

**EASTHAMPTON MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS FROM JUNE 2007 MEETING
CHALLENGES AND OPORTUNITIES**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Attract and keep businesses
- Maintain the character of Easthampton
 - Provide affordable housing for more employees
 - Provide safe infrastructure
- Protect Open Space to attract new businesses
- Balance Open Space with Industry
- Engage Business Community, both small and large, in MP Process and Workforce development and education
- Establish Economic Development Position
- Continue adaptive reuse of mill buildings for affordable housing and businesses

TES

Transportation

- Look at the intersections at West Street and South Street
- Bury Telephone Lines
- Extension of existing sidewalk system
- Create Park and Ride system, sponsored by the state and the city
- Develop required transportation system (shuttles) with new condo development
- Develop a Transportation commission
- Develop a Mission Statement that incorporates bike and pedestrian movement

Energy and Sustainability

- Focus on local production of goods and services
- Develop Green building Codes for municipal, residential, and commercial properties
- Develop an Energy Conservation Permit and Renewable Energy Permit
- Create an Energy Commission and Paid Staff
 - Energy Conservation Contracts
 - Education and Residential and Commercial Level
- Expand recycling opportunities
- Preserve Open Space and encourage tree planting
- Create a municipal or subregional energy company

EDUCATION / PUBLIC FACILITIES

- Build a new elementary school and renovate the high school
- Reuse old elementary schools
- Develop the 16 hour day at the schools (afterschool public use of the pool, gyms)
- Expand the Transfer Station
- Water Protection (DPW and Water Department)
- Increase communication between the police and fire departments

RECREATION

- Preserve Nonotuck Park
 - Maintain the present condition
 - Coordinate with adjacent land uses
 - Create a management plan
- Create linkage between the trail systems
- Find funding
- Protect the Mill Ponds
- Provide for accessibility to all age groups

CULTURAL

- Find funding
- Increase public awareness for the arts through education and website

- Encourage more public art in Downtown and Gateways
- Create signage for cultural events
- Encourage local art competitions
- City Arts board
- Encourage arts between the youth and senior populations
- More festivals, especially around Mill Ponds
- Create affordable housing for artists
- More volunteers

OPEN SPACE

- Farmland Preservation
- Barnes Aquifer
- Promote linkage of wildlife corridors (PCT already doing)
- Create a city goal of a % of open space protected every year
- Review zoning bylaws to ensure open space is adequately addressed
- Find funding

HOUSING

- Find ways to retain and create more affordable housing – both homeownership and rental
- Maintain a good mix of housing for people at all income levels
- Affordable housing should look pleasant and does not need to be clustered together
- We are seeing gentrification here in Easthampton as middle-income people are being priced out of other communities and moving here. This has the potential of making Easthampton unaffordable for people who already live here
- Artists are concerned that their living and working spaces will no longer be affordable
- Rents have typically been affordable in Easthampton but this will also start to change, particularly in owner-occupied duplexes. As owners sell their properties for higher prices, new owners will have to charge higher rents to be able to afford their mortgages
- Incorporate green space into affordable housing developments
- As assessments increase, some seniors are struggling to pay their property taxes
- Bringing together the appropriate stakeholders to discuss the creation of affordable housing
- Education – people don't know what affordable housing is
- The market will support the creation of housing for people above median income but it's the role of the City to find as many tools as possible to support the creation and retention of affordable housing. Some of these are:
 - o Passing an inclusionary zoning ordinance
 - o Working well with developers who want to create housing under Chapter 40B
 - o Changing zoning regulations that favor over 55 housing but have no affordable component
 - o Putting CPA funds to good use
 - o Using funds to help landlords to rehab their properties and keep them affordable
 - o Creating a staff position in the City, this person would work with developers and others to help them through the process of creating affordable housing
 - o Identify possible projects that will fit with state and federal funding guidelines so applications can be made whenever there is an open round
 - o Keep investigating other avenues and incentives – what are other municipalities doing? -