

Introduction to the Community Development Plan Program



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On January 21, 2000, then Governor Paul Cellucci issued Executive Order 418, a measure designed to help communities plan for new opportunities while balancing economic development, transportation infrastructure improvements, and open space preservation.

Technical assistance and grants of up to \$30,000 were made available to assist communities in producing Community Development Plans. Community Development Plans are intended to provide guidance as cities and towns consider options and avenues for future development. The plans will focus on housing, economic and community development, transportation, and open space. The plan must also include strategies for how the community will develop housing that is affordable to families and individuals across a broad range of incomes.

Monterey began the process of undertaking a Community Development Plan in 2002 after it conducted a town survey as a means of determining community need and interest. The results of the Town survey were tabulated and a forum was then held to discuss important issues relevant to the town and the community's vision for the future. After the forum, interested volunteers and Town Officials met several times in 2002 and 2003 to offer community input to guide the development of a Community Development Plan for the Town.

Executive Order 418 required that the Community Development Plan cover the following four areas: affordable housing, open space and environmental resource protection, economic development, and transportation. The Community Development Plan addresses how the community will accomplish its development objectives for each of the four areas.

Monterey is a unique community facing its own set of challenges, and the Plan documents these challenges. The Plan also contains recommendations from members of the community as to how to address the challenges in a manner consistent with maintaining the desired character of the community. The Community Development Plan is based on the most accurate and detailed information available by Federal, State, local and private resources, and is based on a vision set forth through community consensus.

Executive Summary

The Community Development Plan outlines the Town of Monterey's concerns for growth and development into the future. The process of developing the Plan began with looking at a recent town survey, which contained a number of questions related to the residents' views on the community, natural resource protection, protection of agricultural land, affordable housing, economic development, transportation, and town services. Two public forums were held to discuss the results of the survey and to gain greater detail on the overall concerns that residents have for the future of the Town. A large committee was appointed by the Select Board to oversee the Community Development Plan process. The fifteen-person committee held several meetings to discuss each of the four topic areas. An additional joint meeting was held, with the town of Monterey to discuss agricultural preservation and rural development issues. Below are the highlighted recommendations for each of the topic areas.

Housing Element

Residents of Monterey wish to increase the stock of affordable homes in the town. The current housing trends weigh heavily on high-end homes, which does not accommodate low, moderate, and middle-income households. In order to maintain the Town's goals for affordable housing, the following actions are available to the town:

- Maintain local housing stock that provides quality housing for residents of all ages and incomes
- Ensure that future housing opportunities and developments are consistent with the Town's unique character and existing infrastructure while preserving open space, agriculture and natural resources
- Provide an appropriate mix of quality homeownership and rental opportunities with consideration of housing for persons of low, moderate and middle-incomes.

Economic Development Element

Residents of the town of Monterey view natural, cultural and recreational attributes as vital to future economic development. The town wishes to see community support for local farm owners, as well as finding alternative ways to diversify the local tax base. The following actions are recommended to promote economic development in the town of Tyringham:

- Support the preservation and growth of local agricultural enterprises
- Support the retention of existing establishments and encourage limited growth of small-scale service oriented enterprises

- Develop stronger economic link between local attractions and local enterprises without compromising character

Open Space Element

Residents wish to preserve and protect the character of the community while enhancing recreational opportunities. The open space section allocated funding to update the town's existing Open Space and Recreation Plan (1990). This plan is an advisory document that will help guide and inform the actions of local officials. Below is a list of the objectives set forth in this document:

- Preserve a variety of open space in Town including open fields and wooded areas, held both publicly and privately
- Protect all water resources: lakes, ponds, streams wetlands and sub-surface storage areas from alteration and pollution
- Preserve familiar vistas, roadsides, dirt roads, gateway areas and historic sites
- Encourage agricultural enterprises
- Develop and maintain opportunities for active and passive recreation and appreciation of nature and the environment for all

Transportation Element

The transportation section resulted in a Bicycle and Pedestrian Study. The study measured the suitability of existing road conditions for cycling and walking and identified the corridors of highest potential demand for such activities in the town. The study also identifies undeveloped and underdeveloped areas that make sense for possible, attractive routes for Monterey's cyclists and pedestrians. The following are a list of recommendations, which came out of the report:

- Create bicycle enhancements along Route 23 in village center
- Provide sidewalk improvements through town center and along Route 23 to connect to Appalachian Trail Network