

GROTON MASTER PLAN 2025 - COMMENTS RESOLUTION MATRIX (last updated 1/27/2025)
 Final comments on Draft Report (November 2024); and public presentation 1/19/2024

Page #	Reviewers Comments*	Comment Code	Reviewer Initials	Consultant Initials	Status**	Response
Econ. Dev.	Allowance for pass thru traffic and how we can account for it to increase business		AE	FXM	R	There is almost no spontaneous capturing of pass through traffic. Over 85% of brick and mortar retail sales (including in highway rest areas) are destination trips. It's a good idea, if feasible, to divert pass through traffic where congestion and left hand turns are an issue for access to local business.
Implementation Table (OSR section)	The town is considering eliminating the parks committee and putting it under the DPW; request to consider making sure the value of Open Space & Recreation is retained as it is important for quality of life; request to promote and preserve open space and recreation areas.		AE	JS	A	Noted.

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	Need to create a communications path from the PB and SB meetings so the community/public is actually engaged in the plan implementation.		PF	JS	A	Noted. The PB has discussed meeting regularly with the SB (maybe quarterly) and also providing annual progress reports at Town Meeting, as a way to monitor and communicate about implementation.
	Consider reviewing the plan for mobility discussions and adding wording to “walk” and “bike” items, including people in wheelchairs, etc. ... I think some firms use “walk, bike, roll”		BPG	Nitsch	A	Updates made on doc pages 51, 139
	Affordability was a big concern in the feedback at GrotonFest; would like to see it elevated that the people of Groton have expressed discomfort around the tax rate.		PF	JS	A	Noted. See pages 107-108 for information related to tax rates. See page 155 for some discussion on housing affordability. Can the PB please clarify for BPG whether the housing concern is lack of affordable housing or the lack of housing affordability as a market condition in Groton?

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	Add page #'s to maps at the end of the document.		BP	TD	A	InDesign; page numbers were not added to the maps as the Maps have Map numbers and are all located at the end of the report; a List of Maps has been added to the report up front.
	Concerned that PB and SB have never incorporated furthering a master plan; suggest that an economic development director or other position/committee is needed to carry out the master plan.		JG	JS	A	Noted. No action needed, unless PB wants to include an action item in the implementation program for the town to consider an economic development director?
	The town needs a way to keep track of measurable goals like the OSRP keeps track in a grid to show which steps have been completed.		AE	JS	A	Noted.
	Has the MBTA designation been included or discussed in the goals?		AE	TD	A	Added a bullet under H1.7: Comply with the MBTA Multi-Family zoning

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						requirements.
	As a member of the SB, annual goal setting is a good idea; not sure about some of the zoning goals of the plan b/c they don't seem to be understood enough.		BP	JS	A	Noted.
	Thinks an Economic Development Director salary would raise taxes.		BP		R	Noted. No action needed.
	The presence of Donlan's grocery store is missed by many residents.		PH		R	Noted. No action needed.
	Interested in better understanding the action item re: conservation land → ag. land as an immediate action; Chapter 97 land could not have its use changed, etc.		LB	TT	R	This item should remain in the table, as written. The Conservation Commission has allowed agricultural use on some of its properties in the past.
	Reinstate the Ag. Commission so they can encourage current		LB	JS	A	Noted. No action needed.

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	landowners to cultivate agriculture productivity on their own property.					
Land Use	Table 3.1.1 and the Land Use map ... please check and clarify the big black parcel in the middle of town. It is an orchard and is depicted as undevelopable; it would be helpful to provide a description of the 3 categories of vacant land (developable, potentially developable, and undevelopable).		BP	TD	A	Revised map and table with updated 2024 assessor's data
	Look at most recent assessor's data (MassGIS October 2024) and compare it to the data used to create the map to see if anything has changed, especially with regard to "vacant" land.		TT	TD	A	Revised map and table with updated 2024 assessor's data
25-26	Four Corners - replace the paragraph with the following: "The Four Corners	C	FS, TT	TD	A	replaced

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	<p>area of Groton contains a concentration of commercial land abutting a residential zone. Located at the intersection of Routes 119 and 225, three corners have existing commercial development consisting of medical offices, retail establishments, and office space. The remaining corner to the southeast, currently zoned for residential use, was recently granted a special permit by the Planning Board for a proposed 24-unit multi-family, age-restricted development. The addition of these units can potentially benefit the existing commercial properties nearby. Residents interviewed in this Master Plan engagement process voiced a need for improved planning for the types of uses the</p>					

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	community wants to see at this location, indicating potential interest in smaller-scale residential or mixed-use.”					
34	Historic Property Designations and Protections: There is at least one more property with a Preservation Restriction (five total). See below comment re: Groton Grange	M	TT	TD	A	Added
35	Bullet item about The First Parish Church. Add the following as the second sentence: “It was used as a courthouse from 1776-1787.”	M	FS	TD	A	Added
36	Preservation Restrictions paragraph. Add the following as the last sentence: “ The Groton Grange #7 Building (c. 1890) is located at 80 Champney Street and was originally used as a Carriage and Paint	M	TT	TD	A	added

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	Shop.					
79	Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) - please replace the paragraph with the following: "Accessory dwelling units (ADU) may be allowed by-right as a result of recent zoning amendments adopted in the 2024 Fall Town Meeting. The intent of the zoning amendments is to comply with the ADU requirements of the 2024 Affordable Homes Act, which go into effect on February 2, 2025."	C	TT	TD	A	replaced
105	Healthcare Access section - please replace with the following updates: "Located on the border of Ayer and Groton, the Nashoba Valley Medical Center was an acute care hospital with an emergency department. The hospital was established in 1964. Steward Health Care	M	FS, TT	TD	A	replaced

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	<p>closed the hospital on August 31, 2024. The closure of this hospital significantly disrupts healthcare access for the town and has a substantial negative impact on the municipal budget due to the additional personnel required to compensate for increased emergency response times. The nearest emergency departments are now located in Concord, Leominster, and Lowell, Massachusetts, and in Nashua, New Hampshire. Within Groton, the Seven Hills Pediatric Center offers skilled nursing care for children and young adults. Additional urgent care facilities are located in the surrounding communities of Littleton, Fitchburg, Leominster, and Westford."</p>					
General Comment	In general, the master	M	LB	TD	A	More photos included

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	plan document is lacking photographs of the town that would show examples of the topics discussed and a connection to the community. The first photo is deep in the document on page 23 and there are only about 18 total photos in the document. Too much text loses interest for the reader.					in final InDesign report.
140	In Section 4.6 Housing, this image of Main St. doesn't represent 'housing diversity'. Add a few views of some detached single family as appropriate example of the 82% housing units. Also, 18% units are older, so show example of this.	M	LB	TD	A	TT provided photos. Photos incorporated.
141	In Section 4.7 could show photos of local businesses and vacant properties. Also, example of traffic congestion and needed sidewalks.	M	LB	Nitsch	A	Photo and caption inserted on page 142

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143	In the heading at the top of the page, the word Facilities is misspelled, i.e., change the word Faculties to Facilities.	C	TT	TD	A	Correction made.
144	Expand on the first full paragraph on Page 144 that reads: “In addition, municipal facilities and services are not equipped to handle the impacts of climate change. Groton is already experiencing the effects of climate change, and much of the town’s infrastructure was not designed to accommodate climate change conditions. Wherever feasible, Groton should retrofit or upgrade the town’s infrastructure to ensure the provision of essential services and encourage renewable alternatives, energy storage, blue roofs, etc.” What are the impacts	M	LB	Nitsch	A	Insertion made on page 144. Longer explanation of existing threats can be found in section 3.8.

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	and how are we experiencing them? Flood? Heat? Other?					
Maps	There appears to be no list of the Maps in the Table of Contents or anywhere else. A list would be helpful, especially as there are no page numbers on the Maps.	M	BP	TD	A	InDesign report contains a List of Maps in the Table on Contents section up front.
Map 3.1.4	Map 3.1.4 Age of Housing. The color gradations are not sufficiently distinguishable. The two newest categories look exactly the same (1980-1999 and 2000-present). These are the two periods of the most intense building in our history but they are lumped together as one category because the colors are so similar. Same is true for 1920-1969 and the earliest two periods starting Pre-1865.	O	BP	TD	A	Revised map

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Map 3.3.1	Map 3.3.1 Open Spaces and Recreation. There is an incorrect label: William Burn and Sorhaud Woods on property in the middle of the town. The correct name is <u>Williams Barn</u> (not William and not William's) and <u>Sorhaug Woods</u> .	C	BP	TD	A	Revised map
Map 3.4.2	Map 3.4.2 Pedestrian/Cyclist Circulation. This map shows a sidewalk on Common Street starting at the Rich State Forest and running more than half the length of Common Street. This is incorrect. There is no sidewalk there.	C	BP	TD	A	Revised map
Maps	After Map 3.4.3, there is a Map with no number, labelled Vehicle Crash Locations. It needs a number. It also should tell us what period of time it is	M	BP	TD	A	Revised map

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	covering. In what period of time did these crashes occur? One year, one week, one decade? Which one?					
Map 3.7.1	Map 3.7.1 Municipal Facilities. Shouldn't this map include the Senior Center, the Public Library, The Electric Light Dept, the Water Dept, the two DPW facilities, the Transfer Station, and the Groton Country Club? They all provide services to Groton residents and are supported by residents' taxes or fees.	M	BP	TD	A	Revised map
9	1.3 Master Plan Vision and Goals: The Vision Statement should include a bullet point about supporting and enhancing the public schools/education	M	BR	TT	A	Added text to the 2nd to last bullet in the Vision that includes services and facilities.
50	Figure 3.4.1 Annual Average Daily Traffic: This figure needs to be reworked. Route	C	BR	Nitsch	A	Working on revising this figure. Will send it to TT to share with the PB as soon as we

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	119 is the busiest road in Groton, but it is shown as having the least traffic. Route 40 and Lowell Road are the same.					have it.
30	3.2 Natural & Cultural Resource Areas: There are five Great Ponds in Groton, not eight. The Great Ponds are: Baddacook Pond, Cow Pond (a.k.a. Whitney Pond), Lost Lake/Knops Pond, Martins Pond, and Massapoag Pond. Other named ponds include Duck Pond and Wattles Pond.	C	JL	JS	A	TT: Agree with the correction. Correction made.
41	3.3 Open Space & Recreation: Water Resources (either a new sub-section or add to Wetlands sub-section) Groton has abundant water resources for boating, swimming, fishing and picnicking along the shore. Lost Lake and	M	JL	JS	A	TT: Agree with the added text. Text added.

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	<p>Baddacook Pond have state boat ramps, accessible year-round, with seasonal portable toilets. Other ponds are accessible on foot. There are launch points along our rivers with plenty of areas to explore. Many of the lakes, ponds and streams are surrounded by conservation land with hiking trails. Lake houses dot the shores in some areas while other areas are more secluded. Sargisson Beach is a public beach on Lost Lake/Knops Pond with a designated swim area, picnic area,</p>					

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	and seasonal portable toilets.					
44	<p>Under sub-section on Local Capacity, Policies, and Regulations, add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Great Ponds Advisory Committee <p>The Committee is responsible for understanding the history of weed management in the lakes and ponds, investigating current weed management methodology and making appropriate recommendations to the Select Board regarding weed management. The committee is also charged with researching issues of lake management that relate to health, safety, water quality, environmental protection and the</p>	M	JL	JS	A	TT: Agree with the additions. Additions incorporated.

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	<p>preservation and protection of property values of the Great Ponds located within Groton. The Committee makes recommendations to the Select Board to provide for a balance of uses and management appropriate for each water body.</p> <p>· Weed Harvester Committee</p> <p>The Weed Harvester Committee was formed to determine where the weed harvester is needed for mechanical aquatic weed control and to coordinate its use with the Highway Surveyor. Members are also responsible for arranging the designation of an operator for the weed harvester and overseeing its</p>					

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	<p>operation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Groton Lakes Association <p>The Groton Lakes Association (GLA) is a non-profit organization devoted to the improvement and preservation of the lakes in the eastern part Groton: Lost Lake/Knopps Pond, Baddacook Pond, Duck Pond, and Whitney Pond. The GLA works closely with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as other community organizations to develop and implement programs, strategies, and ideas which will preserve the lakes for both native wildlife and recreational use, thereby enhancing the quality of life in our local watershed.</p>					

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N/A	<p>General Comment:</p> <p>I commend you (and others) on the very impressive document you have put together, including the many detailed charts with statistics. I only have a few comments:</p> <p>I was particularly interested in the Transportation section. The ultimate fact remains is that Groton is essentially "a bedroom community" with a 2-lane road/one lane each direction with parking on the sides going through the town center. You can add more safety features (I sadly envision traffic</p>	O	SB	Nitsch	A	TT: No action required.

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	lights someday), but you can't widen the road or expand much on either side, being situated between swamp and Gibbett Hill. Groton has more housing planned (quite a few to add to the traffic where Deluxe Corp was) and the Destination Groton Committee has a fantasy that Groton can draw more tourists, businesses, etc. This will certainly add to our current traffic congestion and the issue of lack of adequate parking.					
N/A	General Comment: Having read, used, and participated	O	RP	JS	A	TT: No action required.

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	<p>in preparing many master plans, I agree with the comments made at the public hearing that most master plans are not effectively utilized. I think that this is especially true of municipal master plans prepared under State of Massachusetts requirements that tend to make them boring and cumbersome. However, this draft Master Plan by Barrett Assoc. does provide an extremely useful body of resource information. In addition to planning recommendations , people should be</p>					

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	made aware that the plan is a resource for data about the Town.					
N/A	General Comment: In comparing the 2024 and 2011 plans there are two changes in the 2024 plan that make it more useful and readable. The first is the organization of recommendations , especially the Action Plan Chart, Section 5.2. In the 2011 plan, the recommendations are spread out through the body of the report. The chart in the current draft provides an easy way to see recommendations with simplified	O	RP	JS	A	TT: No action required.

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	associated information in the context of other recommendations . Actions of interest can then be located for more detailed information.					
N/A	General Comment: The second aspect that makes this document more readable is that it has a reasonably sized and shaped font and especially that it has a single column rather than side by side columns. Reading the 2011, two column Master Plan requires constantly moving one's eyes up and down and if one is reading on a computer, it	O	RP	TD	R	PB directed us to use 2 column format.

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	requires constantly scrolling up and down. I very strongly hope that when this draft plan is put into InDesign, it does not change into that two-column format. Please do not make changes to make the document look "pretty" at the expense of its readability.					
9	Section 1.3 Master Plan Vision and Goals: I like the vision list, but the goals are very general and don't add much beyond the vision list. The goals seem sufficiently watered down that they could be copied and	O	RP	JS	A	TT: No action required.

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	inserted into any Master Plan in any non-urban town.					
N/A	General Comment re: References to Indigenous People There are a total of four minor references to indigenous people and one glaring non-mention. I think this is totally inadequate and in some cases offensive. Specific references are below.	O	RP	JS	A	TT: general comment
22	References to Indigenous People Page 22, first paragraph: "Groton occupies land that was home to the Nipmuc and Nashaway Indigenous nations prior to European	O	RP	JS	A	TT: No action required.

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	settlement that began in the seventeenth century." The area is still home to them.					
26	References to Indigenous People Page 26, first paragraph after "Trends": "The pattern of residential settlement in Groton reflects the town's historical development over several centuries." First, I suggest deleting the word 'residential since the bullets also refer to commercial. Second, I suggest replacing "the town's historical development" with "the town's post indigenous-people settlement".	C	RP	JS	A	TT: Okay with the first suggested edit. Not sure about the phrasing in the second suggested edit.
148	References to Indigenous People Action Plan: Natural and Cultural Resource	O	RP	JS	A	TT: How about something like this? "NCR1.4: Implement

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	Areas NCR1.4 - page 148 in chart "NCR1.4: Implement signage that acknowledges the Indigenous peoples who have traditionally stewarded the land of the region" This is a good recommendation but there should also be a recommendation to implement education that Groton's history does not begin with its occupation by European colonists.					signage and educational programs that acknowledge the Indigenous peoples who have traditionally stewarded the land of the region prior to occupation by European colonists." Revision made.
190	References to Indigenous People "Cultural & Historic Resources" first	O	RP	JS	A	TT: No action required.

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	<p>paragraph: Residents emphasized the importance of preserving and highlighting the historical and cultural heritage of the area. Key actions include recognizing the indigenous occupancy of the region and determining the preservation approach for significant historical buildings like Prescott House." Preserving the Prescott House, which is of relatively minor historical importance compared with many historical aspects of</p>					

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	Groton, should not be equated with recognizing the people who lived on the land for thousands of years before the land was taken from them. I suggest deleting "like Prescott House".					
196	References to Indigenous People A.4. Cultural & Historic Resources: "Highlighting the indigenous occupancy of the area". "Occupancy" not a good term in this context. I suggest changing to "Highlighting the history of indigenous people in this area".	O	RP	JS	A	TT: No action required.

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24	Reference to Groton Land Foundation: The GLF was a limited development corporation that was important during the development surge of 1980s and 1990s but it has since been dissolved.	C	RP	JS	A	TT: Agree with the correction. GLF removed from paragraph listing non-profit land preservation organizations.
28	Local Capacity, Policies, and Regulations: In the early 1980s a series of Town Meetings adopted major conservation-oriented bylaws and regulations, including the Flexible Development Bylaw and a growth Limitation Bylaw that controlled growth	O	RP	JS	A	TT: No action required.

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	during the major development surge of 1980 to 2000. That was essential to protecting the natural resources of the town, but I am not sure how it might be added.					
42	Trails: Another trail that should be mentioned is that Groton Conservation Trust constructed an accessible trail through wildflower meadows on the Bates Conservation property with a CPA grant in 2023. The GCT also constructed a short, but important, accessible path through the	M	RP	JS	A	TT: Agree that these accessible trails should be mentioned. Trails mentioned.

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	wildflower meadow at the General Field.					
43	Build Out, first paragraph: "Groton boasts a large amount of protected open space, but the town also has a large amount of undeveloped, unprotected land that falls under Residential Agriculture zoning." - A significant portion of which is limited by wetlands.	M	RP	JS	A	TT: Agree with the clarification.
46	Groton Conservation Trust: This is a good and accurate statement about the GCT. Thank you.	O	RP	JS	A	TT: No action required.

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148	NCR1.5: Remove “including the Prescott House” The Prescott House is in the process of being demolished. This is a worthy goal without reference to any particular building.	O	BP	JS	A	TT: Agreed.
155	H.1.7, Second Bullet: Add the first word “allow” to “Explore allowing”	O	BP	JS	A	TT: Agreed.
155	H.1.8: Add “with the goal of increasing the number of affordable units required.”	O	BP	JS	A	TT: Agreed.
157	ED1.5: Change beginning of sentence to: “Explore ways to increase...”	O	BP	JS	A	TT: Agreed.
52, 59	Active Transportation: Phase 4 of the	C/M	PF	JS	A	TT: Please update.

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	Squannacook River Trail was completed in April 2024. The original trail concept is now complete. This should be updated.					
58	Complete Streets: The sidewalks along Lowell Road and West Main Street were completed in December 2024.	C/M	PF	JS	A	TT: Please update.
80	Housing Production Plan: There is a formatting error (inadvertent carriage return) in the paragraph.	C	PF	JS	A	TT: Agree with the correction.
146	LU1.4 in Implementation Program: Delete the existing action which refers to planned residential development (PRD), and replace with the following: "Amend the Age-Restricted Development provisions of the zoning bylaw with affordability	O	BP, PF	JS	A	TT: Please update LU1.4 as stated.

* **C** = correction (we made a mistake), **M** = missing information (we omitted something important), **O** = all other

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	requirements that are more feasible for developers and age restriction guidelines that are consistent with current state and federal housing policies.”					
156	ED1.1 - Change the bullet point to read: “Pursue grants or other funding sources to hire an Economic Development Coordinator...”	O	BP, PF	JS	A	TT: Agree; revision made.

* **C** = correction (we made a mistake), **M** = missing information (we omitted something important), **O** = all other

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