**Meeting Minutes - Destination Groton Committee (DGC) Meeting**

**Meeting Date:** June 11, 2025

**Attendees:**

* **Committee Members:** Greg Sheldon, Jeff Gordon, Joni Parker-Roach (via Teams), Brian Bolton, Heather Puksta (via Teams)
* **Sub-Committee member:** Karen Tucker-Barisano
* **Other guests:** **Studio InSitu**: Tim Hess, Matthew Killam, Joshua LaLiberte; **:** **Stantec:** Michael Clark

**Meeting Summary:** The June 11 meeting was convened to review and critique the third version of the **Downtown Vision Plan presentation**, finalize edits in preparation for distribution to town boards, and begin drafting the long-form narrative version of the plan. Additional discussion focused on strategy for public communications, summer engagement activities, and future planning for zoning changes and implementation. The committee continues to move toward an October Town Meeting presentation and needed to ensure alignment between the conceptual visuals and the supporting narrative.

**Key Takeaways**

1. **Consultant Presentation – Version 3 Review**
* Studio InSitu shared updates to the **conceptual SketchUp model and presentation slides**, integrating feedback from the Planning Board and committee.
* Committee members reviewed:
	+ A revised sequence of slides and flow of storytelling
	+ Updated renderings of Robinson’s site, roundabouts, and civic center areas
	+ Overlays showing zoning, walkability radius, and proposed road/path connections
* Agreement was reached that the concept should be shown to **Select Board and other stakeholders** soon, with a working draft of the long-form document ready in parallel.
1. **Narrative Plan and Drafting Strategy**
* The committee began outlining the **written vision plan**, targeting a 10–12 page document with visuals that expands on the presentation.
* The narrative will include:
	+ Background and process
	+ The vision statement
	+ Current challenges and missed opportunities
	+ Proposed zoning and infrastructure improvements
	+ Implementation pathways and phasing
* There was consensus that the tone should remain **aspirational but pragmatic**, and stress that the plan is non-binding and subject to future input.
1. **Terminology and Message Framing**
* The committee reaffirmed language choices:
	+ Use "Town Center" instead of "Downtown" to reflect Groton’s rural roots.
	+ Refer to the draft as a "Vision Plan" not a “Master Plan” to avoid confusion with formal planning documents.
	+ Frame the document as **a collaborative platform for next steps**, not a final roadmap.
* Clear distinctions must be made between concepts and actionable proposals—particularly with more sensitive items like new roads or development sites.
1. **Public Communication and Materials**
* The team discussed refining and distributing a **PDF version of the slide deck** to Select Board, Planning Board, and other key stakeholders before end of June.
* Additional materials may include:
	+ A simplified 2-page summary handout or “vision snapshot”
	+ Optional narrated video overview using the SketchUp model
	+ Consistent language for newsletters and press releases
1. **Roundabouts and Street Redesign Feedback**
* The committee addressed potential concerns about:
	+ Roundabouts near Lawrence Academy and at the Route 40/119 intersection
	+ Reconfiguring traffic flow on Main Street
	+ Changing the appearance of the Town’s existing character
* It was agreed that conceptual renderings must show clear pedestrian benefits and calming design features (e.g., narrowed roads, landscaping, bike access).
1. **Summer Timeline and Engagement**
* Immediate goals:
	+ Finalize vision presentation edits and circulate to boards by end of June
	+ Draft and refine narrative plan by early August
	+ Schedule early feedback sessions with the Select Board
* Broader public forums to be planned for **September or early October**
* October Town Meeting will serve as the milestone for presenting the final vision and initiating implementation discussions.

**Action Items**

* **Consultants to revise slide deck and renderings** based on today's feedback (target completion: June 17–19).
* **Committee to circulate the final PDF deck** to the Planning Board, Select Board, and others by the end of June.
* **Begin drafting long-form narrative plan**, starting with outline and assigning writing sections.
* **Align messaging** across the website, newsletter, and public materials using agreed terms (Town Center, Vision Plan, etc.).
* **Draft a 2-page vision snapshot** to accompany the full presentation.
* **Explore recording a narrated walkthrough video** using the SketchUp model for broader community access.
* **Develop a strategy for introducing roundabout concepts** that emphasizes walkability and scale sensitivity.
* **Plan summer working sessions and consultant meetings** to continue zoning and implementation framework.