

Bolton Long Range Planning Committee

Interim Report

October 7, 2003

Executive Summary

The LRPC has completed the bulk of its data gathering and is identifying the gaps in data needed to produce a strong set of recommendations for the town of Bolton. This Interim Report should be considered a preliminary assessment of the town's needs and priorities. As information gaps are identified and filled, the LRPC will be able to produce a more definitive report.

To date, the output of the LRPC includes two reports on affordable housing, a town-wide opinion survey, a comparison of the town government of Bolton and five larger towns in Metrowest, recommendations for a municipal water supply, recommendations for municipal waste water treatment, a population forecast, a mammoth survey of open land in Bolton, a standard format for municipal capital projects, and this Interim Report.

The LRPC regards its work as a continuing effort to provide pertinent information to the citizens of Bolton and to make recommendations to the town when appropriate. A Long Range Plan for Bolton will always be a "living document" that needs to be updated in light of economic conditions, changes in town population, and mandated and regulatory requirements.

Town Survey 2001

Important to determining town priorities is a survey conducted by the LRPC in the autumn of 2001. This survey, presented by the LRPC in January, 2002, forms the basic foundation for the recommendations of this interim report. The final report of this committee may determine there are factors beyond those included in the survey which should be considered when setting town priorities.

Highlights of the survey are:

- **Fiscal restraint is very important to the majority of people in Bolton.** Although all segments of the population have spending priorities for which they are willing to "loosen the purse strings", all segments share a concern for the town making financial commitments which the current population of taxpayers could not support.
- **There is support for a location in town that would foster civic activity.** Some people feel that a central location is needed to build a sense of community. Most respondents felt that the current infrastructure provides all the resources necessary for an active civic life.
- **People recognize the need for affordable housing, but a majority believes the town should not financially encumber itself to solve this problem.**
- **People want to see additional development within current business districts. Preferably these new businesses would require few town services**
- **Most people believe Bolton should preserve undeveloped land. But a majority of people does not believe that the town should be given a "blank check" to acquire it.**

There is a sizable minority in town that wants an aggressive program of undeveloped land acquisition by the Town of Bolton.

- **The library should be enlarged, but within its current range of functions.**

Town Priorities

We have divided the universe of capital projects into four groups. They are:

- **Immediate Priority**
These are the projects that should be accomplished first. There is enough information for the selectmen to move forward on these issues and prepare plans to present to the town for approval and funding. There is widespread support for these projects.
- **Projects mandated by population growth**
These are projects that do not require immediate attention, but are necessary to support the town as the population grows.
- **Singular Issue Projects**
These are projects that deserve a high degree of attention because of unusual circumstances.
- **Other projects that should be accommodated if opportune circumstances permit.**
These are worthy projects that should be pursued if the land becomes available at a reasonable cost or can be included in some other project.

Immediate Priority

Municipal water supply – Acquisition of land (or water rights) and protection to that land for a supply water and

Municipal waste treatment – Land acquisition and protection for water waste treatment

Forecasts for water consumption for Emerson and Sawyer school with contingencies are prepared. It is clear that many lots in the center of town are too small to satisfy the current Title 5 septic system requirements. (However, wastewater treatment technology can mitigate the need to go off the owner's lot.) The amount of land and characteristics of the land needed for a municipal water supply and municipal wastewater treatment have been defined. Land satisfying these requirements is now available in Bolton.

The LRPC makes these recommendations about municipal water supply and municipal wastewater treatment:

Resolved: That the town of Bolton act to identify a site capable of providing a municipal water supply and restrict the usage of land surrounding the site to protect the quality of the water.

Resolved: That the town of Bolton act to identify a site suitable for waste water treatment and restrict the usage the land surrounding the site to protect Bolton's future wastewater treatment requirements.

Police Station – expand/renovate/replace

The Bolton police station is one of the smallest in the area and elements of it are not consistent with current law enforcement “best practices. Also, the layout hinders effective use of police resources.

The LRPC makes this recommendation about the police facilities:

Resolved: That the town of Bolton act to remedy those aspects of the current police station that hinder effective use of police resources. That the method used to determine requirements and remedies for the police station is provided in the document “Capital Projects” provided as a appendix to this report.

Projects mandated by population growth

Library – expand/renovate/replace

A majority of people responding to the LRPC survey endorsed increasing the size of the library. The present building is running out of storage space and reading room is insufficient. With location centered between the elementary schools and the high school and being in the center of town, the library is growing in importance. However, nothing in the survey indicated a desire by citizens to change the role of the library in town or to change the role of the library building.

The LRPC makes this recommendation about the town library:

Resolved: That the town of Bolton act to increase the size of the Town Library Building in order to relieve the overcrowding of books and provide reading and study space for a town of 5500 people.

Schools

Middle School – Land acquisition

Middle School – Build new

Renovation of Emerson 1952 portion

Renovation of Emerson 1922 portion

Sawyer School Addition

The LRPC makes this recommendation about schools buildings:

Resolved: That the town of Bolton act in concert with the Nashoba Regional School District to develop a forecast of school population growth for grades K-12. That the town not incur additional financial encumbrances related to school buildings until that forecast is released.

Town Hall – expand/renovate/replace

Singular Issue Projects

Affordable Housing – Town-built units and

Affordable Housing – Land acquisition

In the town survey, most people recognized the need for affordable housing in Bolton, but were unhappy with the solution that has the Town of Bolton paying to create the inventory needed to satisfy state requirements. However, in the time since the survey was conducted, housing development events within Bolton have shown there is more to consider than simply cost. Unregulated growth could cost the town more in expenses than creation of the housing.

The LRPC makes this recommendation about Affordable Housing:

Resolved: That the town of Bolton act to foster the creation of affordable housing within the town.

Other projects that should be accommodated if opportune circumstances permit.

Conservation – Stevenson Land
Conservation – Shartner/Nicewicz APR
Department of Public Works Expansion
Cemetery Expansion Space
Elderly Housing & Senior Citizen Space
Playing Fields
Meeting Rooms

Conclusion

In this Interim Report, the LRPC has presented the data collected in the areas of land, municipal resources, affordable housing, municipal water issues, and a town survey. Using the results of the survey and judgment based upon the other information we have collected, we offer our priorities for the energies and monies of the town of Bolton. This Interim Report is one step in a continuing effort to define the priorities for the town of Bolton. As we stated in the beginning of this report: this is a living document, in constant need of revision and updating as the town grows.

APPENDIX

“Capital Projects Process”

that the LRPC Recommends for

Bolton Town Capital Projects

Development and Analysis of Capital Project Proposals

The following is a brief summary of a more rigorous approach to the development and analysis of capital projects for the Town of Bolton. It addresses the needs of long-term financial planning as well as annual budgeting for Town Meeting consideration. Although the primary objective is the initial capital expense, the procedure requires that the disposition of previously used resources and the cost of operations & maintenance be considered for inclusion in Town resource planning and long term financial planning.

The approach can be used for:

- a complete capital project proposal or
- a phased approach is followed - initial study, detailed plan and construction

A. Information and Analysis Requirements

1. Project Description

Provide an overall functional description of the project, including the basis for its need.

2. Function

Explain the proposed approach or alternatives under evaluation e.g. building a new facility for a completely new function or expanding the resources beyond the existing facility

3. Design basis

Summary - *Describe design basis in terms of increased services as direct or indirect result of population growth, regulatory requirement, risk management, etc.*

Functional Components – *For each individual functional component, describe the design basis e.g. specific quantitative requirements dictated by state regulations or recommendations of professional association or justified benchmarking from other towns*

4. Alternatives

Summary – *describe potential alternatives for the entire project, including not going forward with the project*

Functional Components – *describe potential alternatives for each component of the project e.g. sharing similar resources in another department, building or facility outside of Bolton; outsourcing the service provided by the component of the project or not incorporating this component at all*

5. Capital Cost Estimates

Physical facility - provide detailed estimates for each of the alternatives to each functional component of the project. Estimates must be based on specified design criteria and be developed based on equipment pricing or detailed accepted estimating practice (e.g. Means Construction estimates)

In the case in which there are more than one overall project alternative (expand vs relocate), provide a built-up estimate of each overall project alternative.)

Services – provide estimate of services required for consulting, design, construction supervision and commissioning/training

6. Operational & Maintenance Cost Estimates

Provide a breakdown of the annual cost, including:

- Additional personnel required to maintain the facility (in equivalent full-time personnel or fraction thereof)
- Cost of utilities
- Major maintenance costs such as roofing, painting, driveway resurfacing

7. Analysis

For each alternative for each functional component, summarize the cost (capital and annualized operational & maintenance costs) and implications (advantages & disadvantages)

8. Disposition of Existing Facility (for a new facility or relocation)

Describe alternative options for disposition of existing facility including potential re-use by Town, demolition or sale. Provide estimate of revenue to be realized (+ or -) or savings to be made by Town re-use.

9. Temporary allocation of Excess Capacity

If the facility is to be built to a design basis capacity greater than currently required, describe how this excess capacity will be cost-effectively utilized.

10. Schedule

Develop and overall project schedule including the “spend plan” for the capital expenditure

11. Recommendation

Provide an overall recommendation based on assessment of cost and implications of each of the alternatives provided above.

B. Development and Evaluation Process

1. Develop general proposal based on items 1 – 3 above and include summary schedule for developing the entire estimate & analysis
2. Review proposal with Selectmen, Advisory and Long Range Planning
3. Fully develop estimates, options analysis and recommendation
4. Distribute to Selectmen, Advisory, LRPC and other organizations as appropriate
5. Present proposal in a public forum
6. Incorporate comments and present to Selectmen and Advisory for funding article