinguished</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Comment: Perhaps should delineate heavy industrial and "limited/light industrial". Added just an industrial special district (where existing I zone is), light versus heavy may be part of character district implementation. #018

Response: Pg. 127

Comment: it appears from the map that there are no rural lands in Topsham. #019

Response: We have clarified rural lands and potential conservation. Heavy Industrial and Neighborhood Enhancement are hard to discern on the map. I wonder if having blowups of the village area and wherever the heavy industrial area would be better. Make the water a lighter blue. #020

Comment: Map has been made more legible, thanks for the comment. #021

Response: Retain open space in this location. #021

Comment: Noted...this area has conflicting comments...need to resolve. #022

Response: I oppose more development in Woodside and Elm neighborhoods. It will reduce the quality of life and property values!!!! NO! #022

Response: I am not in favor of development around Lower Village and Upper Village. Keep it, IF WE MUST HAVE IT, on 196, the Crooker site and the mall, PLEASE! #023

Response: Noted

Comment: how is this possible with traffic on Main St? #024

Response: Good design? Alternative transportation routes (see illustrative concepts)
Comment: hence the need to attractive development alternatives.
Response: noted

Comment: a more definitive position should be taken on what would be allowable if the property ever changes hands.
Response: interesting thought...should have future preference embedded here

Comment: which could allow for the same development density as 1 - 2 acre lots...with the preservation of open space?
Response: "as a"

Comment: ???
Response: Will add

Comment: spell out?
Response: Comprehensive Plan Update Committee

Comment: not clear to me what story these dogs are telling
Response: Agreed, will need to better clarify drawings.

Comment: agree. Definitely need a text box explaining this 1 page graphic.
Response: Noted

Comment: I oppose more high-density residences in Woodside and Elm!
Response: Noted

Comment: Woodside and Elm are identified as neighborhood preservation.
Response: Agreed

Comment: I strongly oppose more high-density development of residences (including tiny homes, guest cottages, small businesses, apartment complexes, etc.) in Woodside!
Response: Noted
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>photo does not seem to convey definition on CD4</th>
<th>#035</th>
<th>Pg. 135</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>New photo added</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Elaborate on what is referred to as ruins.</td>
<td>#036</td>
<td>Pg. 137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Agreed we will look at elaborating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leave the in-town neighborhoods alone! They are tight enough!</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pg. 137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>Especially Woodside!</td>
<td>#037</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Noted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>How much are we paying people to force development on us? I don't want to pay higher taxes to pay people to make more development that I don't want happen.</td>
<td>#038</td>
<td>Pg. 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>what is CIP?</td>
<td>#039</td>
<td>Pg. 142</td>
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<td>Capital Improvement Plan</td>
<td>#039</td>
<td>Pg. 142</td>
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<td>Please reference all prior studies that served as a basis for plan update content and development.</td>
<td>#040</td>
<td>Pg. 155</td>
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