



## ***Town of Chelmsford***

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### **To the Residents of Chelmsford,**

The Master Plan Committee has developed the 2010 Master Plan to provide the town with guidance and direction over the next 10 years. The Committee has observed that since the 1996 Master Plan the town has become a more mature and built out suburb. We believe that if the town is not careful, and continues with current trends, there exists a significant potential for increased urbanization that will have a negative effect upon the town. This would likely result in a degradation of our community's quality of life, character, services and financial well being. We envision our town to be a suburban community with a diversity of people, financially stable, an education system that is one of the best in the state, and a town government that is open and accessible to all. We need to be cognizant that potential future development and over development could have adverse effects on our community. The Committee believes that the current quality of life and the services should be maintained or improved.

The 2010 Master Plan has identified limited new opportunities for housing and economic development in order to better manage current trends and create a balance in future growth. Since these new opportunities may differ from our recent philosophy for housing and economic development, the potential impact of both recent trends and these new opportunities must be acknowledged and fully understood before any implementation. It is likely that the intrinsic sustainable carrying capacity of the Town will be exceeded to the detriment of everyone. Consequently, we are recommending measures that should be taken to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate the combined potential impact.

### **During the development of the Master Plan, the Committee used the following principles as guidance when making decisions:**

#### **Recall fundamentals of the 1996 Master Plan:**

- Maintain the suburban character of Chelmsford and recognize that unplanned and uncontrolled development of the industrial, commercial, and residential areas of the town may contribute to a poorer quality of life.
- Be cautious of the type of growth that will erode the remaining rural characteristics of the Town, increase traffic, increase parking requirements, and dramatically change the nature of the Town.
- Maintain sufficient natural areas so that open space, plant and wildlife species can be sustained.

#### **Ensure that Chelmsford is Sustainable**

Sustainability means that the town remains fiscally sound, services are maintained or improved, and schools maintain high academic standards. This also means that the water, sewer, transportation and telecommunications infrastructure is sufficient. Additionally we have the resources to protect our wetlands, recreation and open space, natural, cultural, and historic resources. It means we make an efficient use of our land and buildings based upon their intrinsic carrying capacity. In addition, it means we provide housing and economic opportunities for our residents.

**Adopt a sensible and sustainable Land Use Policy**

Chelmsford's Land Use Policy should include prioritizing the reuse and redevelopment of existing structures rather than promoting new construction. It should include new zoning regulations that control and encourage redevelopment where there is zero net increase in building square footage. The land use policy should increase landscaping, improve Stormwater Management and create significant improvements in parking, transportation and traffic systems. Where additional building square footage is allowed site impacts should be fully mitigated.

**Adopt zoning regulations for housing and economic development**

Zoning regulations should be adopted that serve local needs while pursuing regional solutions and strategies; that encourage new housing and economic opportunities to complement other goals and objectives of the Master Plan; that prioritize opportunities to include reuse, rehabilitation, and retrofitting of existing structures; that require all new development and redevelopment fully mitigate any increased impact and that result in a net benefit to the Town and environment while protecting open space. We should discourage development for the sole purpose of "revenue chasing". We recognize that Town-owned property might play an integral role in housing opportunities.

In the coming years, our community will face many challenges that will put pressure on maintaining the quality of life and level of services we currently enjoy. A balanced approach to development and redevelopment must take place in order to insure our community remains a suburban community. A review of our zoning bylaws needs to occur to make sure that we stay current with the ever-changing landscape of business. Our housing stock needs to maintain a balance so that the next generation will be able to be the future of Chelmsford.

In the Introduction Section, you will find our Vision for 2020, along with goals for the seven Sections of the Master Plan. The areas that were addressed include: Land Use and Zoning; Economic Development; Transportation; Housing; Open Space and Recreation; Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources; and Facilities and Services. During the process of developing the Master Plan, the Committee reached out to thirty different stakeholders in the community and held six public input sessions. We see this Master Plan as a guide to the future. It is a document that should be referred to by the Boards and Committees in Town and be used as they deliberate. It should continually be reviewed in order to keep the plan current.

We wish to thank Evan Belansky, Community Development Director; Vivian Merrill, Recording Secretary; and our consultant, Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, for their support and ideas throughout the process. We would like to extend a special thanks to all those that provided input at our public and open sessions, along with the stakeholders that attended our meetings.

In closing, the Master Plan Committee's work may end with this document, but what begins next is a period of implementation of the recommendations and bylaw review to bring the bylaws in line with the Master Plan.

Respectfully,

James Lane, Chairman  
Philip Eliopoulos, Vice Chairman  
George Zaharoolis, Clerk  
Jackie Hoonjan  
David J. McLachlan  
Sheila Pichette  
Linda Prescott  
Peter Robson  
Judy Tavano