

HOLDEN TOMORROW: PLANNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

VISIONING WORKSHOP

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT RESPONSE



Approximately 100 residents attended the Visioning Workshop held on Tuesday, October 3, 2006 at the Holden Senior Center from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. Participants broke out into eight groups of approximately ten to twelve people per group.

Purpose of the workshop: The purpose of the workshop was to invite the Holden community to come together and generate ideas that will create a shared vision for Holden's future. This in turn will be used as the foundation for an action plan that will outline the steps necessary to attain this vision.

Process: Following a brief description of the process and purpose of the workshop, participants were presented with a slide show which included the Consultant's preliminary findings in each of the master plan elements (Housing, Economic Development, Transportation, Public Facilities and Services, Historic and Cultural Resources, and Natural Resources, Open Space and Recreation). The Consultants provided an overview of their work to date both in terms of inventory and analysis as well as a description of previous and on-going venues for public education and input.

Next participants were given an opportunity to visit information tables set up at the back of the room. Information at these tables included a summary of the Consultant's preliminary findings, maps and photographs.

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Participants were then divided into small discussion groups. Eight groups were formed and were set up in various locations throughout the entire Senior Center building. Steering Committee members attended a training session and were given a facilitators instruction packet with which to lead the discussion groups and document resident responses to the questions. All eight groups were asked the same questions in the same way. The large group then reconvened and reported a summary of each of the discussion group's priorities.



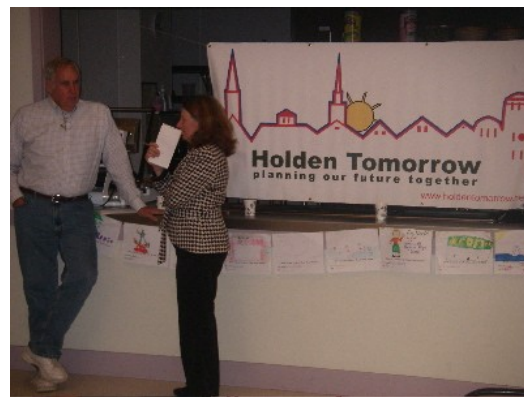
Gathering for presentation by Consultants



Information Tables



Refreshments & Display from Holden Days



Master Plan Log

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VISION STATEMENT FOR HOLDEN'S FUTURE

The following vision statement represents a compilation of the elements suggested by the participants at the visioning workshop who agreed that these were desired for the future of the town. Crafting a vision statement is a way of understanding and describing the desired future as envisioned by a group of people. "Imagine..." is a way of describing how the town would be if the desired future is attained. An action plan will be developed based on this vision. The plan will outline steps necessary to reach the shared vision.

*Imagine Holden Tomorrow ... a **community of friendly people** with a distinctly **New England character** that preserves its **historic buildings and rural atmosphere**. A town that is **walkable** with sidewalks connecting neighborhoods to the center, and preserves a **small town feeling** where people know each other and enjoy chance encounters with one another.*

*Imagine Holden Tomorrow... a town defined by its abundance of **open space** turned into a system of passive and active recreation areas and natural features connected by walking and biking trails, and accessible and enjoyed by a large number of residents as well as visitors, who see Holden as a **biking and hiking** destination.*

*Imagine Holden Tomorrow....with an **attractive Town Center** that has aesthetically pleasing buildings and signs and a **variety of shops and restaurants**. The Town Center will also provide opportunities for gathering such as a Town Common. Additional **gathering spots** will be provided throughout the community in the form of pocket parks and a Community Center. The Town will also have more to do in terms of **recreation and entertainment**, for example, an indoor sports facility, an ice rink, a movie theater and/or a concert facility.*

*Imagine Holden Tomorrow... where the needs of all segments of the population are met including housing and healthcare facilities and services for **seniors**, and safe and enjoyable activities for **teenagers**.*

*Imagine Holden Tomorrow...where **traffic flows well**, intersections are not congested, and access to the town is improved.*

*Imagine Holden Tomorrow...a town with **excellent and responsive town government**. Public services are provided in **state of the art facilities** including a new public safety building. The citizens are involved in town governance and are aware of decision-making because of **good communication** and accurate dissemination of information on the part of town officials.*

*Imagine Holden Tomorrow... a town that is guided by the **vision created by its citizens** and **actively implements it**. A town that is proactive, tries to predict change, and is engaged in shaping its future in positive ways.*

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Key Elements of A Shared Vision for Holden's Tomorrow

- Preserve small town atmosphere (sense of community, friendly people)
 - New England character
 - Historic buildings, rural atmosphere
 - Walkable, more sidewalks
- Preserve and enhance open space
 - Connect existing open spaces with walking/biking trails creating a system
- Additional commercial development
 - Provide more choices in terms of shops and restaurants
 - Provide a boost to the tax base
- Reduce traffic congestion
 - Consider I-190 connector to improve access
- Improve Town Center
 - Attractive architecture and signage
 - Town common
 - More choices and diversity in types of restaurants and shops
- Create community gathering spaces
 - Town Common
 - Community Center
 - Pocket parks
- Provide more opportunities for entertainment and recreation
 - Ice rink, indoor sports facility (indoor swimming pool)
 - Auditorium/concert facility, movie theater
- Support excellence in town government and in the provision of municipal services
 - Continued excellence of schools
 - New state-of-the-art public safety building
 - Update zoning regulations to reflect new realities (e.g. big box, village)
- Support all segments of the population and their particular needs
 - seniors and teens
- Involve citizenry in town governance
 - Public education & awareness of town activities
 - Involve citizens in decision-making including making criteria public

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- Improve communication between town government & citizenry

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LISTING OF MAJORITY RESPONSES FROM SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Participants were divided into small discussion groups (approximately ten participants per group) and asked the questions listed below. The discussions were facilitated by community volunteers who had received facilitator training prior to the visioning session. Participants were asked two kinds of questions, “go around the table” questions in which all group members were asked to contribute a response, in some cases voting on these responses at the end of session, and “brainstorming” questions in which whoever wanted to contribute an idea was welcome, but it was not required of all participants. Discussions were focused on the following questions:

- *“What are your favorite things about Holden (that you would want to ensure be preserved in the future)”?*
- *“What are your least favorite things about Holden (that you feel are important to change in the future)?”*
- *“What else would you like to see in Holden in the future*
- *“What are some potential obstacles to positive change as you see them?”*
- *“What are some strategies for getting “there” (to where you would like Holden to be)?”*
- *“If you could do one thing to improve Holden, what would it be?”*

Participant responses are presented in three ways:

1. Summary of Majority Responses from Small Group Discussions

Responses are summarized by listing comments made by participants both by the number of groups in which the comment was brought up as well as ranking responses by priority (based on the number of “votes” it received, where this is relevant.) For the sake of the summary and for the purpose of beginning to identify areas of consensus, only responses brought up in more than one group are recorded in this section.

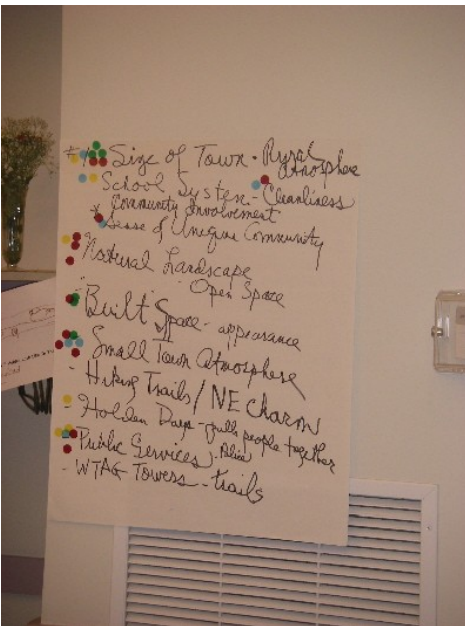
2. Tabulated Small Group Responses: Responses from all groups are compiled and in cases where items were voted on, those items receiving at least 3 votes are recorded.

3. Detailed Complete Documentation of Small Group Responses: This is a separate listing of each group’s responses as documented by the facilitators.

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SMALL DISCUSSION GROUPS



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QUESTIONS

1) ***“What are your favorite things about Holden (that you would want to ensure be preserved in the future)”?***

<i>Response</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i># of groups</i>	<i># of dots¹</i>
Open space & recreation	Natural resources, Hiking, Trout Brook Rail Trail Excellent system	7	55
Schools	Staff & facilities Education is valued	8	53
Small town atmosphere	Neighborhoods Friendly feeling Sense of community	6	31
Library		5	19
Rural atmosphere		2	17
Responsive leadership	Town meeting/ Town services Ability to get involved	2	16
Safety		2	9
Professionalism of police	Respect for law enforcement	2	8
People of Holden		2	7
Historical preservation	Old architecture	2	7

Main Themes

- Recreation, open space, and rural atmosphere are very much appreciated
- Public facilities and services, especially the library, schools, police and town governance in general are appreciated.

¹ All participants were asked to respond to this question. Once all group members had contributed their ideas, each participant was given 5 dots and asked to get up from their seats and “vote” on which they felt was most important by placing the dots next to the words on the large pads. Each participant was requested to use all of their dots, but instructed not to place any more than 3 dots on any one item.

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2) *“What are your least favorite things about Holden (that you feel are important to change in the future)?”*

<i>Response</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i># of groups</i>	<i># of dots²</i>
Traffic congestion		8	46
Lack of 190 connector	<i>To ease traffic</i>	4	18
Public safety building	<i>Outdated</i>	3	17
Lack of funding/foresight to obtain open space	<i>Cookie cutter development that do not preserve natural Lack of park</i>	4	16
Lack of sidewalks		3	13
Lack of commercial corridor	<i>Not enough stores & restaurants Sm. commercial base</i>	3	12
Political climate	<i>Lack of resolve by town boards Lack of ability to sell good project</i>	3	12
Bad feelings	<i>Contentiousness, apathy</i>	2	9

Main Themes:

- Traffic congestion and lack of 190 connector – priority by far, brought up in all eight groups (190 connector in four of the eight groups)
- Lack of mechanisms to preserve open space (including funding and requiring developers to protect some)
- Need for public safety building
- Desire for more stores and restaurants both to provide choice and to increase the tax base

² All participants were asked to respond to this question. Once all group members had contributed their ideas, each participant was given 5 dots and asked to get up from their seats and “vote” on which they felt was most important by placing the dots next to the words on the large pads. Each participant was requested to use all of their dots, but instructed not to place any more than 3 dots on any one item.

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3) “What else would you like to see in Holden in the future?” (Brainstorm)

Response	Comments	# of groups (out of 8)
More shops & restaurants	Art stores, wine & cheese shop	5
I-190 interchange		4
New public safety building		3
More community control on dev.		3
More walking/biking trails	Expanded nature trails at schools Connect rail trail to center rec area	3
Community center	Expand senior center to community center	3
Access to City of Worcester land	Hiking, etc.	2
Improved Fire Department	Including adequate # of quality fire trucks & full time fire staff	2
Mixed age housing		2
CCRC	Reuse Holden hospital	2
Senior housing		2
More provisions for aging population	Continuing care facility	2
Teen center	More teen activities in general	2
Clean Industrial Park	More clearly defined industrial areas	2
More sidewalks	Elevated walkways on Main St	2
Zoning	Increased lot sizes Mixed use/village zoning Big box zoning Strictly enforce zoning	1 1 1 1
Indoor sports facility	swimming pool, ice rink	2
Bus service/trolley within town	Big Y, Main St. to Dunkin Donuts	2
Maintain N. England character		2

Main Themes:

- More shops and restaurants
- Town Center – attractive architecture, Town Common
- Open Space – protect and obtain more to preserve
- Walkability – sidewalks, trails
- Seniors – housing, continuing care facility, mixed age housing
- Community center – expand existing senior center to convert to community center
- Zoning – to deal with new realities: big box, mixed use/village zoning
- Recreational /Entertainment Facilities including: Ice rink, Pocket park, auditorium / concert facility, movie theatre, indoor sports facility (including indoor swimming pool)

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- 4) *“What are some potential obstacles to positive change as you see them?”*
(Brainstorm) only 7 groups

Response	Comments	# of groups (out of 7)
Archaic zoning laws		3
Financial constraints		3
Resistance to change		3
Adversarial nature	Contentiousness	3
Apathy		3
Polarization of community	Lack of consensus	3
Inability of town to purchase land		2
Unwilling to invest in infrastructure	Limited sewer capacity	2
Lack of involvement of voters		2
Not wanting taxes raised		2
State legislature		2
NIMBY – Not In My Back Yard		2
No space for commercial development		2

Main Themes:

- Economics/financial constraints
- Zoning: outdated by-laws
- Attitudes including resistance to change, apathy, lack of ownership by town residents
- Polarization including lack of consensus and special interest groups
- Poor communication including misinterpretation of data, not enough public education, poor local reporting

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5) *“What are some strategies for getting “there” (to where you would like Holden to be)?” (Brainstorm)*

Response	Comments	# of groups (out of 7)
Public education & awareness	Use Cable Access more effectively Use town-wide e-mail	3
Consider representative Town Meeting	Prevent special interest agendas	3
Lobby for state/fed funding, Mobilize state reps	Investigate grants, Grant committee Watch dog for available funding	3
Clear zoning laws		2
Comprehensive plan	Cost-benefit analysis	2
Goals and mission statements	Short and long term	2
Volunteerism	Work with volunteers	2
More early involvement of citizens		2

Main Themes:

- Increased coordination between different parts of town government, includes:
 - Conflict resolution
 - Need leadership to build consensus
- Increased communication and participation on part of citizenry (Use cable TV more efficiently, use town-wide e-mail to keep residents informed), includes:
 - Working with volunteers, neighborhood associations, creating a network of groups and boards, a Citizens Advisory Committee with all ages represented (seniors, teens)
- Keep abreast of state funding possibilities (grant committee, watchdog for available funding)
 - Creative financing
- Comprehensive planning and clear regulations

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6) *“If you could do one thing to improve Holden, what would it be?”*

<i>Response</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i># of groups (out of 8)</i>	<i># of dots³</i>
Zoning By-laws		5	30
Improve traffic flow		3	23
Develop Master Plan	<i>Systematic long range planning</i>	3	17
190 connector	<i>Northern part of town</i>	3	17
Change Town Government	<i>Mail ballot vs. Town Meeting vote Change to representative TM</i>	2	16
Improve relations b/w town admin	<i>Civility between groups Increase communication Need shared vision</i>	3	16
Expand tax base	<i>Expand w/diversified tax base More commercial zoning</i>	3	16
Increase activities for teens	<i>Teen center</i>	2	13
Increase lot size	<i>Less dense housing</i>	2	12
Improve communication b/w government and public	<i>Quicker conflict resolution</i>	2	11
Closely monitor infrastructure	<i>As town grows Better infrastructure</i>	2	11
Continue to beautify Main Street	<i>Design review policy</i>	2	11
New Public Safety Building		1	10
Control Growth	<i>Moratorium on Mega Developments</i>	2	9

Main Themes:

- Improved communication between town departments as well as between town government and public
- Improve traffic, I-190 connector and monitor infrastructure as town grows
 - Zoning – the need for zoning changes was brought up in five of the eight groups

³ All participants were asked to respond to this question. Once all group members had contributed their ideas, each participant was given 5 dots and asked to get up from their seats and “vote” on which they felt was most important by placing the dots next to the words on the large pads. Each participant was requested to use all of their dots, but instructed not to place any more than 3 dots on any one item

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COMMENT PAD

A comment pad with the question: “*What part(s) of town need special attention? Why?*” was available for participants to write their responses. The following are the eight written comments received:

- Recognition of historic importance of Jefferson Village and its Buildings
- Preservation of farm land and forested/natural areas around Bullard/Chapel/Malden Street area and WLAG towers open field for public use
- Enforcement of existing signage laws on Main Street for aesthetic reasons, which would ultimately enhance business
- Adding a left turn lane down the center of 122A to ease traffic stoppage
- Open up access from I-190 from Exit 4 to allow for further commercial/industrial growth and ease traffic on Main Street for people commuting to northern part of town.
- Preservation of the historic center of town – freedom from the creation of a strip mall like environment
- At lights going north 122A intersection of Rte. 31, make outside lane only left turn, as the sensor will go off if the car is going straight.
- Main Street/Center: please make light poles straight!

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TABULATED SMALL GROUP RESPONSES

Responses with 3 or more dots are recorded in the summary that follows. For a complete listing of all responses by small group, please see back of document.

QUESTIONS

1) “What are your favorite things about Holden (that you would want to ensure be preserved in the future)”?

<i>Response</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i># of groups</i>	<i># of dots⁴</i>
Open space & recreation	Natural resources, Hiking, Trout Brook Rail Trail Excellent system	7	55
Schools	Staff & facilities Education is valued	8	53
Small town atmosphere	Neighborhoods Friendly feeling Sense of community	6	31
Library		5	19
Rural atmosphere		2	17
Responsive leadership	Town meeting/ Town services Ability to get involved	2	16
Safety		2	9
Professionalism of police	Respect for law enforcement	2	8
People of Holden		2	7
Historical preservation	Old architecture	2	7
Care of seniors		1	3
Diversity of land use		1	3
Main Street	Walk to shops	1	3
Presence of farms		1	3

⁴ All participants were asked to respond to this question. Once all group members had contributed their ideas, each participant was given 5 dots and asked to get up from their seats and “vote” on which they felt was most important by placing the dots next to the words on the large pads. Each participant was requested to use all of their dots, but instructed not to place any more than 3 dots on any one item.

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2) *“What are your least favorite things about Holden (that you feel are important to change in the future)?”*

<i>Response</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i># of groups</i>	<i># of dots⁵</i>
Traffic congestion		8	46
Lack of 190 connector	<i>To ease traffic</i>	4	18
Public safety building	<i>Outdated</i>	3	17
Lack of funding/foresight to obtain open space	<i>Cookie cutter development that do not preserve natural Lack of park</i>	4	16
Lack of sidewalks		3	13
Lack of commercial corridor	<i>Not enough stores & restaurants Sm. commercial base</i>	3	12
Political climate	<i>Lack of resolve by town boards Lack of ability to sell good project</i>	3	12
Bad feelings	<i>Contentiousness, apathy</i>	2	9
Town Meeting		1	8
Large buildings on small lots		1	7
Lack of community center		1	6
Zoning		1	6
Lack of ability to control growth		1	6
Lack of affordable housing		1	5
Taxes	<i>Always increasing</i>	1	5
Banner on Main St.	<i>Poles</i>	1	5
Police Department	<i>“Too hard-nosed”</i>	1	4
Not enough light industry		1	4
Lack of planning		1	3
Lack of a town common		1	3
Sight line@intersections		1	3
Rice School		1	3
Need more historic preservation		1	5

⁵ All participants were asked to respond to this question. Once all group members had contributed their ideas, each participant was given 5 dots and asked to get up from their seats and “vote” on which they felt was most important by placing the dots next to the words on the large pads. Each participant was requested to use all of their dots, but instructed not to place any more than 3 dots on any one item.

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3) "What else would you like to see in Holden in the future?" (Brainstorm)

Response	Comments	# of groups (out of 8)
More shops & restaurants	Art stores, wine & cheese shop	5
I-190 interchange		4
New public safety building		3
More community control on dev.		3
More walking/biking trails	Expanded nature trails at schools Connect rail trail to center rec area	3
Community center	Expand senior center to community center	3
Access to City of Worcester land	Hiking, etc.	2
Improved Fire Department	Including adequate # of quality fire trucks & full time fire staff	2
Mixed age housing		2
CCRC	Reuse Holden hospital	2
Senior housing		2
More provisions for aging population	Continuing care facility	2
Teen center	More teen activities in general	2
Clean Industrial Park	More clearly defined industrial areas	2
More sidewalks	Elevated walkways on Main St	2
Zoning	Increased lot sizes Mixed use/village zoning Big box zoning Strictly enforce zoning	1 1 1 1
Indoor sports facility	Swimming pool, ice rink	2
Bus service/trolley within town	Big Y, Main St. to Dunkin Donuts	2
Maintain N. England character		2
Better communication b/w gov & res		1
Pay close attention to infrastructure	As we grow	1
Cable TV competition		1
Representative town meeting		1
Free flow traffic		1
Resolution for Rice School		1
Chpt. 40R Development		1
Complete development @ Eagle Lake Mill		1
5 yr. Plan to pass overrides for Town Services		1
Reuse of ECC		

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Set aside land for town use		1
Town common		1
Accessible/protected open space		1
More imaginative development	Green spaces, cul-de-sacs	1
Enforce rules re: abandoned cars		1
Encourage & support local business		1
Provide incentives to property owners	Main Street improvements	1
Ice rink		1
Pocket parks		1
Auditorium concert facility		1
Movie theatre		1
Attractive architecture on Main Street		1
Protect wetlands		1
Improve Eagle Lake Water Quality		1
Reclaim unused land		1
Tuck business away	Not all "up front" on Main Street	1
Fewer repetitive businesses	i.e. banks, nail salons, liquor stores	1
Turning lane on 122A		1
Dog park		1
More use of athletic fields	Summer time	1
Diversity		1
More culture	Arts	1
Better use of Trout Brook		1
Better golf course		1
Better marketing of town		1
More school buildings	With ability to expand	1
Clean up "eye sores" around town		1
More "million dollar homes"		1

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**4)“What are some potential obstacles to positive change as you see them?”
(Brainstorm) only 7 groups**

Response	Comments	# of groups (out of 7)
Archaic zoning laws		3
Financial constraints		3
Resistance to change		3
Adversarial nature	Contentiousness	3
Apathy		3
Polarization of community	Lack of consensus	3
Inability of town to purchase land		2
Unwilling to invest in infrastructure	Limited sewer capacity	2
Lack of involvement of voters		2
Not wanting taxes raised		2
State legislature		2
NIMBY – Not In My Back Yard		2
No space for commercial development		2
Transient community		1
Control of utility rates		1
Too much spin on issues	“Give all the facts so people can make educated decisions”	1
We’re a bedroom community		1
“Village mentality”		1
Difficulty breaking in as a newcomer		1
Extravagance of development		1
Special interest groups	Competing interests: seniors vs. schools	1
Lack of imagination		1
Lack of planning		1
Traffic		1
Planning Board		1
Lack of easy access		1
Select Board		1
Low income housing		1
Parent apathy		1
Public transportation	Kids and seniors	1
Size of public safety staff		1
Desire to keep Green Space		1
Proposition 2 1/2		1

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Anti-development sentiment		1
Town Meeting		1
Steering Committee		1
Misinterpretation of data/info	By consultants, committee	1
Not enough educating	Informing the public about results	1
Poor local reporting		1
Vested interest		1
Lack of “ownership” of town by residents		1

5) “What are some strategies for getting “there” (to where you would like Holden to be)?” (Brainstorm) (only 7 groups)

Response	Comments	# of groups (out of 7)
Public education & awareness	Use Cable Access more effectively Use town-wide e-mail Dissemination of accurate info	4
Consider representative Town Meeting	Prevent special interest agendas	3
Lobby for state/fed funding, Mobilize state reps	Investigate grants, Grant committee Watch dog for available funding	3
Clear zoning laws		2
Comprehensive plan	Cost-benefit analysis	2
Goals and mission statements	Short and long term	2
Volunteerism	Work with volunteers	2
More early involvement of citizens		2
Re-think ideas previously defeated		1
Be persistent at Town Meetings		1
Pass Proposition 2 1/2 override		1
Check with other towns	Country-wide	1
Creative financing		1
Network of groups/boards		1
Change Town by-laws	Ballot voting	1
Community Preservation Associates		1
Impact fees		1
Greater emphasis -existing infrastructure		1
Training for conflict resolution		1
Expansion of historic district		1

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Need leadership to build consensus		1
Citizen Advisory Committee/Board	All ages – teens, seniors	1
More neighborhood associations		1
Re-vamp Planning Board		1
Communication/cooperation b/w schools and municipal		1

6) “If you could do one thing to improve Holden, what would it be?”

Responses brought up in more than one group and/or with 3 or more dots are recorded below. For a complete listing of all responses, please see back of document.

<i>Response</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i># of groups (out of 8)</i>	<i># of dots⁶</i>
Zoning By-laws		5	30
Improve traffic flow		3	23
Develop Master Plan	<i>Systematic long range planning</i>	3	17
190 connector	<i>Northern part of town</i>	3	17
Change Town Government	<i>Mail ballot vs. Town Meeting vote Change to representative TM</i>	2	16
Improve relations b/w town admin	<i>Civility between groups Increase communication Need shared vision</i>	3	16
Expand tax base	<i>Expand w/diversified tax base More commercial zoning</i>	3	16
Increase activities for teens	<i>Teen center</i>	2	13
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Improve communication b/w government and public	<i>Quicker conflict resolution</i>	2	11
Closely monitor infrastructure	<i>As town grows better infrastructure</i>	2	11
Continue to beautify Main Street	<i>Design review policy</i>	2	11
New Public Safety Building		1	10
Control Growth	<i>Moratorium on Mega</i>	2	9

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	<i>Developments</i>		
More focus on historic preservation		<i>1</i>	<i>8</i>
Use Rice Schools		<i>1</i>	<i>7</i>
Protect open space		<i>1</i>	<i>7</i>
Civic investment & pride		<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>
Create gathering space		<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>
Improve communication	<i>B/w Town & State & Fed govmtn.</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>

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**DETAILED COMPLETE DOCUMENTATION OF RESPONSES IN
SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

As documented by each group's facilitator



Facilitator Training

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BLUE GROUP

Facilitator: Joe Giotta
Writer: Rosemary Johnson

Group Demographics: 7 adults: 5 men, 2 women
Length of residency: 2, 6, 11, 20, 28, 33 years

Question 1:

“What are your favorite things about Holden (that you would want to ensure be preserved in the future)”?

- | | | |
|-------|--|-------|
| #1: | rural aspect, open space | ***** |
| #2: | schools: quality of staff and facilities | ***** |
| #3: | neighborhoods: friendly feeling | **** |
| | natural open space | **** |
| also: | | |
| | presence of farms | *** |
| | public safety, safe environment | *** |
| | respect for law enforcement and | |
| | professionalism of police force | *** |
| | recreation area: pool, lake, programs | * |
| | town meeting form of government | * |
| | sense of community | * |
| | peace of mind that safety brings | * |
| | awareness that laws are enforced | * |
| | lack of industrial development | - |

Question 2:

“What are your least favorite things about Holden (that you feel are important to change in the future)”?

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-------|
| #1: | lack of commercial corridor | ***** |
| #2: | lack of affordable housing/rentals | ***** |
| #3: | lack of funding/foresight, to obtain | |
| | open space | **** |

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traffic congestion *****

also:

lack of 190 connection: to ease traffic	***
Holden: a conduit to traffic going to other towns	**
lack of pedestrian lights	**
lack of sidewalks	**
lack of residential/commercial mix: ex. Apartments over stores	**
lack of a "town common"	*
lack of a teen center	*
lack of "master planning"	*
lack of bike paths	*
lack of diversity in retail: different types of stores/markets	*
traffic using residential streets to cut through, avoiding congested streets	-

Question 3:

"What else would you like to see in Holden in the future?"

- access to City of Worcester land (hiking, etc.)
- more school buildings: designed for ability to expand with increase in population
- clean up "eye sores" around town
- increased lot sizes
- more "million dollar homes"
- new public safety building
- more community control on development
- subsidized senior housing
- more provisions for aging population

Question 4:

"What are some potential obstacles to positive change as you see them?"

- steering committee
- town meeting
- misinterpretation of data/info by consultants, committee
- not enough educating/informing the public of the results
- poor local reporting
- archaic zoning laws
- vested interest

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- financial constraints
- lack of “ownership” of the town by residents

Question #5:

“What are some strategies for getting “there” (to where you would like Holden to be)?”

- public awareness
- public education
- clear zoning laws
- consider representative town meeting/prevent special interest agendas

Question #6:

“If you could do one thing to improve Holden, what would it be?”

- #1: smart growth: expand with diversified tax base *****
- #2: go with the “Master Plan” *****
mail ballot vs. town meeting vote *****
improve civility between town leaders/groups *****
administration, etc *****
- #3: 190 connector: northern part of town *****
increase lot size: less dense housing *****

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LIME GROUP

facilitated by David Lindberg and Cheryl Owoc

Question 1 “What are your favorite things about Holden (that you would want to ensure be preserved in the future)?” (Items are listed in the order ranked by the group)

- Open Space – Rail Trail and Mason Farm (8 votes)
- Responsive leadership – Town meeting and town services (6 votes)
- Community Elementary School System (5 votes)
- Library (3 votes)
- Senior Center (2 votes)
- Sports Recreation Development (2 votes)
- Small town feel (2 votes)
- People in town – values (1 vote)
- Form of Government (1 vote)
- Recreation at multiple levels

Question 2 “What are your least favorite things about Holden (that you feel are important to change in the future)?” (Items are listed in the order ranked by the group)

- Traffic (5 votes)
- Stabilize Taxes – “Always increasing” (5 votes)
- Lack of 190 access (4 votes)
- Police Department – “Too hard-nosed” (4 votes)
- Lack of amenities (not enough stores and restaurants) – (3 votes)
- Banner across Main Street – (2 votes)
- Lack of sidewalks – (2 votes)
- Lack of affordable housing – (2 votes)
- Lack of retail options – (2 votes)
- Lack of sign law enforcement on Main Street
- Residential zoning laws – “Lots to small”
- Lack of industry – jobs

Question 3 “What else would you like to see in Holden in the future?”
(Brainstorming session)

- Teen Center
- More retail stores

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- More high-end restaurants
- Elevated walkways on Main Street
- Expanded nature trails at schools
- Better communication between town government and citizens
- **Pay close attention to town infrastructure development as we grow**
(was underlined numerous times on newsprint)
- Public safety building

Question 4 “What are some potential obstacles to positive change as you see them?” (Brainstorming session) (The top three are listed in order of greatest potential obstacle)

- Not wanting taxes raised
- Resistance to change
- Transient community
- Control of utility rates
- Zoning
- NIMBY – “Not in my back yard”
- Too much spin on issues – “Give all the facts so people can make educated decisions”
- “We’re a bedroom community”
- “Village mentality”

Question 5 “What are some strategies for getting ‘there’ (to where you would like Holden to be)?” (Brainstorming session)

- Comprehensive plan
- Goals and mission statements
- Volunteerism
- More early involvement of citizens
- E-mail system to keep citizens abreast of town development

Question 6 “If you could do one thing to improve Holden, what would it be?” (Items are listed in the order ranked by the group)

- Protect open space – (7 votes)
- Closely monitor infrastructure as town grows – (6 votes)
- Teen center – (6 votes)
- More commercial zoning – (4 votes)
- Route 190 connector – (3 votes)
- Continue to beautify Main Street – (3 votes)

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- In town EMT services – (1 vote)
- Indoor Pool

YELLOW GROUP

Judith Haran – Facilitator
Steve Mentzer – Note Taker

8 Participants – Holden Residents from 1yr – 55 years.

Question 1 – What are your favorite things about Holden?

Responses:

- 12 Dots - Natural Resources / Environment / Hiking Trails
- 8 Dots - Schools
- 7 Dots – Sense of Community
- 4 Dots – People of Holden
- 3 Dots – Library
- 3 Dots – Historical Preservation
- 3 Dots – Care of Seniors
- Small Town Atmosphere
- Perceived stability of the population

Question 2 - What are your least favorite things about Holden?

Responses:

- 6 Dots – Lack of a Community Center
- 6 Dots – Lack of ability to control growth.
- 4 Dots – Traffic congestion
- 4 Dots – Lack of Sidewalks
- 3 Dots – Outdated Public Safety Buildings
- 3 Dots – Small Commercial / Industrial base.

Question 2 - What are your least favorite things about Holden?

Responses (Cont'd):

- 3 Dots – Lack of a Master Plan
- 3 Dots – Lack of a Common.
- 2 Dots – Pedestrian Safety
- 2 Dots – Contentious people.
- 2 Dots – Zoning Problems
- 1 Dot – Traffic Circulation
- 1 Dot – Lack of affordable housing.

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Question 3 – What else would you like to see in Holden in the future?

Responses:

- I-190 interchange
- Community Center
- Continuing Care Facility
- Cable TV Competition
- Mixed age housing
- More Sidewalks
- More restaurants

Question 4 – What are some potential obstacles to positive change as you see them?

Responses:

- Adversarial nature.
- Amounts of money available.
- Resistance to change
- No space for commercial development
- Desire to keep Green Space
- “Not in my back yard”!

Question 5 – What are some strategies for “getting there”?

Responses

- Proper Zoning
- Re-think ideas previously defeated
- Be persistent at Town Meetings

Question 6 – If you could do one thing to improve Holden what would it be?

Responses:

- 10 Dots – Zoning By-laws
- 7 Dots – Use Rice School
- 6 Dots – Main Street By-pass
- 6 Dots – Commercial / Industrial Zone near I-190
- 6 Dots – B.O.P. Zoning
- 5 Dots – Moratorium on “Mega Developments”
- 2 Dots – Dairy Queen

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PURPLE GROUP

Favorite Things

Worcester Water Shed Property *1 dot*
Open Space *4 dots*
Neighborhood Feel *5 dots*
People and Families *3 dots*
Green (natural open space) *2 dots*
Activities for Kids *2 dots*
Sense of Community *2 dots*
Ability to Get Involved *3 dots*
Chaffins
Historic Distric Flavor *1 dot*
Town Services *7 dots*
Neighborhood Open Spaces (areas to congregate or play areas) *1 dot*
Schools *7 dots*
Proximity of Shops in Center
Convenience of other than shops *2 dots*
Rail Trail
Sidewalks

Least Favorite Things

Traffic *7 dots*
Lack of Adequate Public Safety Facilities *9 dots*
Lack of Small Clean Industrial Park Areas to Support Tax Base *1 dot*
Lack of Progress at the Mill @ Eagle Lake *1 dot*
Coyotes
Political Climate *3 dots*
Absence of I-190 Connector *4 dots*
Anti-development Sentiment *1 dot*
Town Meeting *8 dots*
Meeting Passes/Vote Rejects *1 dot*
Unbridled Residential Development *2 dots*
Lack of Aesthetics – Main Street Businesses *2 dots*
Lack of Year-Round Activities for Kids (other than sports)

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Future – what else do we want to see

CCRC
New Adequate Public Safety Facility
I-190 Connector
Representative Town Meeting Form of Government
More Up-Scale Shops and Restaurants in Commercial Clusters
(i.e. art stores, wine shop, cheese shop)
Clean Industrial Park
Free Flow Traffic
Adequate number and Quality of Fire Trucks
Full-Time Fire Staff
Resolution for Rice School
Ch 40R Development
Complete Development @ Eagle Lake Mill
5-year Plan to Pass Overrides for Town Services
Re-use of ECC

Obstacles to Positive Change

Open Town Meeting
Proposition 2 ½
Anti-Development Sentiment
Inability of Town to Purchase Land as it Becomes Available
Apathy
Lack of Involvement of Citizens (Voters)
Polarization of Community
State Legislature
Difficulty in Breaking in as Newcomer

Strategies for Getting There

Pass Proposition 2 ½ Override
Representative Town Meeting

One Thing to Improve Holden

Change to Representative Town Meeting *11 dots*
More State Funding *2 dots*
New and Adequate Public Safety Facility *10 dots*
Improve Traffic Flow *8 dots*
Recall Entire Board of Selectmen *1 dot*
Build I-190 Connector *10 dots*

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RED GROUP

What are your favorite things about Holden (that you would want to ensure be preserved in the future)?

Size of Town – Rural atmosphere 9 Dots

School system 3 Dots

Cleanliness 2 Dots

Community Involvement

Sense of unique community 2 Dots

Natural landscape – open space 4 Dots

“Built” Space – appearance

Small town atmosphere 6 Dots

Hiking Trails/New England Charm

Holden Days – pulls people together 1 Dot

Public Services – Police 5 Dots

WTAG Towers – trails

What are your least favorite things about Holden (that you feel are important to change in the future)?

Lack of desire for community development

Politics of small community 2 Dots

Increasing traffic/noise 8 Dots

Lack of communication from Town Hall 1 Dot

Sightlines at intersections 3 Dots

Lack of resolve by town board 3 Dots

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Lack of Town Common 1 Dot

Lack of maintenance Main St.

Lack of access to 190 7 Dots

Limited commercial zoning 1 Dot

Lack of planning 3 Dots

“Dead” Main St.

Cookie Cutter Developments (failure to preserve natural landscape) 5 Dots

Lack of park(s) 3 Dots

Rice School 3 Dots

What else would you like to see in Holden in the future?

- Full time Fire
- 190 Extension Letter
- Set aside land for Town use
- Town Common
- Inside (Indoor) swimming
- Accessible/protected open space
- More imaginative development
 - Green Spaces
 - Cul-de-sacs
- Bus service within Town/Trolley
- Enforce rules regarding abandoned vehicles
- Re-Use Holden Hospital (CCRC)
- Walkable/Bikeable corridors – without vehicular interference
- Encourage and support local business

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- Mixed use – Village zoning
- Senior housing issue
- Incentivize Main Street property owners to care for property

What are some potential obstacles to positive change as you see them?

- Money
- Consensus
- Taxes
- Negative attitude
- Resistance to change
- Inability to obtain land for town use
- Extravagance of development
- Special interest groups
- Competing interests: Seniors v. Schools
- Lack of imagination

What are some strategies for getting “there” (to where you would like Holden to be)?

- Dissemination of accurate information
- Check with other towns (country-wide)
- ST/LT goals
- Lobbying for State/Federal funding
- Creative financing
- Networking of groups/boards
- Change Town bylaws – ballot voting
- Cost-benefit

**HOLDEN TOMORROW:
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If you could do one thing to improve Holden, what would it be?

Extension of 190 10 Dots

Better infrastructure (impact of surrounding Towns) 5 Dots

Less dissension 1 Dot

Design review policy 8 Dots

Comprehensive plan 5 Dots

Department – awareness implement communication 4 Dots

Swimming pool

HOLDEN TOMORROW: PLANNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

VISIONING WORKSHOP **PINK/WHITE GROUP**

Facilitator: Wendy O'Leary
Writer: Pam Harding

Question 1:

“What are your favorite things about Holden (that you would want to ensure be preserved in the future)”?

#1:	Education is Valued	6
#2:	Trout Brook Rail Trail	6
#3:	Old Architecture	4

also:

Library	3
Diversity of Land Use	3
Community Spirit	2
Pool	2
Open Space	2
Law Enforcement	2
Lots of Activities things to do	2
Holden Days	1
Location	1
Sense of History	1
Sense of Neighborhood	1
Town Communication	

Question 2:

“What are your least favorite things about Holden (that you feel are important to change in the future)”?

#1:	Large Buildings on Small Lots	7
#2:	Traffic	5
#3:	Contentiousness	5
#4:	No Sidewalks	5

also:

Lack of Tolerance	3
Lack of Enforcement of Local Ordinance	3
Lack of Planning	2
Lack of Gathering Destinations for Conversation	2
Lack of Public Participation	1
No Bike Lanes	1
Town Meetings	1

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Question 3:

“What else would you like to see in Holden in the future?”

- Ice Rink
- Pocket Parks
- Auditorium Concert Facility
- Movie Theatre
- Connect Rail Trail to Center of Town of Holden Indoor Recreation Area
- Sr. Ctr. Become Community Center
- Attractive Architecture on Main St.
- Maintain New England Character
- Protect Wetlands
- Improve Eagle Lake Water Quality
- Reclaim Unused Land
- Big Box Zoning
- Growth Controls Planning

Question 4:

“What are some potential obstacles to positive change as you see them?”

- Contentiousness
- Lack of Planning
- Unwilling to Invest in Infrastructure
- Finding Common Ground
- Apathy Futility
- Lack of Involvement

Question #5:

“What are some strategies for getting “there” (to where you would like Holden to be)?”

- More Citizen Involvement
- More Grant Investigation
- Community Preservation Associates
- Impact Fees
- Greater Emphasis on Existing Infrastructure
- Training For Conflict Resolution
- Expansion of Historic District
- Work with Volunteer Organizations
- Lack of Ability/Leadership to Build Consensus
- Change of Design of Town Government

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Question #6:

“If you could do one thing to improve Holden, what would it be?”

#1:	Increase Lot Sizes Related to Housing Size	8
#2:	Systematic Long Range Planning	7
#3:	Quicker Conflict Resolution	5
#4:	Civic Investment and Pride	5
#5:	Create Gathering Space	4

GRAY GROUP

Facilitators: Ed Starkus and Kim Ferguson

Question 1

Favorite Things About Holden

- Sense of community (said 2x) 4 DOTS
-the people (doesn't mean I like them all!)
- Less Developed and slow growth (said 2x) 6 DOTS
-Rail Trail
-Open areas/greenways/open space
- Town Center – the appearance
- Wachusett Food Pantry
- Responsiveness of Town Administration and the employees
-pleasantness; courtesy; police and fire; make you feel comfortable in Town Hall, etc
- Friendliness of the people
-they smile and will talk to you

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- Personal pride in property (said 2x)
-people have gardens and keep up their property
- Main Street (said 2x) 3 DOTS
-walk to shops; retail is close by; post office, grocery store, gift shop etc near by
- Proximity to Worcester
- Schools are excellent (said 4x) 8 DOTS
-very happy with schools
- Library (said 3x) 4 DOTS
-it's run well
- Farmer's Market (said 2x) 1 DOT
- Rail Trail (said 2x) 2 DOTS
- Neighborhood walks and use of sidewalks in center of town
- Safety: "I feel safe" 4 DOTS
- Memorial Day Parade planning 1 DOT
-haven't had one in many years!
- "I love Town Meeting" 2 DOTS
-"One person can make a difference"

Question 2

Least Favorite Thing

- Traffic Issues (mentioned 4x) 5 DOTS
-Doyle Road has lots of traffic and early AM truck traffic
-Main Street traffic and commuting issues
- Buildings on Main Street 2 DOTS
-new building architectural layout is ugly
-parking should be behind the buildings
-our by-laws don't discourage "ugly construction"
-should we have a covenant – attractive buildings required?

HOLDEN TOMORROW: PLANNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

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- Taxes paid don't support the level of services provided **1 DOT**
 - Example: developer builds 30 new homes = need for more schools; should developer pay money to Town to defer school construction costs?
etc

- Need more emphasis on historic preservation **5 DOTS**
 - Should save old buildings and reuse them (such as Rice School and Chaffins School)

- More affordable housing is needed **2 DOTS**
 - Should be more aggressive with this

- More public transportation **2 DOTS**

- Taxes are too high **2 DOTS**
 - Taxes are too high for seniors who don't use services (schools, plowing – if in a condo association, etc)

- Holden's ability to “not sell a good idea” or project correctly to the people and the Town political process in general **6 DOTS**
 - Community Preservation Act, Public Safety Bldg, Rice School
 - Difficulty navigating the town meeting process and bringing an idea forward

- Don't have enough community activities **1 DOT**
 - We're too passive and don't do a lot as a community

- Don't have enough light industry (said 2x) **4 DOTS**
 - need more jobs in town

- Huge houses on tiny lots **1 DOT**
 - lots are too small for homes being built

- Wachusett Food Pantry (and other non-profits) needs a building **2 DOTS**
 - To work out of

- Lack of shopping opportunities **2 DOTS**
 - Walgreens and other larger stores may survive here (Staples, Barnes and Noble)
 - Limit the drive to Worcester and shop here

**HOLDEN TOMORROW:
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Question 3

Holden in the Future

- Small town without big growth
 - “more of what we are now”
 - “small town America”
- Tuck businesses away – not all “up front” on Main Street
- More clearly defined industrial areas – expanded industrial zone to offset taxes
- Expansion of consumer oriented commercial businesses (said 3x)
 - clothing stores; restaurants; big box store?
- Trolley route – Big Y down Main Street to Dunkin Donuts and back 1x per hour
- Fewer repetitive businesses (i.e. banks, nail salons, liquor stores)

This group ran out of time and was not able to discuss questions 4 and 5.

Question 6

One Thing To Improve in Holden

- Town Politics **7 DOTS**
 - Disenfranchised Voters
 - Lack of a “common bond”
 - Different ideas but we’re not “negotiating” to work things out
 - Problems facing town meeting vs. ballot elections **2 DOTS**
 - Things will pass one hurdle (t.mtg) but fail at the next (overrides, etc)
 - Should we change the form of government?
 - Traffic Volume (said 3x) **8 DOTS**
 - Disenfranchised voters go away **2 DOTS**
 - Rethink the zoning by-laws **8 DOTS**
 - More focus on historic preservation and land use issues (open space) **8 DOTS**
-

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PEACH GROUP

Facilitator: Ed Benoit

Note Taker: Barbara Kohlstrom

Peach/Orange Table: 10 Participants (6 Women/4 Men)

Question 1: “What are your favorite things about Holden (that you would want to ensure be preserved in the future?”:

- Open Space
- People (1)
- Convenience to everything (2)
- Standard of Excellence in schools (10)
- Access to I-190
- Library (6)
- “Character of a small New England town” (5)
- Excellent recreation system (4)
- Senior Center/Senior Services (2)
- Trout Brook (3)
- Safety of town (Police/Fire) (6)
- Natural Resources (4)
- Trees (1)

Question 2: “What are your least favorite things about Holden (that you feel are important to change in the future?”:

- I-190 connector
- Smelling sewer on Shrewsbury Street
- Traffic in downtown/general (7)
- Disorganized appearance of Main Street (Architecturally) (2)
- Avoid missed opportunities (i.e.WPI land sale)(1)
- Apathy (4)
- Political nature of town Soccer League (1)
- Number of attempts to get Public Safety Building passed (5)
- Cookie cutter housing developments (4)
- Zoning (6)
- Lack of sidewalks (4)
- Banner on Main Street/Poles (5)
- Allow schools to be more available to Town and public use. (2)
- Better management of Town Pool (longer hours/no adult swim) (2)

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Questions 3: “What else would you like to see in Holden in the future?”:

- Turning lane on 122A
- I-190 interchange
- Dog park
- More things for teenagers (Teen Center)
- More use of athletic fields (summer time)
- Indoor sports facility
- Change Senior Center to Community Center
- Mixed diversity in housing (Older folks to stay in homes)
- Diversity
- More culture (arts)
- Reservoir for public use
- Better use of Trout Brook
- Strictly enforce zoning (restrict zoning variances)
- Increase retail/restaurant variety
- Better golf course
- Better marketing of Town

Question 4: “What are some potential obstacles to positive change as you see them?”:

- Traffic
- Planning Board
- Lack of easy access
- Apathy
- Limited commercial space
- Limited sewer capacity
- Select Board
- Low income housing
- State restrictions
- Parent apathy
- Public transportation for kids and seniors
- Current zoning
- Size of Public Safety (Increase staff)

Question 5: “What are some strategies for getting “there” (to where you would like Holden to be?”

- Citizen’s advisory committee or board for all ages (teens/seniors)
- More neighborhood associations

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- More public participation
- Creative zoning (neighborhood)
- Revamp Planning Board (revitalize)
- Communication and cooperation between schools and municipal
- Mobilizing our State Reps
- Watch Dog committee for available State and Federal funding
- Grant committee
- Cable Access (HCTV) use it more effectively

Question 6: “If you could do one thing to improve Holden, what would it be?”

Improve zoning (6)

Better cross communication between government and public (6)

Increase activities for younger people (7)

Traffic/Access to town (7)

Better communication between our Town and State and Federal Government (4)

Controlling growth (4)

More planned commercial space (4)

Change Town Meeting concept (1)

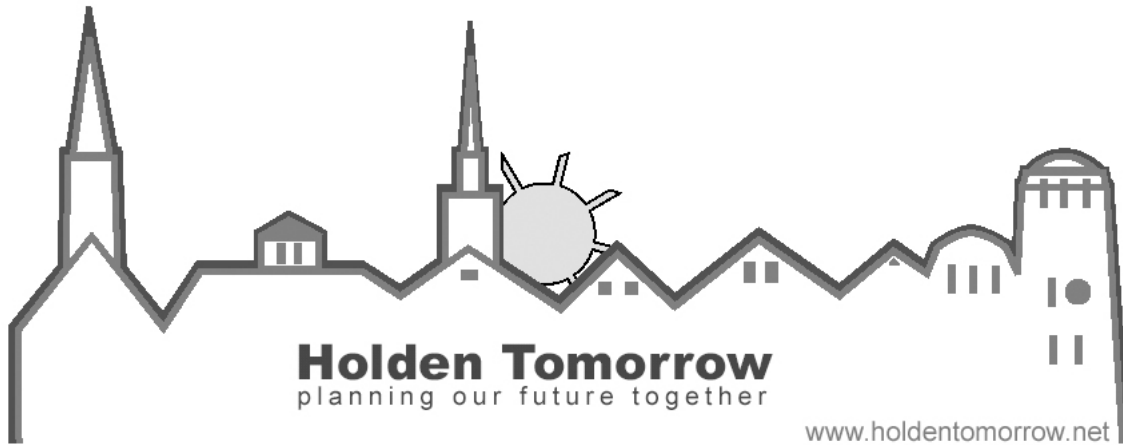
HOLDEN TOMORROW: PLANNING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

VISIONING WORKSHOP

Holden Senior Center

Tuesday, October 3, 2006

7:00 – 9:30 pm.



AGENDA

Purpose of the workshop:

To invite the Holden community to come together and generate ideas that will create a shared vision for Holden's future. This in turn will be used as the foundation for an action plan that will outline the steps necessary to attain this vision.

- 7:00 – 7:45 **Welcome, Introduction, and Overview**
(including slide show presentation of preliminary findings)
- 7:45– 8:00 **Circulate among Information Tables⁷**
(Some of this information will also be included in the introductory slide show)
- 8:00 – 9:15 **Break Out into Small Groups Discussions**
(all groups will discuss the same questions)
- 9:15 – 9:30 **Report Back**
Wrap Up and Next Steps

⁷ Tables will be set up with maps, photos and hand-outs summarizing info. The consultants and members of the Steering Committee will be at the tables to discuss these with participants.

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Key Facts to Consider in Thinking about Holden's Future

- The town's total population is approximately 15,621 (U.S. Census 2000)
- The population over age 55 is expected to grow 85% by the year 2030
- The average age of Holden's residents is 40 years old (2000 U.S. Census).
- Approximately 33% - 45% of the town's land is permanently protected as open space (the majority of this is watershed areas).
- Only 3% of the town's land is zoned as commercial/industrial; just 2% of the town's land is used for commercial/industrial uses
- Holden's total land area is 34.99 square miles (with a total area of 36.22 sq. miles).
- The number of residents working in town had decreased by 33% between 1990 and 2000.
- There are about as many cars as people in Holden (in 2005 there were 15,998 cars and 16,499 people).
- Traffic on Holden roadways increases by 2% per year.
- The town's sewer system is close to reaching its capacity
- The number of calls for fire and police service have been steadily increasing

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