

1. Land Use Element

Overview:

Lincoln has successfully guided development in a manner that has protected its natural beauty, preserved its historic resources, and addressed the housing, services, and social needs of its growing population. The town's land use decisions have been an important part of guiding development, both in terms of preserving open space as well as crafting innovative solutions to development opportunities. As undeveloped land becomes a scarce resource, as redevelopment of existing properties becomes more frequent, as the needs and desires of residents evolve, and as regional issues grow in their urgency and impact, the need for creative and broadly supported land use decisions increases in importance.

Goal LU-1 Create a compact, dense, walkable village center in the Lincoln Station area that provides more housing choices near public transportation, goods and services for residents, and opportunities for social interaction.

Recommendations:

LU-1.1 Conduct a public planning process that captures resident interests in, as well as concerns about, further development at Lincoln Station.

LU-1.2 Identify potential benefits and drawbacks, if any, arising from compact, mixed-use, and transit-oriented forms of development, and determine acceptable trade-offs.

LU-1.3 Capitalize on and reinforce existing investment at Lincoln Station in infrastructure, services, and housing choices.

Goal LU-2 Institute a comprehensive process for considering proposed zoning changes.

Recommendations:

LU-2.1 Develop and publish the criteria that Lincoln's town boards will use to guide their review and evaluation of future proposed zoning changes.

LU-2.2 Charge the Planning Board with responsibility for coordinating the review process with other town boards, providing timely feedback and guidance to proponents, and providing avenues for the public to participate in the review process.

Goal LU-3 Encourage development proposals that creatively address local needs.

Recommendations:

LU-3.1 Update the Zoning Bylaw by providing for land development and preservation techniques such as transfer of development rights and "by right" open space-residential development.

LU-3.2 Evaluate the town's approach to development review and permitting, and consider options to make the permitting process more efficient for proposals that advance the goals of this Comprehensive Plan, such as open space-residential development, accessory apartments, or the relocation of smaller homes in order to prevent demolition.

Goal LU-4 **Maintain communication with non-profit organizations and institutions in Lincoln in order to integrate their long-range plans with the town's plans.**

Recommendations:

LU-4.1 Identify in a timely fashion land use and facilities development proposals that affect either the Town or the institution, and their possible impacts.

LU-4.2 Pursue cooperative efforts that leverage a non-profit or institution's mission to the benefit of the Town culturally, economically, or physically.

2. Natural Resources Element

Overview:

Lincoln's biodiversity and its many acres of protected woodlands and fields attest to its success in protecting natural resources. Through land acquisitions, public education, and building a strong conservation ethic, Lincoln has done an exceptional job of preserving ecologically sensitive areas and the quality of its drinking water supply. However, the high cost of land and changing lifestyles make it increasingly difficult for Lincoln to protect its land and water resources. It will take a sustained commitment to environmental regulation and enforcement, water management, public education, and stewardship to ensure the continued quality and abundance of these resources as the town continues to grow and change.

Goal NR-1 **Preserve Lincoln's natural resources and agricultural land uses.**

Recommendations:

NR-1.1 By purchase, restriction, or other method, continue to protect lands which contain or contribute to the protection of valuable natural resources, including public drinking water supplies.

NR-1.2 Continue to secure deed restrictions to protect wetland buffer zone areas.

NR-1.3 Establish policies and regulations for water use – both voluntary and mandatory – in order to conserve water and bring Lincoln in line with the state's water use standards

NR-1.4 Develop property management plans for the protection of conservation land and habitat areas.

NR-1.5 Encourage or require best management practices for soil and water conservation on all construction projects in Lincoln, including agricultural lands to the extent allowed by law.

NR-1.6 Ensure that developers comply with requirements for environmental impact reports, stormwater management, and open space development guidelines.

Goal NR-2 **Promote water conservation, ecological landscaping practices, and energy and resource conservation among all property owners and town employees.**

Recommendations:

NR-2.1 Develop conservation guidelines for all public buildings, including schools, the town offices, public safety, and public works.

NR-2.2 Continue to educate the public about Lincoln's conservation ethic and commitment to stewardship.

NR-2.3 Investigate and seek opportunities to participate in state, national, and global environmental programs, such as dark skies and green cities initiatives.

Goal NR-3 Improve controls against environmental degradation and pollution.

Recommendations:

NR-3.1 Continue to educate the public about alternatives to chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers in landscaping and lawn maintenance activities.

NR-3.2 Consider adopting a Low-Impact Development (LID) bylaw, consistent with state stormwater regulations and guidelines, to require developers to include stormwater best management practices (BMPs) in future projects.

NR-3.3 Identify and evaluate the town's options for regulating chemical and sediment pollution of private and public water supplies and establishing local standards for the use of chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers, to the extent allowed by law.

NR-3.4 Adopt noise pollution regulations, with clear standards to define noise disturbance.

NR-3.5 Ensure that new construction projects meet appropriate environmental standards by creating an avenue for reviewing such projects.

NR-3.6 Through identification, public education, regulations, and guidelines, increase the effectiveness of programs to control invasive species and pests.

Goal NR-4 Improve communication and coordination between the Water Department and other town agencies responsible for developing and implementing natural resource protection plans.

Recommendations:

NR-4.1 Ensure that town agencies have a basic understanding of Lincoln's drinking water supplies and water storage and distribution systems.

NR-4.2 Ensure consistency between Lincoln's land use policies and water resource protection laws that affect the amount of water Lincoln can withdraw from surface water and groundwater supplies.

NR-4.3 Coordinate water conservation efforts among Lincoln's land use and natural resource agencies and all town departments with operations and maintenance responsibilities for public buildings and grounds.

3. Cultural and Historic Resources Element

Overview:

The Town's mission statement says: "Lincoln is a town that cherishes its rural, agricultural character, its small town heritage, its open space, and its historical legacy." While Lincoln has adopted a wide range of preservation tools and techniques, changing times and growing economic pressures make it increasingly difficult to ensure the continued preservation of town-owned historic assets. Lincoln is home to many cultural, educational, and historical institutions that embody and enhance the town's character and legacy while also contributing to its sense of community. Frequently, however, there are unfulfilled opportunities for collaboration between the community, the schools, and these cultural and historic organizations, together with, at times, a lack of coordination among the organizations themselves.

Goal CH-1 Strengthen collaboration with Lincoln's cultural and historic organizations.

Recommendations:

CH-1.1 Establish a Council for Cultural and Historic Organizations that would be the forum for exploring mutual opportunities for town government and cultural, historical, educational, and other non-profit organizations to share resources and expertise.

CH-1.2 Provide information about activities sponsored by cultural and historic organizations on the town's website.

CH-1.3 Encourage partnerships between the town's cultural institutions and the Lincoln Public Schools to identify opportunities for integrating cultural programs into the existing curriculum.

Goal CH-2 Identify, evaluate, and protect Lincoln's cultural and historic assets.

Recommendations:

CH-2.1 Building on the Lincoln Historical Commission's previous efforts, prepare a comprehensive inventory of Lincoln's cultural and historic resources, including areas, structures, buildings, objects, and historic landscapes.

CH-2.2 Upon completion of the comprehensive inventory, identify eligible buildings and districts for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

CH-2.3 Work with residents to create additional local historic districts.

CH-2.4 Promote the use of preservation restrictions to protect public and privately owned buildings and structures.

CH-2.5 Explore opportunities for preserving archaeological sites.

CH-2.6 Re-establish funding for consultant and administrative expenses in the town's annual operating budget, as appropriate, to support historic preservation.

Goal CH-3 Promote stewardship of Lincoln's cultural and historic resources.

Recommendations:

CH-3.1 Make information on Lincoln's cultural and historic character, buildings, districts, cemeteries, and other heritage treasures widely available to residents and visitors in formats that are attractive, accurate, and easily understood.

CH-3.2 Expand the collections and finding aids for the newly integrated archives and records management initiative spearheaded by the Lincoln Public Library, Town Clerk, and Historical Commission.

CH-3.3 Support stewardship by collaborating with existing local organizations and providing funding from local and non-local sources.

4. Built Environment Element

Overview:

Lincoln's zoning policies and its successful efforts in land conservation and historic preservation over the last four decades have preserved its rural beauty and character and thus contributed to making it one of the more desirable western suburbs in which to live. As a result, Lincoln attracts an affluent population with the capacity to purchase, renovate, expand and sometimes demolish existing homes to create newer, larger homes to satisfy their needs. Over time, this trend toward building larger homes and the natural desire to do so near conservation lands could have the unintended consequences of adversely affecting the town's attractive preserved character. In addition, some current building and land management practices may adversely affect the natural settings that have distinguished Lincoln from average suburban development.

Goal BE-1 Preserve key aspects of Lincoln's rural roots and agricultural heritage, its varied architecture, and the prominence of its natural land formations.

Recommendations:

BE-1.1 Update, clarify, and strengthen Lincoln's regulations and review procedures governing demolition and renovation requiring significant demolition.

BE-1.2 Encourage the creation of Neighborhood Conservation Districts in appropriate areas.

BE-1.3 Expand protection of scenic roadways, vistas from roadways, and other elements that enhance the character of a rural and agrarian environment.

BE-1.4 Encourage owners of private property with historic or scenic vistas to keep the view open and visible to the public.

Goal BE-2 Preserve rural character achieved by recent public and private efforts in Lincoln to conserve open space and to place land in permanent conservation.

Recommendations:

BE-2.1 Increase non-disturbance setbacks on lots contiguous to Lincoln's conservation lands.

BE-2.2 Consider establishing scenic overlay districts as a means to protect land features bordering conservation lands.

BE-2.3 Require site plan review by the Planning Board of any development on lots contiguous to Lincoln's conservation lands.

Goal BE-3 Encourage new structures to fit within the landscape and to respect Lincoln's unique New England character.

Recommendations:

- BE-3.1** Create a Visual Preference Guide that articulates and illustrates key visual characteristics and preferred building-to-land relationships as an aide to residents, homebuilders, and developers.
- BE-3.2** Review the Zoning Bylaw and remove regulatory barriers to allowing buildings to conform to the landforms, particularly with respect to overall height on sloped sites.
- BE-3.3** Strengthen regulations that govern massing, scale, and issues of adjacency of principal and accessory structures to ensure they fit within context of surrounding neighborhoods.
- BE-3.4** Support educational programs sponsored by local organizations that work to protect the town's identity.

Goal BE-4 Encourage environmentally sensitive building and landscape practices for all future development.

Recommendations:

- BE-4.1** Consider incorporating energy and environmental performance standards in Lincoln's development regulations.
- BE-4.2** Increase public outreach and access to information about environmentally responsible design, using the town's website, newspaper articles, coordination with groups that sponsor public education programs, and other means.
- BE-4.3** Encourage higher-density development in designated areas, such as the Lincoln Station area, to preserve open space elsewhere.

5. Open Space Element

Overview:

Lincoln has established a nationally renowned model program of land stewardship. Caring for public and privately-owned land, avoiding encroachments on wetland resource areas, thoughtful landscaping and sustainable forestry, supporting local farms, and putting wildlife interests first seem to have been broadly accepted as Lincoln's way of life. These ideas, however, can easily be jeopardized by contemporary practices such as mansionization, poorly considered siting, or redeveloping older residences to the point of clearing once-undisturbed areas on house lots to make way for very large homes with manicured yards. As new housing development and housing re-sales continue to bring new people into the community, there is no guarantee that Lincoln's future population will be as committed to conservancy. Increased public awareness and a continued commitment to stewardship will be needed in order to protect the conservation values that inspired so many open space acquisitions in the past.

Goal OS-1 **Preserve and protect conservation, agricultural, and recreational lands.**

Recommendations:

- OS-1.1 Continue efforts to protect existing conservation land and open space from development.
- OS-1.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of Lincoln's existing bylaws, regulations, and policies to protect open space, and strengthen them as appropriate.
- OS-1.3 Protect lands of conservation and recreation interest, such as private farms, Chapter 61 lands, view corridors, buffers and scenic vistas, outstanding natural features, and fields appropriate for recreational use.
- OS-1.4 Provide incentives to farmers on private property to place conservation or agricultural preservation restrictions on non-protected agricultural land.
- OS-1.5 Maintain open communication among conservation organizations and continue to explore funding, land acquisition, or limited development opportunities.
- OS-1.6 Partner with adjacent towns, the state, and regional non-profit organizations to promote mutual conservation and recreation interests.

Goal OS-2 **Promote active stewardship of existing agriculture and conservation land.**

Recommendations:

- OS-2.1 Maintain the Conservation Commission's Property Baseline Inventory and Monitoring Program.
- OS-2.2 Encourage best land management practices, such as farming or recreation field maintenance practices compatible with natural resources, ecologically sound

woodlot management, and scientifically sound management of existing open farm ponds.

OS-2.3 Support long-term land stewardship with local resources, grants, stewardship fees, and other funding sources.

OS-2.4 Establish and enforce policies for addressing violations of conservation restrictions and regulations governing the use of conservation land.

Goal OS-3 Maximize recreational opportunities on recreation and conservation land.

Recommendations:

OS-3.1 Provide for multiple uses of recreation and conservation land, and multiple recreation uses of conservation trails.

OS-3.2 Maintain and evaluate opportunities to expand the roadside path and trail network.

OS-3.3 Maintain current recreation facilities and provide new facilities to meet evolving community needs.

6. Housing Element

Overview:

Lincoln was historically an economically and demographically diverse community and residents have long enjoyed the social and educational benefits that such a community provides. However, housing prices have increased dramatically over the last three decades, mainly due to rising land values. Since undeveloped land is scarce and expensive, there has been a recent increase in the demolition of smaller homes to fulfill the market demand for newer, larger homes. There is some concern that, over time, this could lead to reduced economic and demographic diversity in the town's population, and there is already evidence that some of Lincoln's elderly as well as young families who could use starter homes are being priced out of the market. In addition, state-mandated housing requirements under Chapter 40B, which allow a developer to bypass local regulations, could threaten the rural character of Lincoln and compromise the diversity of its housing stock by allowing large scale development inconsistent with Lincoln's goals.

Goal H-1 Provide for a variety of housing types to encourage diversity of Lincoln's population.

Recommendations:

- H-1.1** Create higher-density housing, including a modest amount of additional multi-family housing, in the Lincoln Station area.
- H-1.2** Consider development incentives such as M.G.L. c. 40R to achieve Lincoln's housing goals.
- H-1.3** Encourage retention or creation of smaller homes in order to maintain a range of housing stock available to smaller households and those in early or later stages of life.
- H-1.4** Encourage accessory apartments to provide more options in current housing stock.
- H-1.5** Remove zoning obstacles to preserving smaller homes by allowing them to be relocated to another lot with an existing residence for use as an accessory dwelling unit.

Goal H-2 Provide more housing to accommodate the needs of individuals who may be underserved by Lincoln's existing housing stock.

Recommendations:

- H-2.1** Determine the need, availability, and cost of in-home services to assist the elderly and people with disabilities so they are able to remain in their own homes if they choose.
- H-2.2** Conduct outreach and provide information to elderly taxpayers about available programs such as reverse annuity mortgages or work in lieu of property taxes, which might allow them to remain in their own homes for as long as possible.

H-2.3 Determine the need for additional age-restricted (55+) housing beyond Lincoln's existing developments, including options such as an elderly cottage housing opportunity (ECHO) program.

H-2.4 Continue to study needs for supportive housing to serve adults with disabilities, particularly adult children of Lincoln residents.

Goal H-3 **Maintain Lincoln's long-standing commitment to provide affordable housing that meets local needs.**

Recommendations:

H-3.1 Continue to provide affordable housing opportunities throughout the town, using techniques such as scattered site development, condominium buy-downs, and group homes.

H-3.2 Ensure that affordable housing is included in residential and mixed-use developments in the Lincoln Station area.

H-3.3 Support the Lincoln Housing Commission in setting local targets and strategies to provide affordable housing.

Goal H-4 **Maintain local control over affordable housing development.**

Recommendations:

H-4.1 Review, refine, and update Lincoln's Affordable Housing Plan.

H-4.2 Continue to prevent hostile comprehensive permits by ensuring that Lincoln meets the ten percent statutory minimum under M.G.L. c. 40B.

H-4.3 Propose, shape, and support positive changes to state legislation that would align with Lincoln's affordable housing goals without posing a threat to its rural character.

7. Economic Development Element

Overview:

Lincoln's economy is a part of the larger Boston regional economy, which serves as a major asset for local residents, yet this very fact causes ambivalence about the best economic development direction for the town. The local employment base includes small retail, professional services, government, non-profit organizations, agriculture, and home-based businesses. Lincoln has traditionally framed its conversations about economic development in terms of land use, zoning, and tax base expansion while jealously guarding its quality of life as its guiding principle. Despite a history of spirited debates about commercial development, there has only been broad agreement about the desirability of a village center at Lincoln Station and some rare instances of agreement about other locations. As a result, Lincoln relies almost exclusively on residential property taxes to pay for local government services. The Town feels increasing pressure to find other sources of revenue to meet its financial needs.

Goal ED-1 Continue to encourage agriculture as a way of life and a source of local employment and food.

Recommendations:

ED-1.1 Adopt a right to farm bylaw.

ED-1.2 Support and collaborate with local and regional organizations to promote agri-tourism in Lincoln and increase the base of loyal customers for Lincoln agricultural products.

ED-1.3 Continue the Conservation Commission's agricultural leasing program and explore opportunities to expand it, such as by converting fallow fields on existing conservation land to agricultural production, where appropriate.

Goal ED-2 Provide for commercial and mixed-use development that respects Lincoln's rural character and adds to the quality of residential life by providing goods and services for residents.

Recommendations:

ED-2.1 Create an Economic Development Committee to identify and assess Lincoln's economic development opportunities and advise the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, and other town boards about economic development policy.

ED-2.2 Develop the Lincoln Station area as a higher-density mixed-use village that compliments and reinforces the vitality of Lincoln's existing small businesses.

ED-2.3 Continue to evaluate sites with potential for new commercial or mixed uses that can be developed and operated in harmony with existing residential neighborhoods.

ED-2.4 Ensure that new commercial development provides public benefits to the town and surrounding neighborhood, such as transportation demand management (TDM) programs to reduce employee-generated traffic, athletic fields on the premises for use by local recreation organizations, employer-assisted housing, or incorporation of renewable energy technologies in building operations.

Goal ED-3 **Retain and capitalize on Lincoln’s cultural, educational, environmental, and other non-profit charitable organizations as a vital part of the local economy.**

Recommendations:

ED-3.1 Encourage partnerships between non-profit organizations and local businesses for special events, programs, and other forms of joint marketing that would be mutually beneficial for them and of interest to Lincoln residents.

ED-3.2 Support non-profit organizations by including their programs and activities on a community-wide calendar maintained on the town’s website.

ED-3.3 Encourage non-profit organizations to provide a variety of educational and enrichment opportunities for Lincoln’s youth, both in and outside of the classroom.

Goal ED-4 **Promote local businesses and home-based businesses as a source of local, “zero-commute” employment.**

Recommendations:

ED-4.1 Periodically evaluate the needs of local businesses, such as business services, expansion space, communications technology, networking, or supportive policies from town government.

ED-4.2 Review the town’s zoning regulations in order to identify and remove barriers to, and to encourage, at-home employment.

ED-4.3 Encourage local businesses to collaborate and coordinate with the town’s non-profit organizations and institutions to address mutual interests, such as planning and cross-promotions of special and seasonal events, and wayfinding to the Lincoln Station area.

8. Transportation and Circulation Element

Overview:

Through decades of planning, regulation, and investment, Lincoln has worked to preserve and enhance its scenic roadsides, vistas, and rural appearance, and it has established an impressive network of trails and roadside paths. However, increased traffic volumes and speeds, coupled with the absence of sidewalks or paths except on major roads, has created an increasingly unsafe environment for local drivers, walkers, and bikers. Enhanced traffic calming, traffic enforcement, and non-vehicular modes of transportation have become necessities. Improving the paths and trails for bikers and encouraging shared motor vehicle use will help to increase mobility for residents and enhance Lincoln's sense of community. Although these goals present substantial challenges due to the town's dispersed development pattern, limited funds, and lack of viable local transportation options, they deserve further study consistent with Lincoln's history of thoughtful, innovative planning.

Goal TC-1 **Increase the safety of Lincoln's roadways.**

Recommendations:

TC-1.1 Implement traffic-calming measures to slow vehicle speeds and reduce the amount of cut-through traffic through certain areas of town.

TC-1.2 Decrease traffic speed through speed limit regulation and enforcement.

TC-1.3 Institute public education and outreach to encourage traffic safety and awareness for users of Lincoln's roads, roadside paths, and trails.

TC-1.4 Continue to coordinate with state and regional transportation agencies regarding Route 2 improvements, including the Crosby's Corner project.

TC-1.5 Assess and, if necessary, improve parking in the center of town.

Goal TC-2 **Encourage the use of both motorized and non-motorized modal alternatives for intra- and inter-town transportation.**

Recommendations:

TC-2.1 Improve the attractiveness of and access to Lincoln's pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, including roadway shoulders.

TC-2.2 Explore feasibility of expanding bicycle access to the trail network.

TC-2.3 Explore ways of increasing availability of motorized transportation alternatives, such as ridesharing and shuttle service, and investigate mechanisms to fund them.

Goal TC-3 Address transportation issues on a regional level.

Recommendations:

TC-3.1 Continue and build upon partnerships with surrounding towns and regional agencies to address regional traffic congestion through transportation alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle commutes.

TC-3.2 Encourage ridership on the MBTA commuter rail.

Goal TC-4 Coordinate the need for traffic control measures with preserving the rural character of Lincoln's roadways.

Recommendations:

TC-4.1 Continue to use Lincoln's Roadway Design Guidelines when reconstructing or maintaining town roads.

9. Community Services and Facilities Element

Overview:

As a small town with finite resources, Lincoln is constantly faced with the challenge of funding municipal and school services. The educational, cultural, recreational, and human services that Lincoln provides enhance the quality of residential life, but they are increasingly expensive. In addition, Lincoln's public facilities need major capital improvements, and some may need to be retired, rebuilt, or rededicated to other purposes. Its infrastructure and utilities need to be updated and maintained as well, notably the water distribution system. Despite the efforts of town boards and staff, Lincoln's decentralized government makes it difficult to coordinate a comprehensive assessment of needs for local government services and facilities. The aging of the population, the impact of economic cycles on municipal revenue growth, the unpredictability of state aid, constitutional constraints on the taxation powers of Massachusetts towns, and the cost to operate quality services mean that Lincoln's financial challenges will intensify in the future. Moreover, Lincoln is likely to face difficult, potentially costly choices about the fate of the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional School District, and possibly about the town's responsibility to residents at Hanscom Air Force Base. Lincoln needs to be open to fresh ideas about government's responsibility for community services, the costs and benefits of those services, and ways to increase revenues without compromising Lincoln's rural character.

Goal SF-1 Continue to identify and assess community service needs, considering Lincoln's changing population, the cost of services, the revenues available to support them, and alternative models of service delivery.

Recommendations:

SF-1.1 Periodically evaluate needs for existing or new local government services through resident surveys, consultations with town staff and organizations that provide services to Lincoln residents, and review of program participation statistics and other available information.

SF-1.2 Explore opportunities to provide services through agreements with private organizations and other local governments in Lincoln's region.

SF-1.3 Continue to review the sufficiency of user fees and charges to recover most or all of the town's cost to provide programs and services.

SF-1.4 Establish objective methods of measuring and analyzing the net cost of community services and provide information to town boards and town meeting.

Goal SF-2 Improve the management and maintenance of town facilities and infrastructure.

Recommendations:

SF-2.1 Establish and fund a full-time facilities manager position to coordinate and oversee the management and maintenance of all municipal facilities.

SF-2.2 Institute a Planned Preventive Maintenance (PPM) program in order to maximize the efficiency, reliability, and lifespan of building systems and equipment.

SF-2.3 Support Lincoln's asset management needs through a comprehensive capital improvements plan and broadly supported policies for use of non-exempt and exempt debt, capital outlays, and to the extent allowed by law, capital reserve funds.

SF-2.4 Identify, assess, and pursue opportunities to increase the amount revenue generated by private use of municipal facilities such as the Pierce House.

SF-2.5 Systematically maintain and improve the water distribution system in order to conserve water and meet or exceed state standards for unaccounted for water.

SF-2.6 Increase support for upgrading, integrating, and maintaining information technology at the town offices and other public buildings.

Goal SF-3 **Continue to invest in local government innovation, capacity, and efficiency.**

Recommendations:

SF-3.1 Attract and retain highly qualified managers, professionals, and support staff in all town departments, and provide the facilities and technology they need to work efficiently.

SF-3.2 Provide adequate, timely opportunities for employee training and professional development to encourage state-of-the-art practices and increase the town's capacity to comply with federal and state mandates.

SF-3.3 Explore opportunities to reorganize, consolidate, or centralize functions in order to improve efficiency and control growth in operating costs.

SF-3.4 Continue to invest in technology improvements in order to support inter-departmental operating needs and provide residents with timely access to public information.

Goal SF-4 **Continue to monitor the status of Hanscom Air Force Base and initiatives with respect to military housing, through base closure or privatization of existing housing, that may place new demands on Lincoln's municipal and school services.**

Recommendations:

SF-4.1 Maintain an active leadership role in the Hanscom Area Towns Committee (HATS) in order to ensure vigorous representation of Lincoln's interests.

- SF-4.2** Secure specialized legal services, as appropriate, to ensure that local officials have the best available information to guide decisions about responding to a change in the status of Hanscom's housing stock.

- SF-4.3** Pursue all appropriate political and legal means to protect Lincoln from having to absorb the cost of residential services at Hanscom without predictable sources of offset revenue from non-local sources.

10. Governance

Overview:

Like many Massachusetts towns, Lincoln has seen a decline in civic engagement by residents as evidenced by declines in town meeting participation and the number of volunteers and candidates for election. Reversing this trend will take sustained and strong leadership by town officials, commitment of citizen and staff resources, improved communication, and more effective collaboration with established local organizations, institutions, and networks.

Goal G-1 Increase citizen participation in town government.

Recommendations:

- G-1.1** Work with community organizations and networks to encourage public participation and provide town government information to residents.
- G-1.2** Provide regular e-news about town government activities, issues, and decisions.
- G-1.3** Establish a citizen skills bank (database) as a resource to identify qualified volunteers and candidates, and encourage town boards and committees to use the skills bank to identify and cultivate new members.
- G-1.4** Create a volunteer coordinating committee to assist with outreach and recruitment of potential volunteers.

Goal G-2 Make public service and town meeting participation engaging and attractive to residents.

Recommendations:

- G-2.1** Encourage regular, informal breakfast meetings for town board chairs to exchange ideas and information.
- G-2.2** Provide training for board and committee chairs and members, and additional staff support as needed.
- G-2.3** Hold interdepartmental meetings of town boards and staff to coordinate the town's response to issues that involve multiple boards or committees.
- G-2.4** Prepare and distribute a booklet with clear, simple, user-friendly descriptions of town meeting warrant articles and even-handed descriptions of the arguments pro and con.

Goal G-3 Enhance the frequency and effectiveness of town government and citizen communications.

Recommendations:

- G-3.1** Improve the town's website to facilitate access to information about the town and town government activities.
- G-3.2** Enhance two-way electronic communications between residents and the town offices.
- G-3.3** Encourage the creation of blogs to facilitate constructive dialogue about town-related issues.

Goal G-4 Work with other communities and the state to overhaul the system of real property taxation as the primary method of financing local government.

Recommendations:

- G-4.1** Seek assistance from the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) to form a task force to facilitate discussions and to develop proposals.
- G-4.2** Work to ensure that the Massachusetts Association of Town Finance Committees becomes an active participant in reform efforts.