

XI. Implementation Program

A. Reporting

It is recommended that the Board of Selectmen require quarterly updates and annual written reports from each committee and department on the progress of each of the applicable items. These reports will provide the accountability mechanism for the implementation of this community plan to the residents of Belchertown.

Consistent and coordinated action over years by many members of the Belchertown community will be required to achieve the future envisioned by this Community Plan. The intent of this plan is to prompt community leaders to look ahead, anticipate the needs of the town, and develop a plan for the town to reach its goals and meet its needs. This community plan is to be a reference to keep key tasks prominent, to assist town leaders in programming their responsibilities, and to help them fulfill their missions with the most efficiency.

The following implementation steps were developed from an analysis of the existing conditions outlined in each section, and how those conditions compare to the overall goals for the community. These goals, and their underlying objectives, came directly from the citizens of Belchertown as responses to a community-wide survey conducted in the spring of 2000 and fall of 2007, and from a series of three town forums (October 2000 – October 2001) and one town forum in November 2007. The specific implementation steps attempt to answer the question, "How do we get from here to there?"

There is no legal mandate, unless otherwise specifically noted, that any or all of these implementation steps be adopted. Nonetheless, they represent the will of the people, and take advantage of the wisdom and experience of a wide array of knowledgeable people. The citizens of Belchertown have a right to expect that those departments and boards representing their interests will consider these steps in planning and budgeting for the future. The following section provides the objective analysis and subjective public comments from the 2007 community survey and public forum. The numbering of the implementation steps is based on public input and should be addressed, as much as possible, in the order in which the steps are presented.

B. List of Top Priorities [respective section listed in brackets]

1. [Housing] Develop **planned growth strategy** ensuring infrastructure exists to support the desired pace and type of growth.
2. [Land Use] Draft **phased development bylaw** providing incentives for developers to save open space, provide housing for preferred groups, avoid suburban landscapes, and promote the rural look and feel of the town by phasing the number of building permits.
3. [Agriculture] Develop **incentives for landowners** to keep their land in forestry, agriculture, and recreation.
4. [Open Space and Recreation] Develop **review process for proposed developments** adjacent to preserved conservation land and agricultural land to prevent adverse impact to that land and maximize the overall area of contiguous open space.

5. [Land Use] Draft **zoning bylaw revisions** to increase lot size in areas of environmental concern including poor draining soils, steep slopes, active farm and forestry production, and wellhead / watersheds.
6. [Natural Resources; Community Facilities & Services] Update and distribute **GIS** information. A Graphic Information System (GIS) provides the town with valuable data used in making decisions related to zoning, housing, demographics, the environment, and other natural resource-related issues.
7. [Historical & Cultural Resources] Establish policy defining and protecting **scenic vistas and views** from town ways.
8. [Natural Resources] Develop comprehensive **Lakes Management Plan** with the Tri-Lakes Association with emphasis on nutrient run-off.
9. [Natural Resources] Require **wildlife habitat evaluation** for all development projects (other than single family homes) outside of village areas.
10. [Circulation & Transportation] Use a pavement management system (to prioritize **town roads**) for street maintenance and improvement.
11. [Community Facilities & Services] Develop a five-year and a ten-year plan for Fire, Police, EMS, and Public Works Department **staff and facility needs**. Identify possible sites for north and south satellite stations.
12. [Economic Development] Work with the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation to plan and achieve redevelopment of the **state school property** in ways that gain the most for the community. Consider how utilitarian service facilities might be tucked into the site plan concept.
13. [Open Space & Recreation] Establish a **system of bikeways and hiking trails** (separate from roadways if possible) connecting the far ends of town to recreation areas and other public facilities.
14. [Open Space & Recreation] Develop **plan for targeting parcels**, portions of parcels, development rights, and easements for acquisition.
15. [Community Facilities & Services] Evaluate aging assets and create an **annual improvement schedule**.
16. [Health & Human Services] Evaluate readiness and capacity to **respond to biohazard emergencies**, disease outbreaks, and other serious threats to public health and safety.
17. [Land Use] Draft **creative or flexible development bylaw** to providing incentives for subdivision and multiple ANR developers to enhance the use of natural resources and preserve the rural look and feel of town by offering flexible frontage requirements, varied lot sizes, road widths, and use of common drives.

18. [Housing] Assure **design of affordable housing units** will be compatible with other structures in the area, preserving the town's rural look and feel.
19. [Health & Human Services] Assess availability of **acute / urgent health care** services and emergency services in Town.
20. [Economic Development] Examine the zoning bylaw, and compare the types of businesses that are allowed in the town center with the types that have been identified as promising for that area. Identify developable parcels in the **town center**; consider whether they need to be rezoned; and whether adjustments are needed in allowed uses, dimensional and site plan requirements, sign regulations, and development review procedures. Consider full or partial implementation of the 2003 Town Center Plan.
21. [Historical & Cultural Resources] Develop and adopt appropriate **demolition notification bylaw** allowing time to consider alternatives to the loss of historic structures.
22. [Housing] Address requirements of **low income housing**.
23. [Community Facilities & Services] Conduct a **town office space needs analysis**.
24. [Circulation & Transportation] Commit necessary resources to **manage tree and vegetation cutback** work along public roads.
25. [Circulation & Transportation] Develop a policy for **services to private roads**.