LONG TERM PLANNING GUIDE
LONG TERM LISTENING FOR LONG TERM PLANNING
“Long Term Listening—For Long Term Planning”

Groton COA [GCOA] 5 Year Groton Community Adult Center*
2-Phase Long Term Planning Guide

The Groton Council On Aging [GCOA] Long Term Planning Guide is the result of the cumulative findings from a town-wide survey, census data, input from senior center experts, participants’ input from over 5 focus groups, current staff expertise, COA Board input, research, and site visits to other senior and adult centers. By all measures, it is clear that the Groton Senior Center, as it currently exists, cannot optimally address the needs of Groton’s current senior population nor meet the needs of Groton’s imminent future senior population.

The 60 and older adult population has increased by 1% per year since 2010. In 2015 the older adult population (60 years and older) comprised 25% of Groton’s adult population. Growth data and statistics show that growth will continue to increase by 1% per year and will reach 30% of the adult population by 2020.

The research unit of the Office of Elder Affairs 2002 projections estimates the Groton adult population 65 and older will increase from 668 in 2010 to 1455 in 2020. This is an increase of 117% in 10 years.

Based on these ever-changing needs of Groton’s aging population and the imminent baby boomer inclusion, the need to increase and refine existing programs and develop ones that are needed must begin now.

The current center, originally designed to serve as Groton’s VFW, is not optimally suited for use as a senior center from both facility and program perspectives. The building measures ~5,000 sq. ft. of space and prohibits optimal program offerings due to the lack of quiet, separate space and an inability to provide adequate programs for large groups (50 or more) due to limited room size and room configurations. Building accessibility is sub-standard. There is no elevator in the building requiring those attending programs in the basement to enter through an outside steel door that is not always easily accessible in the winter. Often times programs need to be split between the 2 levels creating obstacles and hardships for those with limited mobility.

*Groton Community Adult Center serves as a placeholder to illustrate the spirit and intent of the future building.
Currently, participants must enter the building by walking around the building, through the parking lot (in all weather conditions) and up a lengthy ramp that is not doable for some. There are no automatic doors on the building that enable those with walkers or wheelchairs access with independence and dignity.

Based on our findings and to better align our Center with our Core Beliefs, the Planning Committee developed a 2 phase Long Term Planning Guide.

**Center’s Core Beliefs**

1. *Groton Community Adult Center* is the focal point for support services to aid seniors to age in place and to navigate life’s transitions. We will achieve this Core Belief by making the Center the primary community resource for support, information, and referral services to Groton’s older adults, their caregivers and other Groton stakeholders who provide services for our seniors.

2. *Groton Community Adult Center* will be a dynamic, welcoming place where people gather and participate in activities and programs that promote healthy aging through physical, cognitive, social, outreach services, emotional, and vocational wellbeing.

3. *Groton Community Adult Center* will collaborate with participants and other community organizations to address needs and current concerns of older adults and their families as well as to be responsive to emerging needs in this diverse community.

4. *Groton Community Adult Center* will be a trendsetter to ensure that older adults and their caregivers are educated and informed about issues and concerns that matter most in their lives.

5. *Groton Community Adult Center* will be a center for seniors to participate and engage in practices and activities that promote healthy minds and bodies to maintain their independence.

*The Center’s Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs will be accomplished through a 2 phase Long Term Planning Guide.*
Phase 1

Goal #1: Conduct a Facility Feasibility Study

Prepare a Request for Proposal [RFP] for BOS review and ultimate approval by the voters at the Spring 2016 Town Meeting.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Evaluate the program and space [internal and external] needs of the Senior Citizens Center—present and planned.
2. Assess the benefits and challenges of relocating some or all programs and services to one or more existing town and/or private facilities.
3. Identify key limitations, deficiencies, and advantages in the existing facilities and its overall site (parking, handicapped access, safety, etc.).
4. Assess the feasibility and costs of remediation.
5. Assess the benefits, challenges, and/or downsides of co-locating to other sites or facilities.
6. Provide an assessment of the benefits and challenges of other identified sites for a new facility.
7. Prepare cost analysis and benefits of renovating/upgrading existing facility.
8. Prepare cost analysis for a new building with land acquisition if applicable.
9. Prepare a comparative analysis of the benefits of moving/building a new center vs. upgrading/renovating the existing Center.
10. Develop preliminary design drawings of the top 2 preferred recommended plans.
11. Provide a cost estimate for the top 2 preferred recommended plans and projected project completion timeline for each.
12. Meet with COA Director and other appropriate boards periodically as needed.
13. Be prepared to present and support findings to various town-wide groups.
Goal #2: Expand Public Awareness
   Plan for and implement 4 town-wide informational sessions that will address:

OBJECTIVES:
1. Expand public awareness and knowledge about senior issues in Groton.
2. Present the rationale to support upgrading the Center’s facility.
3. Provide opportunities for all residents to learn about the Facility Feasibility warrant.
4. Explain the benefits to the community at large of a 21st Century Center for Groton.

Goal #3: Form Feasibility Oversight Committee

OBJECTIVES:
1. Assess and score Feasibility RFP.
2. Assess current building structure.
3. Help promote passage of the town-wide warrants.

Timeline: Phase I: January 2016 – April 2016
Phase 2: Following positive approval of Phase I at Spring Town Meeting

Goal #4: Secure Funding for Building Renovation/Building/and/or Expansion

OBJECTIVE
1. Feasibility Oversight Committee develops action plan and timeline for next step Center Renovation/Building/and/or Expansion

GOAL #5: DEVELOP and ENHANCE PROGRAMS & SERVICES

OBJECTIVES:
2. Identify unmet needs.
3. Explore evening programs.
4. Address program interests as indicated in the needs assessment.
5. Explore evening transportation options.
6. Evaluate current and future programs as they relate to the six branches of service: Information and Referral, Health and Fitness, Intergenerational, Leisure and Education, Retirement and Family Care.

GOAL #6: STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATION

OBJECTIVES:
1. Change Center’s name from Groton Senior Citizens Center to Groton Community Adult Center.
2. Create a comprehensive older adult volunteer database to address the needs of the Groton Community Adult Center and the Groton Community at large.
3. Recruit external advisors as needed.
4. Study present and future staffing issues based on existing and projected needs.
5. Benchmark other effective Senior Centers and/or other organizations.
GOAL #7 – BUILD FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

OBJECTIVES:
1. Explore endowment possibilities.
2. Establish a friends group.
3. Work with town leaders to develop 2 – 4 year financial plan.

GOAL #8 – EXPAND PUBLIC AWARENESS

OBJECTIVE:
1. Develop a marketing/outreach plan for the Center.

TIMELINE PHASE II MAY 2016 – JUNE 2020