

Below is the Strategic Planning Committee May 2019 quarterly report for the Town's Strategic Plan. This report tracks the progress in the implementation of the plan. This is a quarterly report covering through May 15, 2019.

BACKGROUND

In 2016 the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) worked to finalize the Town's strategic plan by prioritizing goals and developing a system to track the Town's progress in implementing the plan. Going forward, the SPC will work with Town departments and boards and committees to ensure that Town initiatives adhere to the goals of the Town's Strategic Plan. This is the most recent quarterly report on the progress in implementing the plan.

The Strategic Planning Committee was created by the Board of Selectmen in the spring of 2015 to develop a Strategic Plan for the Town. Its membership consists of representatives from other existing boards and commissions, including the Planning Board, School Committee, Finance Committee, Conservation Commission, Public Works Committee, Council on Aging, Community Preservation Commission, and the Conomo Point Planning Committee. The SPC drew on previous town planning efforts, including the *Planning to Preserve the Best of Essex* report produced by the Long Term Planning Committee in June of 2015. Through a series of seven, two hour workshops, the SPC created a strategic plan that included nine goals for the Town to pursue ([link to draft plan](#)). The plan was made available for public comment in December of 2015. In addition, the SPC hosted a Public Forum on February 10, 2016 to present the plan and take comment. [A video recording of the forum is available on the SPC webpage.](#)

The Strategic Planning Committee is grateful for all the public feedback received from the first draft of the plan. The SPC relied heavily on public feedback in setting priority goals for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The two main themes from the feedback were:

- There are not enough Town funds to pursue all of the goals outlined by the SPC, and thus the SPC should prioritize the goals of the plan based on what is most important and essential to the Town in the future (e.g. needs before wants).
- The public needs to have ample opportunities throughout the strategic planning process to vote, approve and fund any action and initiative that is generated from the strategic planning process, and the SPC should work on ways to better inform the public.

Based on this feedback the Committee set priority goals for the Town. The two highest priority goals (Priority 1) are

- Renew and Finance Critical Town Infrastructure
- Maintain and Develop a Strong Business Community.

The next set of goals (2nd priority) would be

- Increase participation in Town government
- Improve the health of and access to the Essex River and Chebacco Lake.

The remaining goals (Priority 3) would be the lowest priority.

Identifying highest priority goals ensures that these are the focus for the Town. The SPC recognizes that the Town may work towards goals of different priorities simultaneously but advises the Town to consider how pursuing other goals will affect achieving the priority goals in terms of the dedication of resources.

Working towards the nine goals of the Strategic Plan will be incremental. This document will serve as a quarterly report and will be maintained by the Staff Planner for the SPC to track the progress of each project or initiative. Within each priority is a gray box: When an item is completed it would be recorded in the gray box in each priority section, and another project or initiative from the Strategic Plan list of actions would be added to this list for the Town to work on. **Also, it is possible that the SPC will soon at a tenth goal - “Building Coastal Resilience”, since it appears from work conducted recently that much attention will be required to keep the Town in good stead with the predicted effects of sea level rise and climate change.**

| Essex Strategic Plan Goals | | |
|----------------------------|--|----------|
| Goal # | Description | Priority |
| 1 | Renew and finance critical town infrastructure | 1 |
| 2 | Maintain and develop a strong business community | 1 |
| 3 | Increase Participation in Town Government | 2 |
| 4 | Improve the health of and access to the Essex River and Chebacco Lake. | 2 |
| 5 | Increase the amount of protected land in Essex | 3 |
| 6 | Expand the range of recreational opportunities and assets | 3 |
| 7 | Develop and deliver a fiscally responsible school budget | 3 |
| 8 | Maintain the Town’s public safety services | 3 |
| 9 | Meet the housing needs of all Essex residents | 3 |

This quarterly report will be updated and reviewed by the SPC at their quarterly meetings. It will be available to the public through the SPC webpage ([link to Strategic Planning Committee webpage](#)). The SPC meetings are public meetings and attendance and participation is encouraged.

Questions about the plan and its progress can be directed to Matt Coogan, Town Planner, at mcoogan@essexma.org.

PRIORITY 1 – Current Actions

| Goal # | Description | Priority |
|--------|--|----------|
| 1 | Renew and Finance Critical Town Infrastructure | 1 |

- Public Safety Building** - A proposal to purchase the Village Restaurant property for a new fire station was brought to Town Meeting in May of 2018 but did not receive the necessary $\frac{2}{3}$ vote needed to authorize the purchase of the property. A Project Manager has been hired to re-assess the Town's options, using funding approved at a Special Town Meeting in August of 2018. The Town and Building Committee has been assisted by the Project Manager and an architectural firm, Johnson Roberts Associates (JRA), to continue to work on options at the current Fire Station site, an adjacent site in Memorial Park, and the Town property that abuts John Wise Avenue from the Spring Street Cemetery. JRA was hired using funding approved by Town Meeting in the fall of 2018. The Selectmen solicited offers from private property owners to sell property to the Town for a public safety building site and no qualifying offers were received at first. Later, the owner of 11 John Wise Avenue, which abuts the Town cemetery property, agreed to sell that property to the Town. The Committee's goal was to propose a final solution to the Annual Town Meeting in May of 2019 and has done so. That solution ended up being a combined facility on the combined John Wise Avenue site, as opposed to the other options studied. The Town Meeting has funded the design through project bidding and award and the Annual Town Election in May of 2019 approved the necessary debt exclusion. In the fall of 2019, a final Town Meeting will vote on approving borrowing and appropriating funds for the actual construction project.
- Water System Infrastructure** – The Annual Town Meeting in May of 2018 appropriated \$50,000 for a comprehensive study of the Town's entire water system, in order to prioritize which elements will need to be addressed first, what the overall timeline will be, and what the cost of upgrades and line replacements is expected to be over the long term. That study is being undertaken by Wright-Pierce and the preliminary report has been issued. The Board of Public Works is reviewing the report and may have recommendations for funding the first phase of system upgrades in the fall of 2019.
- Memorial Park Plan and Public Safety Building** – At the recommendation of the Town Building Committee, the Board of Selectmen proposed to the Fall Town Meeting non-CPA funding to complement existing CPA funding for Memorial Park Plan. This new funding was used to investigate alternative building footprint and roadway layout options for a future replacement of the police/fire HQ in the area of 24-30 Martin. As noted above, the Town Building Committee has recommended another site for the proposed public safety building and the Memorial Park Plan may be picked up again if and when the current public safety is prepared for demolition. . Also, a private group of residents has expressed interest in raising funds to improve the main baseball diamond, including better accommodations for spectators.

- **Green Communities** - In February of 2019, the Town completed Green Communities projects at Essex Elementary School, the second phase of LED interior lighting upgrades and the expansion of capabilities for the building's energy management system. The projects had a combined cost \$155,000 and were covered entirely by a Green Communities grant. In March of 2019, the Town applied for \$29,000 to fund the conversion of all public street lights from the old-style lamps to new, LED lamps. A second grant program offered by MAPC will be used to complement the Green Community grant in this area.
- **Memorial Elementary School** – The Manchester Memorial Elementary School Feasibility Study concluded with a recommendation for a final campus and building configuration. Both Towns voted on October 16, 2018 and November 6, 2018 to approve the costs of final design, construction, and construction oversight, via a debt exclusion. Construction will begin in the summer of 2019, after school gets out for the year.
- **Essex Elementary School** – The Town was awarded a Green Communities grant for additional LED lighting and upgrades to the building's energy management system. As noted above, those projects have been completed.
- **LED Streetlight Conversion** - The Town Administrator and Town Planner worked with the Board of Selectmen on different options for converting the Town's 115 streetlights to LED fixtures. The conversion will reduce electricity consumption to lower utility bills and will relieve the Town from having to pay costly monthly fixture rental fees to National Grid, as well as improve lighting quality. Town Meeting has set up and has begun to fund a future maintenance account, since National Grid will no longer maintain the system. The Town plans on funding the project partially through a grant program managed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Rapid LED Program, which covers 30%. The remainder of the project would be funded through a Green Communities Competitive grant. Essex is participating in the MAPC program and applied for a Green Communities grant in March of 2019. The Town has already purchased the fixtures on the poles from National Grid, a prerequisite to conversion to LED.

| Goal # | Description | Priority |
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| 2 | Maintain and Develop a Strong Business Community | 1 |

- **Economic Development Plan** - The Town was awarded a District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) grant through the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for an Essex Economic Development Plan that will provide the opportunity to engage the newly formed Committee and the general public to identify programs, policies, and strategies that can help local businesses and attract new economic opportunities. All work will proceed under the purview of the Economic Development Committee (EDC). The project should begin in June and last for 9 months.
- **Economic Development Committee** - The EDC had their official first meeting in March of 2018 at a joint meeting with the Strategic Planning Committee and has tried to meet on a monthly basis thus far. Current projects include the implementation of the Village Center Parking Strategy, the Economic Development Plan mentioned above, and the Main Street parking

project that would design and install improved pavement marking and wayfinding signage in the downtown area (see below).

- **Essex Parking Study Next Steps** – At Town Meeting in May of 2019, \$84,000 in funding was appropriated to implement the marking of parking spaces and addition of wayfinding signage on Main Street recommended in the 2016 Parking Study. The Town will be working with Stantec on permitting through MassDOT and construction bid documents.
- **Zoning** – The Village Center Zoning Study has been completed and is now on the [Town website](#). The Planning Board will take up the study's recommendations over the coming months, with an eye toward a possible zoning proposal to Fall Town Meeting.

PRIORITY 1 – Completed Actions

| Goal | ITEM | DATE |
|------|--|------------|
| 1 | Public Safety Building - Town Meeting in May approved additional design funding and the Annual Town Election in May approved a debt exclusion for the project. Property adjacent to some existing Town land will be purchased by the end of May. A Town Meeting later in 2019 will vote on the actual project funding. | Oct 2019 |
| 2 | Essex Parking Study - Funding was approved at Town Meeting for pavement marking and wayfinding signage for the downtown area. | May 2019 |
| 2 | Economic Development Plan - The Town was awarded a DLTA grant through the MAPC for an Economic Development Plan. The planning process will begin in June and will be overseen by the Economic Development Committee. | May 2019 |
| 1 | Green Communities Application 2019 - The Town applied for a Green Communities grant to cover 70% of the upcoming LED streetlight conversion. The remaining cost of the project would be funded through MAPC's LED Retrofit Program. | Mar 2019 |
| 1 | Public Safety Building - The Town has hired a Project Manager and a Designer to guide it through the site selection and design process for a new public safety building or buildings on Town land or on private land that could be purchased. A final solution may be ready for proposal to the 2019 Annual Town Meeting. | May 2019 |
| 2 | Essex Parking Study - Town Meeting will consider a proposal for pavement marking and wayfinding signage for the downtown area. | May 2019 |
| 1 | Water System Infrastructure - Wright-Pierce water system study will wrap up and the Fall Town Meeting will consider funding one or more of the top-priority items. | Nov 2019 |
| 1 | Green Communities Application 2019 - The Town hopes to apply for 100% funding to convert its public street lights from the old-style fixtures and lamps to LED. The Town has already purchased the fixtures from National Grid, as a prerequisite. | March 2019 |

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| 1 | Green Communities Project 2018 - 2 projects, Phase 2 LED interior Lighting Program and Phase 2 Energy Management System were completed. These projects were covered entirely through a \$155,000 Green Communities grant. | Feb 2019 |
| 2 | Economic Development Plan - the Town's DLTA application for technical assistance to create the plan has been funded and work with MAPC should begin in earnest in early 2019. | October 2018 |
| 2 | Economic Development Plan - The Town submitted an application to receive District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) from the MAPC to facilitate an economic development plan. | August 2018 |
| 1 | Green Communities 2018 - The Town was successfully awarded a \$155,000 grant to fully fund two energy efficiency projects at Essex Elementary School. One is a second phase of LED interior lighting upgrades and the other is an expansion of capabilities for the building's energy management system. The work is scheduled to be completed by January 2019. | June 2018 |
| 1 | Water System Infrastructure - The May 2018 Annual Town Meeting appropriated \$50,000 for a comprehensive study of the Town's entire water system, in order to prioritize which elements will need to be addressed first, what the overall timeline will be, and what the cost of upgrades and line replacements is expected to be over the long term. Engineering firm Wright-Pierce is presently working on that study. | May 2018 |
| 2 | Essex Parking Study - The BoS voted to begin implementation of the Parking Strategy for downtown, specifically pavement markings and signage. Permitting and cost are now matters that must be taken into consideration. | May 2018 |
| 1 | Public Safety Building - The article at Spring Town Meeting to authorize the Town to purchase the Village Restaurant property at 55 Main Street did not receive the necessary $\frac{2}{3}$ vote. The Town will continue to pursue options for a new facility at several Town-owned sites and to consider the purchase of other private parcels that meet certain minimum criteria. A Project Manager is on board and the Fall Town Meeting will consider funding for an architect. | May 2018 |
| 2 | Zoning - The Village Center Zoning Study has been completed by the consultant Harriman. The study includes recommendations for a new Main Street zoning district with new dimensional requirements and an allowance for mixed use development. The study is available on the Town website. The Planning Board has this future possible zoning work as a long-range goal. | May 2018 |
| 1 | Green Communities Application 2018 - The Town applied for \$155,000 of Green Communities grant funding for additional LED lighting and upgrades to the building energy management system. DOER should be notifying grant awardees in the next month. | Mar 2018 |
| 2 | Economic Development Committee - The EDC held its first official meeting in March 2018. They will meet on a monthly basis. | Mar 2018 |

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| 1 | Green Communities Application 2017 – The Town was awarded a 2017 Green Communities Competitive Grant in July from MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER). The Town received a \$176,145 Green Communities grant in 2017 to fund 3 projects at Essex Elementary School: the first phase of a LED lighting upgrade, stream trap replacements, and an Energy Management System (EMS). These projects are now completed. The Town Planner submitted a final report to the Green Communities Division. The Town was able to apply for additional grant funds for new projects in March 2018. | Jan 2018 |
| 1 | Public Safety Building - The Committee worked with an architect to formulate the necessary photo renderings for three options and a public forum was held on January 24, 2018. The renderings are available on the Building Committee webpage . After a proposal to purchase the Village Restaurant property failed in May of 2018, the Town has hired a Project Manager to evaluate all options and to provide a new proposal to the Annual Town Meeting in May of 2019. | Jan 2018 |
| 1 | Town Hall – Renovation is complete and Town departments moved in the week of May 22, 2017. The Town Planner completed the final report for the Green Communities grant funding used to fund some of the energy efficiencies in the renovation, including the new HVAC system, windows, and insulation. The Town’s grand re-opening event was held on Saturday, June 24, 2017. | June 2017 |
| 2 | Zoning – The Town was awarded a FY 2017 Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance (MDI) Program award. The award provides up to \$15,000 of consulting services to assist the Town and the Planning Board with a Village Center mixed use zoning ordinance. | May 2017 |
| 1 | Public Safety Building - The Annual Town Meeting approved \$10,000 in funding for the production of visual renderings to compare what the options at the two main sites will look like. The issue will be brought to public forums and in May, 2018, for a vote at the Annual Town Meeting. | May 2017 |
| 1 | Green Communities competitive grant application submission – Town Planner submitted for a grant to fund the replacement of the Water Treatment Plant boiler with a new, ultra-energy efficient boiler system. | Mar 2017 |
| 1 | Essex Elementary Green Communities grant application – Town Planner submitted for a grant to fund 3 projects at the school: Phase 1 LED lighting upgrade, steam trap upgrades, and an EMS system | Mar 2017 |
| 1 | Town Hall Green Communities Grant – The Town Planner submitted a final report to DOER for the Green Communities grant that helped fund the new HVAC system, insulation, and new windows. | Feb 2017 |
| 2 | Community Compact – The State approved the Town’s request to add the best practice area “Preparing for Success” as an additional Community Compact, under the Housing and Economic Development category. The SPC | Dec 2016 |

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| | recommended this action in order to move along economic development action items in the Plan. | |
| 2 | Essex Parking Study – Funded through a MDI grant, the Town received technical assistance from Nelson Nygaard to produce a parking management plan for the Essex Village Center. The plan is available on the Town website. | Oct 2016 |
| 1 | Memorial Elementary School Study – Town’s share of funding for Manchester Elementary School Study CY16 was approved at Spring Town Meeting | May 2016 |
| 1 | Water Main Replacement – With SPC recommendation, the Finance Committee worked with the Public Works Committee to add Water Main Replacement to the Town’s Capital Improvement Plan. | May 2016 |

PRIORITY 2 – Current Actions

| Goal # | Description | Priority |
|--------|---|----------|
| 3 | Increase Participation in Town Government | 2 |

- 575 votes were cast in the May 13, 2019 Annual Town Election. This is 21% of eligible voters (2,737 total).
- 2,026 residents voted in the November 6, 2018 Special Town Election. This is 72.6% of eligible voters (2,792 total) and 40% greater than the 2018 Annual Town Election.
- 798 residents voted in the May 14, 2018 Town Election. This is 32% of eligible voters (2,514 total) and 2% less than 2017 Town Election.
- 570 residents participated in the Annual Town Meeting on May 7, 2018. This is 23% of eligible voters (2,514 total).

| Goal # | Description | Priority |
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| 4 | Health and Access to River | 2 |

- **Climate Change and Essex River** - The Town continues to engage various parties in our ongoing climate change work. A Community Compact in this area is already done. The Army Corps of Engineers committed to a full feasibility study that will compare the cost and benefit of traditional dredge spoil disposal to possibly using spoils within the Essex River System to restore environmental quality and perhaps make the marsh the Town’s best “green” infrastructure for future coastal resiliency. The study may take up to two years to complete but we are hopeful that our state of readiness will translate to climate change and sea level rise mitigation funding that may be offered by the Federal government in the future. The Corps will also review the prospect of traditional maintenance dredging with sea or land spoil disposal, on a parallel track to its beneficial reuse study. The Town successfully became a

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Community, which afforded the Town extra credit on two MVP Action Grants which are ongoing. The MVP program is administered by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA). The Town applied for two additional MVP grants in April of 2019 and is awaiting word on funding status. Further, the Town will be applying in June of 2019 for State grant funding for the replacement of the Conomo Point seawall system.

- **Municipal Vulnerability and Climate Change:** The Town was awarded a grant from the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs that was applied towards a process that helped the Town achieve the Municipality Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) designation from the state. The Town also was awarded and has completed the scope of a grant from the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) to get the public more familiar with coastal resiliency via showing how this field goes hand in hand with emergency planning. The town has been awarded two MVP Action Grants: one grant will begin to study the feasibility of using mussel reefs to stabilize the salt marsh horizontally and the other grant will work in Essex, Ipswich, and Newbury is presently evaluating how the salt marsh recovers from a significant natural sediment deposition event that occurred in January of 2018. The Town was also awarded a grant to develop a comprehensive design for the future improvement and renovation of the Conomo Point Seawall system.
- **MVP Grant and Climate Change:** The Town was awarded a second grant from Coastal Zone Management (CZM) to get the public more familiar with coastal resiliency via showing how this field goes hand in hand with emergency planning. The grant work has been completed.
- Congress has approved official changes to the Federal Channel boundaries in the Essex River, which will have made the channel free of encroachments and, consequently, eligible for Federal dredging or other funds. Simultaneously, efforts to understand the implications of climate change and sea level rise are turning to the initial implementation of strategies to mitigate those future effects. As noted above, the Town has worked closely with the Army Corps of Engineers, Mass CZM, and Mass DEP to request a feasibility study that would consider the re-use of dredged materials within the Essex Bay system, thereby solving the navigation problem and making progress toward a more resilient coastal environment.
- **Hazard Mitigation Plan Update** – The Town is working on updating its Hazard Mitigation Plan from 2012 using a grant secured through the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. The Plan needs to be updated every five years in order to remain eligible for Federal hazard mitigation grants. Various public input sessions have occurred and that work should wrap up in June of 2019.
- **ACEC Resource Management Plan Project** – The Town Administrator explored with Gloucester, Ipswich, Rowley, and Newbury the prospect of a Resource Management Plan for the Great Marsh Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). A summit involving many stakeholders was held on September 20, 2017 in the newly-renovated Town Hall. [For more information on the ACEC use this link.](#) The group agreed to possibly use a new CZM Coastal Resiliency grant and the soon-to-be-released Great Marsh Adaptation Plan as the nucleus for a potential Regional Management Plan in the future.

PRIORITY 2 – Completed Actions

| Goal | ITEM | DATE |
|-------|--|------------|
| 4 | Seawall Grant Award - The State funded the design and permitting for improvements and renovations to the Conomo Point seawall system. That work should be wrapping up by mid-2019. | Nov 2018 |
| 4 | Hazard Mitigation Plan Update - the Town is making progress on the update of this Plan, which is required if the Town is to apply for certain Federal grant programs in the future. This work is expected to be completed in March of 2019 | July 2018 |
| 4 | Seawall Grant Application - the Town has applied for funding for the design of improvements and renovations to the Conomo Point seawall system. | July 2018 |
| 4 | MVP Action Grants - The Town successfully applied for two grants to help advance the state of climate change readiness in Essex. One grant will study the prospect of using mussel reefs to keep the marsh intact horizontally and the other is studying how the marsh is rebounding to a natural sediment deposition event from January of 2018 (relating to vertical stability of the marsh). Both projects will wrap up by June of 2019. | July 2018 |
| 4 | Sea Level Rise and Climate Change Planning and Awareness - The Town wrapped up its involvement in two coastal planning projects, one funded by the Federal Superstorm Sandy grant to characterize the predicted effects of climate change and sea level rise in our area; the other funded by CZM to raise public awareness about these predicted future circumstances. | June 2018 |
| 4&6 | Conomo Point Public Waterfront Access Project - The project has been completed. | June 2017 |
| 4 | ACEC Hazard Mitigation Project – Essex hosted an ACEC summit with stakeholders of the partnering communities. | Sep 2017 |
| 3 | Participation in Government – the SPC helped host the re-Grand Opening of Town Hall in June. | June 2017 |
| 4. | Climate Change and the Essex River – Essex became a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Community and was awarded several allotments of grant funding to continue coastal vulnerability work. | June 2017 |
| 4 & 6 | Conomo Point Public Waterfront Access Project – The waterfront observation deck has been completed and opened to the public for Memorial Day weekend. The parking lot has also been completed. | May 2017 |
| 4 | ACEC Resource Management Project – Essex has engaged with Gloucester, Ipswich, Rowley and Newbury on a Resource Management Plan for the Great Marsh ACEC | April 2017 |
| 4 & 6 | Conomo Public Waterfront Access Project – BoS awarded the contract for the Northern Conomo Point Waterfront Access Improvement project | Feb 2017 |

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| 4 & 6 | Conomo Point Public Waterfront Access Project – design, permitting, and allocation of funding for the public improvements completed in 2016. | Dec 2016 |
| 3 | Participation in Government SPC was allocated \$2,500 at Town Meeting in May. | May 2016 |
| 3 | Participation in Government – BoS government participation survey was distributed at Fall 2016 Town Meeting and electronically through the Town website. The effort was very successful, translating to four new Finance Committee members, one new Housing Authority member, and several other volunteers who may be willing to work in other areas in the near future. | Nov 2016 |

PRIORITY 3 – Current Actions

| Goal # | Description | Priority |
|--------|-------------------------|----------|
| 5 | Protected Land in Essex | 3 |

- **Open Space Plan** - The Open Space Committee released a survey for residents to fill out that will help the Town prioritize action items included in the 2015 Open Space Plan. The Town Planner will continue to work with the Committee to get the revised Plan fully accepted by the State.
- **Develop Stronger Relationships with Local Conservation Groups** - MECT collaboration with SPC/ Open Space Committee
- **Increase Protected Land in Essex** - The Town coordinated with Essex Greenbelt and neighboring Towns on the acquisition and creation of the Sagamore Hill reservation. The Town approved CPA funds to help with the acquisition.
- **Increase Protected Land in Essex** - The Board of Selectmen, Board of Assessors, Open Space Committee, and Conservation Committee are presently working to a) better manage Town property that is already in conservation status (perhaps with help from a local management organization), and b) possibly put other tax-tile parcels into a conservation status under the Selectmen, again, with management assistance from a local land management organization. Work cannot begin in earnest until the Board of Assessors completes adjustments to parcel ownership, locations, and boundaries.

| Goal # | Description | Priority |
|--------|----------------------------|----------|
| 6 | Recreational Opportunities | 3 |

- **Memorial Park Plan** - (see #1 above)

- **Essex Youth Commission** - The Board of Selectmen has rejuvenated the Essex Youth Commission with five new members. The Commission created a revised position description for a Youth Director and the new Director was hired in April of 2018. The Commission is working with the Director to develop new programs for the youth of Essex.
- **Centennial Grove Master Plan** - The Annual Town Meeting approved funding for a Master Plan for the future management of and amenities at the Centennial Grove. The Selectmen have worked with the Finance Committee to release a Request for Proposals for a cost-driven Master Plan. Proposals were due on October 19, 2017. Unfortunately the Town did not receive any proposals. The Selectmen are working with the Youth Commission to determine whether, together with the YMCA, more programs and amenities can be offered to Town residents at low or no cost. Town Meeting did provide some funding to clean out the facilities at the Grove and to make them safe for use by youth and other programs. This work is almost complete.

| Goal # | Description | Priority |
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| 7 | Education | 3 |

- The Regional School District and the two towns have completed a process that studied both the operating and capital budget forecasts of each entity, in an effort to keep year-to-year operating assessments to an affordable level and to properly time and finance School District and municipal capital projects. The three entities held an operating budget workshop on November 29, 2017 and capital budget workshops on December 19, 2017 and March 21, 2018. Going forward, the entities will closely coordinate these matters.

| Goal # | Description | Priority |
|--------|---------------|----------|
| 8 | Public Safety | 3 |

- **Fire Department** SPC correspondence with the Fire Chief on identifying what the EFD's top ongoing initiative is right now.

| Goal # | Description | Priority |
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| 9 | Housing | 3 |

- **Affordable Housing** - The Town Planner submitted a successful application for the Municipal Engagement Community program through the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA). The program provides free technical assistance to communities pursuing housing production and affordable housing. The Town has assembled an Essex Housing Coalition

Group and held two meetings since December 2018, with the third meeting to occur in June. CHAPA staff has also been meeting with key stakeholders and attended other community meetings, and will work with the Coalition to conduct public education efforts in support of housing production, with an emphasis on affordable housing. Strategies and an implementation plan will be developed.

- **Technical Assistance** SPC worked with Planner and Town Administrator to identify an expert who could analyze what a Community Compact for housing means in Essex and how this could get us out of first gear (see CHAPA, above)..
- **Learning from and partnering with Manchester** - Town Planner recommends that the SPC invite the Town Planner from Manchester or a member of their affordable housing organization to present on their process and successes in creating an affordable housing policy. CPC could be invited to this presentation as well since CPA funding could be used towards affordable housing. The Essex Housing Authority could also be involved. Manchester has expressed interest in partnering with Essex on a regional housing strategy.

PRIORITY 3 – Completed Actions

| Goal | ITEM | DATE |
|------|--|-------------|
| 9 | Housing - The Town was awarded a Municipal Community Engagement technical assistance from CHAPA. A Housing Coalition has been formed and held its first meeting in December. | Dec 2018 |
| 9 | Housing - The Town submitted a Municipal Community Engagement Application through CHAPA | August 2018 |
| 9 | Housing - Joint SPC/ EDC meeting on affordable housing 6.20.2018 | June 2018 |
| 5 | Open Space Plan - The Open Space Committee created a town-wide survey to help prioritize action items in the Open Space Plan. | June 2018 |
| 6 | Essex Youth Commission - The new Director was hired in April of 2018. The Commission is working with the Director to develop new programs for the youth of Essex. | April 2018 |
| 6 | Centennial Grove Master Plan - Unfortunately the Town did not receive any proposals from the RFP in October 2017. The Selectmen are working with the Youth Commission to determine whether, together with the YMCA, more programs and amenities can be offered to Town residents at low or no cost. | Mar 2018 |
| 7 | MERSD Budget - The Regional School District and the two towns have completed a process that studied both the operating and capital budget forecasts of each entity, in an effort to keep year-to-year operating assessments to an affordable level and to properly time and finance School District and municipal capital projects. The Regional School District and two Towns held an operating budget | Mar 2018 |

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| | workshop on November 29, 2017 and capital budget workshops on December 19, 2017 and March 21, 2018. | |
| 6 | Centennial Grove Master Plan – Board of Selectmen, with the support of the finance committee, released a Request for Proposals for a cost-driven master plan. Proposals are due October 19, 2017 | Sep 2017 |
| 6 | Essex Youth Commission – The Board of Selectmen rejuvenated the Commission with 5 members. | July 2017 |
| 6 | Centennial Grove Master Plan – Funding approved at Annual Town Meeting for a Master Plan for the future management and amenities at Centennial Grove | May 2017 |
| 6 | Essex Youth Commission - Annual Town Meeting approved funding for a new Youth Coordinator or a Youth Program Director in the fiscal year 2018 operating budget. | May 2017 |
| 4 & 6 | Conomo Point Public Waterfront Access Project – The waterfront observation deck has been completed and opened to the public for Memorial Day weekend. | May 2017 |
| 4 & 6 | Conomo Public Waterfront Access Project – BoS awarded the contract for the Northern Conomo Point Waterfront Access Improvement project | Feb 2017 |
| 4 & 6 | Conomo Point Public Waterfront Access Project – design, permitting, and allocation of funding for the public improvements completed in 2016. | Dec 2016 |
| 2 | Community Compact – The State approved the Town's request to add the best practice area "Preparing for Success" as an additional Community Compact, under the Housing and Economic Development category. Both housing and economic development fall within this Community Compact. | Dec 2016 |
| 5 & 9 | CPA and Protected Land - Preservation of Sagamore Hill | May 2017 |
| 5 & 9 | CPA – The Town Successfully approved an increase in CPA funding to 1.5% in May 2016 | May 2016 |
| 5 | Open Space Plan – The Open Space Committee updated the Town's Open Space Plan in 2015 | 2015 |
| 5 | Sagamore Hill – CPA funding for Sagamore Hill Project was approved at Town Meeting | Nov. 2016 |
| 7 | School Operations - The Town already meets the operation and budgetary goals and has repeated annually | |