

12. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan is a step-by-step guide for Bolton to follow over the next fifteen years to ensure that the Master Plan recommendations are put into action. Implementing the Master Plan will require a concerted and ongoing effort on the part of the town's elected and appointed officials, volunteers and dedicated citizens. The actions that the town takes now will create a lasting legacy for future generations. Implementing the Master Plan is the best way to ensure that Bolton will continue to be a desirable community in which to live, work, and play five, ten, twenty and even fifty years into the future.

Implementation is a critical step in the Master Plan process. As shown by the recent SJC decision on the Town of Hadley's Phased Growth Bylaw, failure to implement recommendations of a Master Plan has significant legal consequences. Failure to implement this plan would have serious impacts on planning and growth in Bolton and all efforts should be made to advance the implementation of the Plan's strategies.

The Implementation Plan is divided into two components. The first part is the Implementation Action Plan, which identifies the group or groups responsible for implementing each Master Plan recommendation as well as the approximate timeline for action. The second component is an Evaluation Form, a template designed to help the town keep track of the progress being made on each recommendation.

Planning is a fluid process and requires a community to continually evaluate and respond to events and challenges, as well as changes in the goals and desires of its residents. This Master Plan has a planning horizon of approximately 15 years: that is, planning needs are evaluated and recommendations are made based on their projected benefit over the same timeline. However, the Implementation Plan only has a six-year timeframe in the sense that most of the Master Plan recommendations are targeted to be implemented (or least commenced) within six years. After about five years (around 2010), Bolton should revisit the Master Plan to determine whether its goals and general strategies are still appropriate to the town. A full re-write of the Master Plan will not be necessary at this time, but the town should facilitate a public review of the document, modify the goals and strategies as necessary, and prepare a new Implementation Plan for the subsequent six years. The town should consider preparing a new Master Plan after 15 years (around 2020), at which time conditions in the town will probably have changed substantially and a new plan will be needed to address the challenges that these conditions present.

12.1 Implementation Action Plan

The Implementation Action Plan summarizes all of the Master Plan recommendations in a matrix format that identifies the approximate timeline and the group(s) responsible for implementing each one. The recommendations are divided according to the chapter in the master plan that is addressed. Most of the actions will cost little or no money to implement because they can be brought about by Town Meeting vote or other action to change local policies. In some cases, the town may need to devote staff resources or hire an attorney or consultant to assist with this

process (e.g., to help prepare zoning changes). The Town Planner may take the place of a consultant in many of these recommendations. Some of the actions that involve facility or infrastructure improvements will require the expenditure of funds, which may come from the town, the state, and/or other sources.

In the “Timeframe/Priority” column of the Action Plan matrices, actions are classified as either “Immediate” (indicating action within 12 months), “Short-Term” (indicating action within 12-24 months), “Middle-Term” (indicating action within 2-4 years), “Long-Term” (indicating action within 4-6 years), or Ongoing (indicating action that should be continually repeated as necessary). A priority designation is also given to each Action Plan item indicating “high”, “middle” or “low priority.” All items and strategies within this Master Plan are important however, and the priority designation is simply a means to prioritize generally among all the actions contained within the plan. A handful of actions that require state involvement and/or major capital expenditures may require more than six years to complete.

Many strategies are linked to one another, requiring much effort in the early phases to lay the groundwork for future progress. The feasibility of implementing certain strategies will be dependent on the town’s ability to set the foundation with a number of the shorter-term strategies and allow the longer-term strategies build from those efforts.

12.1.1 Implementation of the Master Plan

Upon the acceptance of this Master Plan, the Master Plan Committee recommends that, in lieu of a Master Plan Implementation Committee, the Board of Selectmen (BOS) hold twice-yearly special meetings, involving all boards and committees listed as “Responsible Entities” in this Plan. At these meetings, the BOS should facilitate communication between the various boards, assess progress made on Master Plan strategies, and review priorities and milestones for future goals and actions. The BOS should be responsible for making sure that the action items identified in this Master Plan are being implemented in a timely and organized manner. Other duties include:

- Asking for interim updates from the boards and commissions responsible for implementing the strategies as identified in the Implementation Plan.
- Working with key Boards to help involve the public in the implementation process.
- Coordinating efforts with the Advisory Committee, Planning Board and proposed Capital Planning Committee.
- Facilitating the hiring of consultants, as necessary, to assist with the implementation.

Responsible Entity- The Board of Selectmen, in conjunction with the Advisory Committee, Planning Board, and proposed Capital Planning Committee, working with all Town Boards and Commissions listed as Responsible Entities in this Master Plan.

12.2 Evaluation Program

The Evaluation Program is a tool to help the Town measure the success of the Master Plan recommendations (once they have been implemented) in relation to the goals established by the community. The Evaluation Program is also a way for the town to revisit the Master Plan three, five, or even ten years into the future and take stock of new challenges and opportunities. In this way, the town can keep the Master Plan current without undertaking a complete re-write of the document every few years. The following page can be photocopied, modified for each specific goal, and filled out every few years by the MPIC as a concise summary of the successes and failures toward meeting each of the Master Plan goals.

