

**APPENDIX B**

**- MASTER PLAN PUBLIC FORUMS -**

# **Town of East Brookfield Master Plan Public Forum: Open Space & Recreation**

**March 23, 2005  
7:00PM to 9:00PM  
East Brookfield Center**

## **Forum Agenda**

- 7:00PM Sign In
- 7:10PM Welcome and Introductions  
(George Miller, Chairman of the Master Plan Committee)
- 7:15PM Program Outline and Goals for the Evening  
(Stephen Wallace, Central Mass Regional Planning Commission)
- 7:30PM Review and Discuss East Brookfield's goals for open space preservation and recreation.
- 8:00PM Group Discussion on Open Space Preservation: what to protect, how to do it, and how to pay for it.
- 8:30PM Group Discussion on Recreation: what is needed, where to locate it, and how to pay for it.
- 9:00PM Evening Wrap-Up and Next Steps  
(George Miller, Chairman of the Master Plan Committee)

# Implementing a Town Vision

## (Results from 3/23/05 Public Forum on Open Space & Recreation)

Goal: Protect Ponds, Rivers & Wetlands

1. Expand current State protection of ponds and wetlands, e.g., expand buffer zones and exclude building in buffer zones. Include protection of brooks and other wetlands that feed the primary rivers and ponds in order to protect water quality and wildlife.

**Planner's Commentary:** I did not hear a lot of support for this particular recommendation from the people at the forum. As an alternative, I wrote down: "Continue to explore new ideas for waterbody, stream, river, and wetland protection." This version seemed to elicit a bit more agreement.

2. Eliminate existing commercial zones surrounding two ponds; eliminate commercial zones near other rivers, brooks and wetlands.

**Planner's Commentary:** I don't recall hearing much either pro or con regarding this recommendation.

3. Implement bylaws for the prevention of residential/commercial storm run-off into vernal pools, wetlands, ponds, rivers, streams or onto roads; mandate usage of storm basins for new development.

**Planner's Commentary:** Rather than implement new bylaws, the forum participants seemed to think this issue could be handled through the building permit process. As an alternative, I wrote down: "Require erosion control mechanisms as a condition of receiving a building permit."

4. Mandate inspections on septic systems near water bodies.

**Planner's Commentary:** The forum participants were generally supportive of this recommendation.

5. Implement bylaws on the taking of upland soils near wetlands, ponds, rivers and brooks.

**Planner's Commentary:** While generally supportive of the idea behind this recommendation, the forum participants seemed to think this could be accomplished through a mining/excavation bylaw with strict erosion control standards during the duration of such operations and re-grading plans once such operations are concluded.

6. Work with state, North Brookfield, Brookfield and Sturbridge governments to implement bylaws on boat propeller cleaning and inspections for invasive plants.

**Planner's Commentary:** The forum participants were generally supportive of this recommendation but also felt that appropriate signage was necessary at boat launches and other portage sites.

Generally speaking, the public seemed to support bylaws that are based on science and that take into account the Town's enforcement capability.

### Goal: Create and Protect Open Space

1. Focus growth in the village, which has an existing infrastructure, e.g. water, roads.

**Planner's Commentary:** The forum participants were generally supportive of this idea but were also concerned about the lack of municipal sewer service, especially in the areas around the lakes. One comment suggested tying into the North Brookfield sewer system as an option.

2. Coordinate zoning and land/easement purchases with state scientists.

**Planner's Commentary:** The forum participants were generally supportive of this idea.

3. Focus protection on the following areas:
  - East Brookfield, Seven Mile and Five Mile River watersheds including the brooks feeding the rivers, e.g., Great Brook
  - Uplands surrounding Quaboag, Quacumquasit and Lashaway
  - Lands with wildlife populations and large unbroken forest areas

**Planner's Commentary:** The forum participants were generally supportive of this idea.

Goal: Encourage conservation easement donations or sales to private land conservation organizations, from large landowners.

**Planner's Commentary:** forum participants were generally supportive of this idea but were skeptical that many landowners would be willing to make land donations or agree to conservation easements. It was agreed that educating landowners on estate planning options that result in open space protection would be a worthwhile endeavor.

5. Develop an Open Space plan to encourage the above and to obtain state, federal & private funds for preservation.

**Planner's Commentary:** This effort is in progress.

6. Reduce size of current commercial zone (see impact from state Regional Planning Build-Out analysis).

**Planner's Commentary:** We did not dwell on this particular recommendation as it deals primarily with economic development.

Land Protection Suggestions (in no particular order)

- The Depot
- The Podunk Area
- High Rocks
- Teneriffe Hill
- Grimes Farm on Adams Road
- Plimpton Place
- The Connie Mack House
- Great Brook Swamp
- Devil's Kitchen
- Land Adjacent to Existing Protected Lands
- The Eastern Side of the East Brookfield River
- The Town's Entire Stream and River Network
- Podunk Pike
- The Golf Course
- Grey Ledge

Recreation Facilities & Programs Suggestions (in no particular order)

- A Rail-Trail
- Downtown Walking Trail as part of an Elderly Housing Development
- Use of Old Ball-Fields as potential site for new Affordable Housing
- Fix Drainage at New Ball-Fields
- Pursue the Canoe Trail Idea from CMRPC's Western Subregion Trail Study
- Hiking Trails
- Continue the Town's Well-Run Summer Recreation Program
- More Nature Programs
- Recreation Programs for Senior Citizens

# **What is *Your* Vision for East Brookfield's Future?**

As you may be aware, East Brookfield is in the midst of preparing the Town's first-ever community Master Plan document that will serve as the Town's strategy for managing its growth over the next decade. The Plan will address such topics as: housing, transportation, community facilities and services, economic development, land use and zoning, and an implementation plan for moving forward. The Planning Board and Board of Selectmen have jointly appointed a Master Plan Committee to oversee the process. We are at the beginning stages of this effort and would like to involve the public in our initial deliberations. Towards that end, we hereby invite all East Brookfield residents to attend the following public forum:

**East Brookfield Master Plan – Community Visioning Forum**  
**Wednesday January 25, 2006**  
**7:00 – 9:00 PM**  
**East Brookfield Senior Center**

If you have concerns about East Brookfield's future, then please attend this forum and share them with us! At the forum, you will receive an overview of the Master Planning process, gain an understanding of the pressing issues facing the Town, and have a chance to share your opinion on where East Brookfield needs to go in the future (and how to get there!). At the forum, the following topics will be discussed:

- What are East Brookfield's strengths?
- What are East Brookfield's weaknesses?
- What are East Brookfield's opportunities?
- What are East Brookfield's threats?

The January forum is part of a series of public forums being held as part of the Master Planning process. We invite you to attend any and all of our forums and help us shape the Plan that will guide our Town's future development.

Light refreshments will be provided. For additional information, please contact the East Brookfield Master Plan Committee at [gidgemiller@yahoo.com](mailto:gidgemiller@yahoo.com).

Snow date will be Saturday morning January 28, 10:00 AM to Noon at the Senior Center.

**East Brookfield Master Plan – Community Visioning Forum**  
**Wednesday January 25, 2006**  
**7:00 – 9:00 PM**  
**East Brookfield Senior Center**

**Forum Agenda**

- 7:00 PM Registration and coffee
- 7:05 PM Welcome and Introductions  
(George Miller, Master Plan Committee Chairman)
- 7:10 PM An Overview of the Master Planning Process  
(Stephen Wallace, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission)
- 7:15 PM Program Outline and Goals for the Evening  
(Stephen Wallace, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission)
- 7:20 PM Group Discussions regarding East Brookfield's Strengths,  
Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
- 8:30 PM Presentation of Discussion Comments
- 9:00 PM Prioritizing Citizen Concerns
- 9:10 PM Evening Wrap-Up and Next Steps  
(George Miller, Master Plan Committee Chairman)

**East Brookfield Master Plan**  
**- Public Forum -**  
**January 25, 2006**  
**7:00PM – East Brookfield Senior Center**

**Public Forum Comments**

All told, there were 20-22 participants throughout the course of the evening. The audience was broken up into two groups. Each group was instructed to develop a list of East Brookfield's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. At the end of the breakout sessions, the participants were reconvened together and a speaker from each group went through their comments. At the end, each participant was given four blue dots and instructed to place a dot on what they considered to be East Brookfield's greatest strength, weakness opportunity and threat. The results of this effort are listed below.

**Group 1**

Strengths:

Small rural community  
Low tax rate  
Good school system  
Good drinking water  
Near Mass Pike and other major highways  
The three lakes, fishing & rivers  
Volunteer Fire Department & Emergency Services  
Farm stands  
Forests, Wildlife Management Areas, untouched environment  
Open Space  
Golf Course  
Highway Department  
Wildlife  
New municipal complex at the Memorial School

Weaknesses:

Lack of sewers  
School system  
Town volunteerism – apathy  
Lack of affordable housing  
Limited water distribution geography – another well needed  
Insufficient businesses to offset taxes  
Traffic increasing  
Taxes increasing  
Poor, lax zoning regulations  
Town looks like a “strip”, not a small town

Lack of recreation for kids – community center, activities, etc  
Recreation water resources are divided across town borders  
Podunk versus the rest of town  
Sand pit development  
Lack of rental properties

Opportunities:

Leverage of local towns to improve lakes and other resources  
Excess buildings – shoe shop, Hodgkins school, old firehouse, depot, senior center  
Zoning changes  
Railroad – transportation opportunity  
Town website  
Route 49  
Sand pit development  
Build a village – change zoning, beautify the downtown  
Large pieces of land – preserve open spaces, use for senior/affordable housing  
Town Manager

Threats:

Weak zoning regulations  
Loss of small town atmosphere  
Pollution – noise, light, groundwater  
Deteriorating buildings  
Route 49  
Developers  
Increasing taxes  
Uncontrolled low-income housing – at sand pit development

**Group 2**

Strengths:

Recreation – town fields, bowling alley, golfing  
Rural community  
– small population, know neighbors, “walk in the woods”, animal shelter  
Location/ease of traffic – Routes 49, 20, 9 and the Pike  
Lakes, natural environment  
Community services – police, fire, fireworks  
Modern school  
Controlled growth – stable population  
Open-minded community members  
History – “baby of MA”, Connie Mack  
Lack of industry – no pollution, no traffic  
No chain stores  
Railroad

Weaknesses:

No sewer system  
No set plan for control of growth  
Voter apathy  
Small population = small tax base  
Beavers!  
Lack of industry & business = small tax base  
Center of town – congestion at rush hour, lack of parking  
Auto distribution center – pollution, no tax revenue, lack of jobs  
No place to shop  
No senior/affordable housing (less school impact) – susceptible to Chapter 40B  
Need to use the environment – hiking/biking trails

Opportunities:

Chance to decide where we are going – control our own destiny  
Develop along Route 49  
Railroad – transportation opportunity  
Historic buildings to be restored– shoe factory, old town hall, depot, Lashaway Jr. High  
Look into town sewer – for downtown and lake area = industrial growth (Good? Bad?)  
Change visual character of the town to be more pleasing to the eye  
- nice common, benches, trees, store fronts

Threats:

Unsupervised/uncontrolled development – threat to rural community, services, schools  
Development along Route 49  
Lack of community involvement – voting, meetings, unkempt properties  
Chain stores  
Auto distribution center – potential to expand to other parts of town (“the Flats”),  
pollution, increased traffic, loopholes in zoning bylaw

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Top Three Strengths

Rural community (7 votes)  
Lakes, forests and natural environment (5 votes)  
No other strength received more than one vote

Top Three Weaknesses

Auto distribution center – pollution, no tax revenue, lack of jobs (6)  
No senior/affordable housing – susceptible to Chapter 40B (4 votes)  
Lack of sewers (3 votes)

Top Three Opportunities

Chance to decide where we are going – control our own destiny (5 votes)  
Restoration of old buildings – depot, town hall, others (3 votes)  
Large pieces of land – preserve open spaces, use for senior/affordable housing (3 votes)

### Top Three Threats

Weak zoning regulations (9 votes)

Unsupervised/uncontrolled development (4 votes)

Auto distribution center (3 votes)

### Notes to Committee:

- From the forum and the survey, it is clear that citizens want to preserve the rural nature of East Brookfield and its associated amenities (open space & natural environment).
- Notice that the auto distribution center ranks high as a weakness and a threat.
- I would suggest that the top two threats are interrelated.



## **Important Meeting on East Brookfield's Future!**

The East Brookfield Master Plan Committee invites all East Brookfield residents to attend the fourth and final public forum for the Master Plan, where a full draft of the Plan and its major recommendations will be presented. Please join us for the following event:

**Master Plan Public Forum  
October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007  
7:00 PM to 9:00 PM  
at the East Brookfield Senior Center**

The Master Plan Committee has just completed a full draft of East Brookfield's first ever Master Plan. As the foundation for the Town's planning and zoning efforts, the Master Plan will be instrumental in setting forth a vision for East Brookfield's future. At this forum, the Master Plan Committee will present the Plan's most significant findings and go over the recommendations with the public. The Master Plan's recommendations cover the following topics:

- Town Government
- Open Space & Recreation
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Land Use & Zoning

This interactive forum will give East Brookfield residents an opportunity to review the Plan's major findings and recommendations, ask questions, and share their concerns with the Master Plan Committee before the Plan is brought before the voters at the fall Town Meeting. All residents with an interest in shaping East Brookfield's future are invited to attend and encouraged to participate. Hope to see **YOU** there!

# **Town of East Brookfield Master Plan Public Forum**

**October 3rd, 2007  
7:00PM to 9:00PM  
East Brookfield Senior Center**

## **Forum Agenda**

- 7:00PM**      **Sign In**
  
- 7:10PM**      **Welcome and Introductions**  
(George Miller, Chairman of the Master Plan Committee)
  
- 7:15PM**      **Presentation of Master Plan's key findings, goals, objectives and recommendations.**  
(the full Master Plan Committee)
  
- 9:00PM**      **Evening Wrap-Up and Next Steps**  
(George Miller, Chairman of the Master Plan Committee)

**East Brookfield Master Plan**  
**- Presentation of Findings, Goals & Recommendations -**  
**October 3, 2007, 7:00 PM - 9:00PM**  
**East Brookfield Senior Center**

**Public Forum Comments**

All told, there were approximately 45 citizens in attendance. Master Plan Committee members took turns going through the major findings, goals and recommendations for each chapter. Outlined below are the public's comments.

**Town Government** (Committee Presenter: Miller)

- What about "Reverse 911" for emergency services?
- What are you recommending for town sewer?
- There is a need for industrial development and the tax dollars they generate.

**Natural Features, Open Space & Recreation** (Committee Presenter: Miller)

- Does Lake Lashaway have a weed problem?
- Consider managing the actual waterways, particularly Great Brook.
- Per the survey results, make maintenance of recreation facilities a higher priority.

**Housing** (Committee Presenter: Jacquith)

- How about the old shoe factory in the town center as a possible location for affordable housing?
- Is housing coming to the sandpit on Harrington Street?

**Economic Development** (Committee Presenter: Jacquith)

- Are there grants available for sewer?
- Have you considered a methane reduction plant?
- Remember that sewer can add to the cost of housing.
- The Town should pursue multiple options for economic development.

**Transportation** (Committee Presenter: Magwood)

- The impact of trucks on local roadways is a concern.

**Land Use & Zoning** (Committee Presenter: Cormier)

- How about a bylaw for the upkeep of existing properties?
- What is your schedule for working on the zoning changes?
- The Town should consider Low Impact Development (LID) standards for handling stormwater generated by development.
- The Town should consider digitizing its Assessor maps to help with the upcoming zoning changes.