



TOWN OF SWAMPSCOTT

MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

ELIHU THOMSON ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
22 MONUMENT AVENUE, SWAMPSCOTT, MA 01907

NOVEMBER 16, 2015 MEETING MINUTES

Time: 6:30– 9:00 pm

Location: Swampscott Senior Center, 200 Essex St. (rear)

Members Present: Chris Bibby, Ralph Souppa, Gino Cresta, Robert Powell, Toni Bandrowicz, Angela Ippolito, Jim Olivetti, Amy O'Connor, Sarah Walker, Trish Malphrus, Brett Laker, Neal Duffy, Gail Brock, Sylvia Belkin, Andrew Steingiser

Members Absent: Mary Webster, Jackson Schultz, Erin DeRoche, and Gail Brock

Others: Matthew Smith (MAPC), Pete Kane (Town Planner), Peter Spellios (Board of Selectmen)

The 8th meeting of the Master Plan Committee opened at approximately 6:30 pm.

WELCOME/PROJECT STATUS

Approval of Oct 24 meeting minutes:

Members of the Swampscott 2025 Master Plan (S25) committee approved the Oct. 24 meeting minutes.

TOWN FINANCES

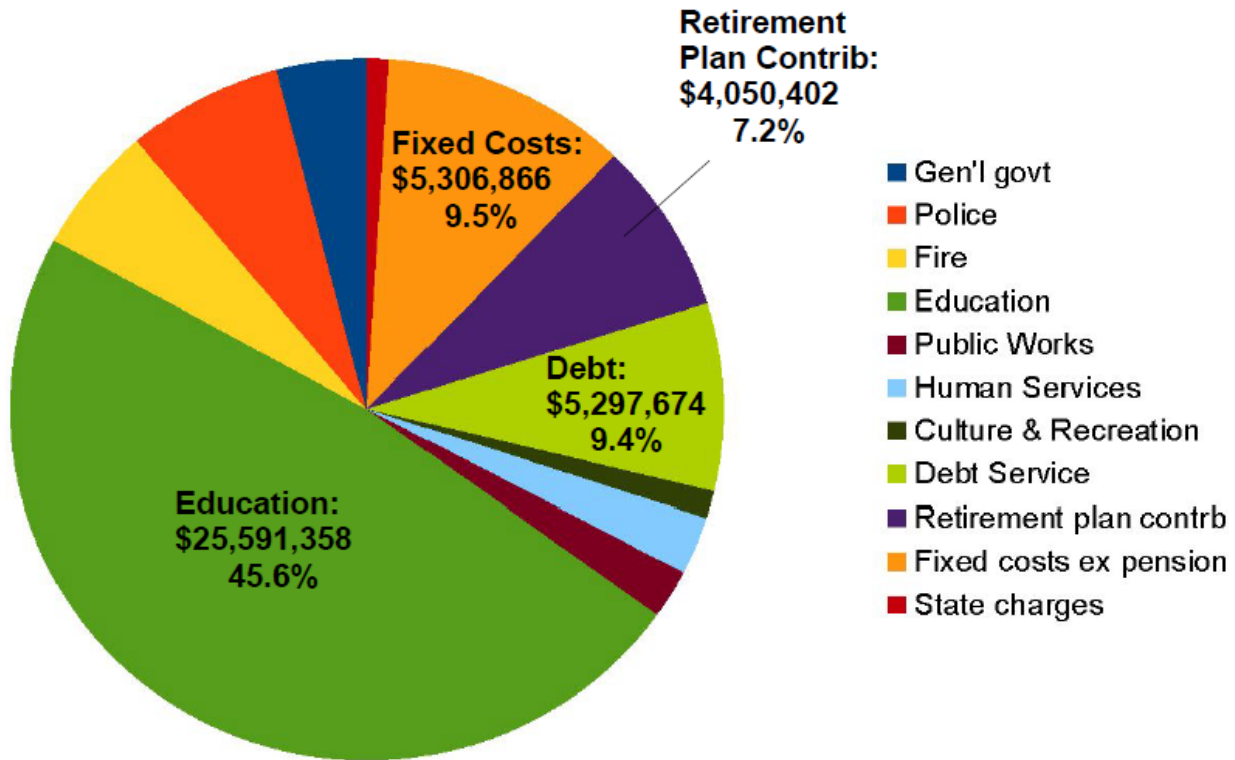
Selectman Peter Spellios delivered a presentation, the substance of which was the following:

1. The Master Plan will be Swampscott's blueprint for the future by, "provid[ing] a basis for decision making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality... the comprehensive plan shall be internally consistent in its policies, forecasts and standards...." (MGL c. 41, Section 81D).
2. A successful Master Plan must reflect and address Swampscott's economic strengths and shortcomings – in doing so, we will be able to implement it.
3. Swampscott has a revenue problem and few tools available to help itself – Swampscott's reliance on new revenue growth will significantly increase in years to come.
4. Planned, predictable and controlled growth needs to replace current culture of defending against arbitrary growth – Unplanned / arbitrary growth is a significant threat to our town's character.
5. The Master Plan Committee is on the right path by promoting enhanced amenities and an improved quality of life – which will make Swampscott more desirable and raise property values – but a more specific controlled growth plan is needed to address our structural financial deficiency and protect and enhance our towns character.

Spellios outlined the following expenses and revenue for Swampscott for FY 2015:

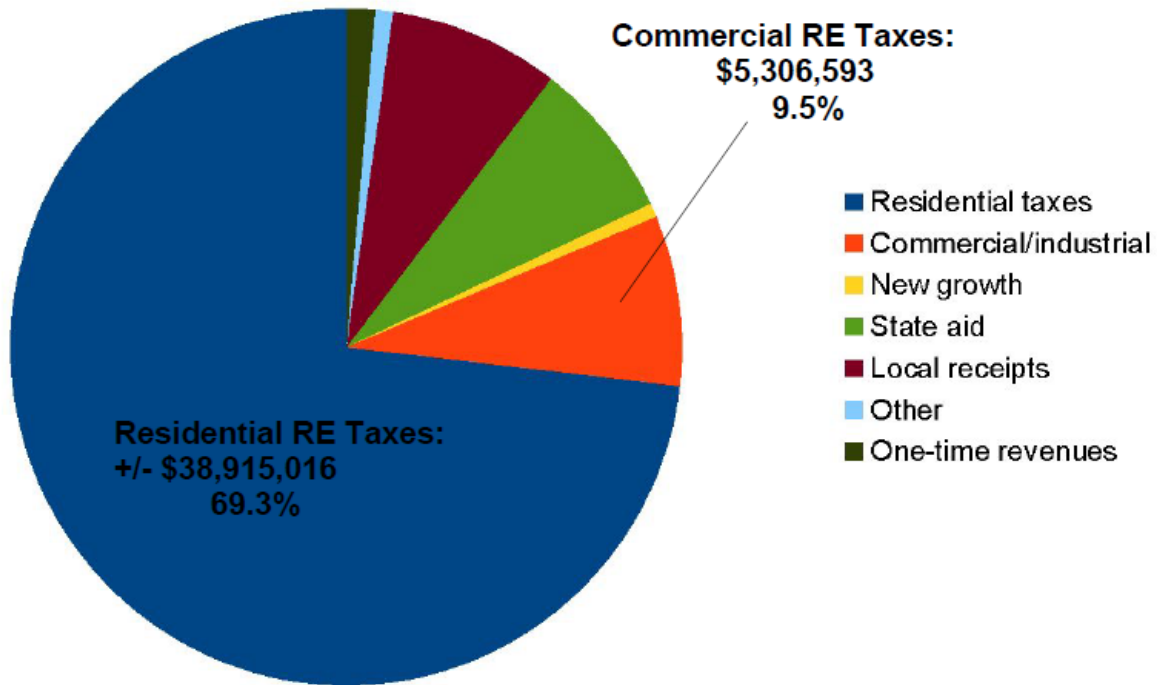
Expenses (FY2015)

+/- \$56,150,000 (excluding water and sewer charges)



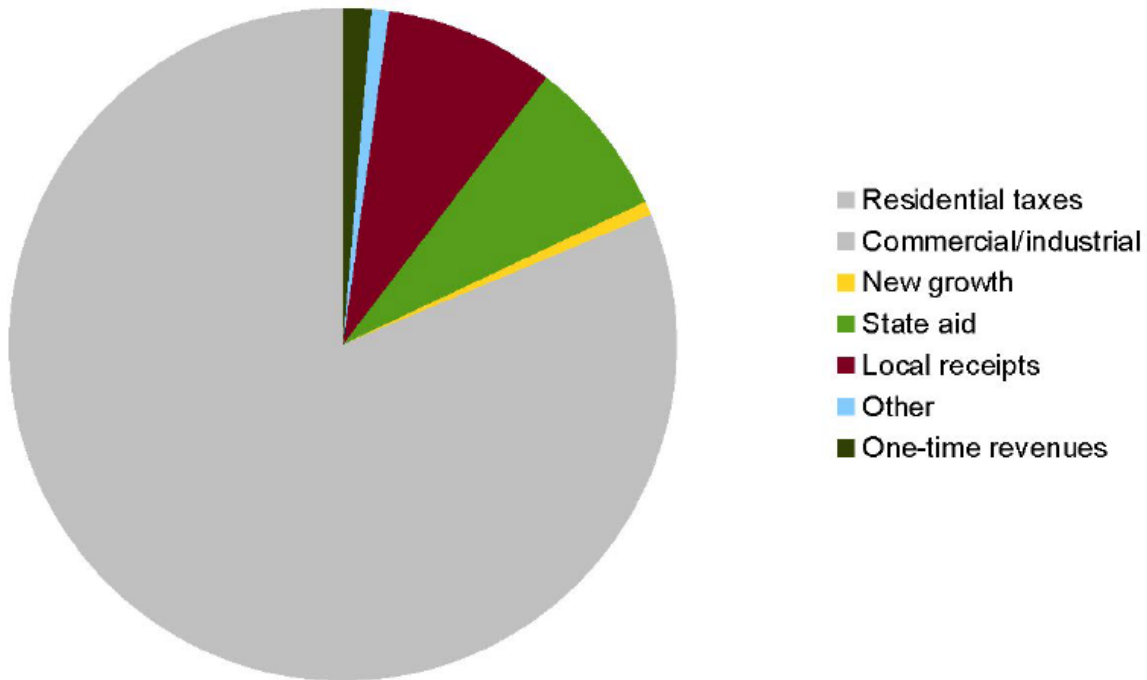
Revenue (FY2015)

+/- \$56,150,000 (excluding water and sewer charges)



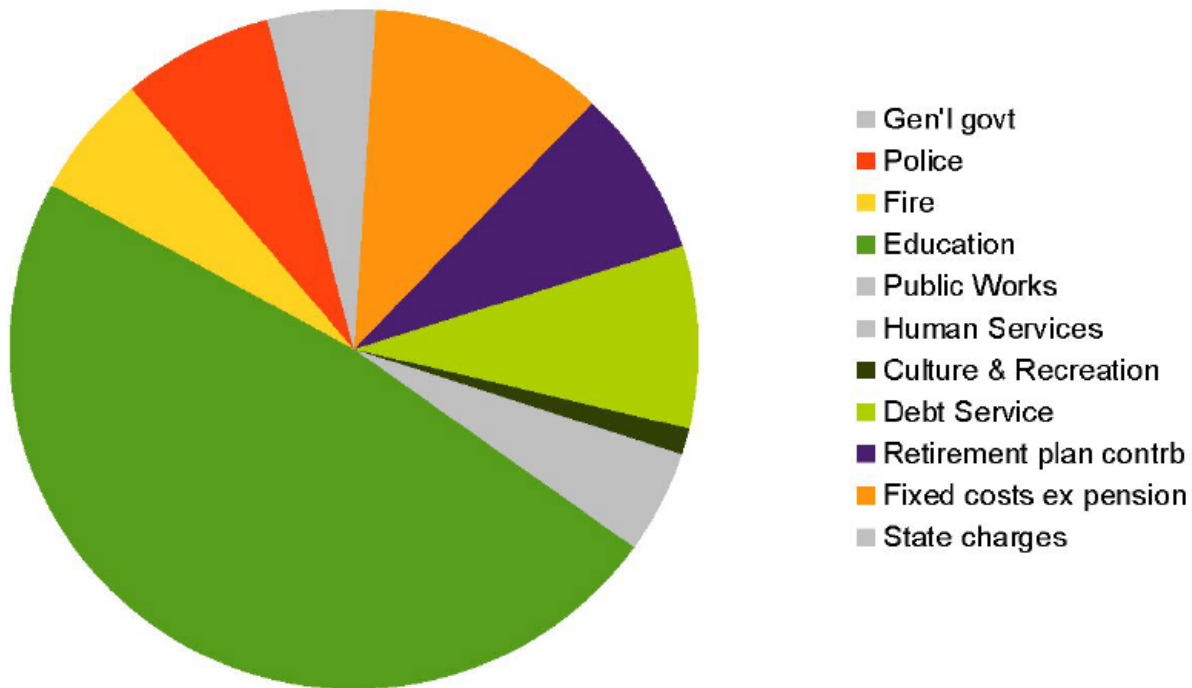
Spellios noted that only 20% of the town's revenues are not subject to Prop 2½.

Only 20% of Our Revenues are not subject to Prop 2 ½



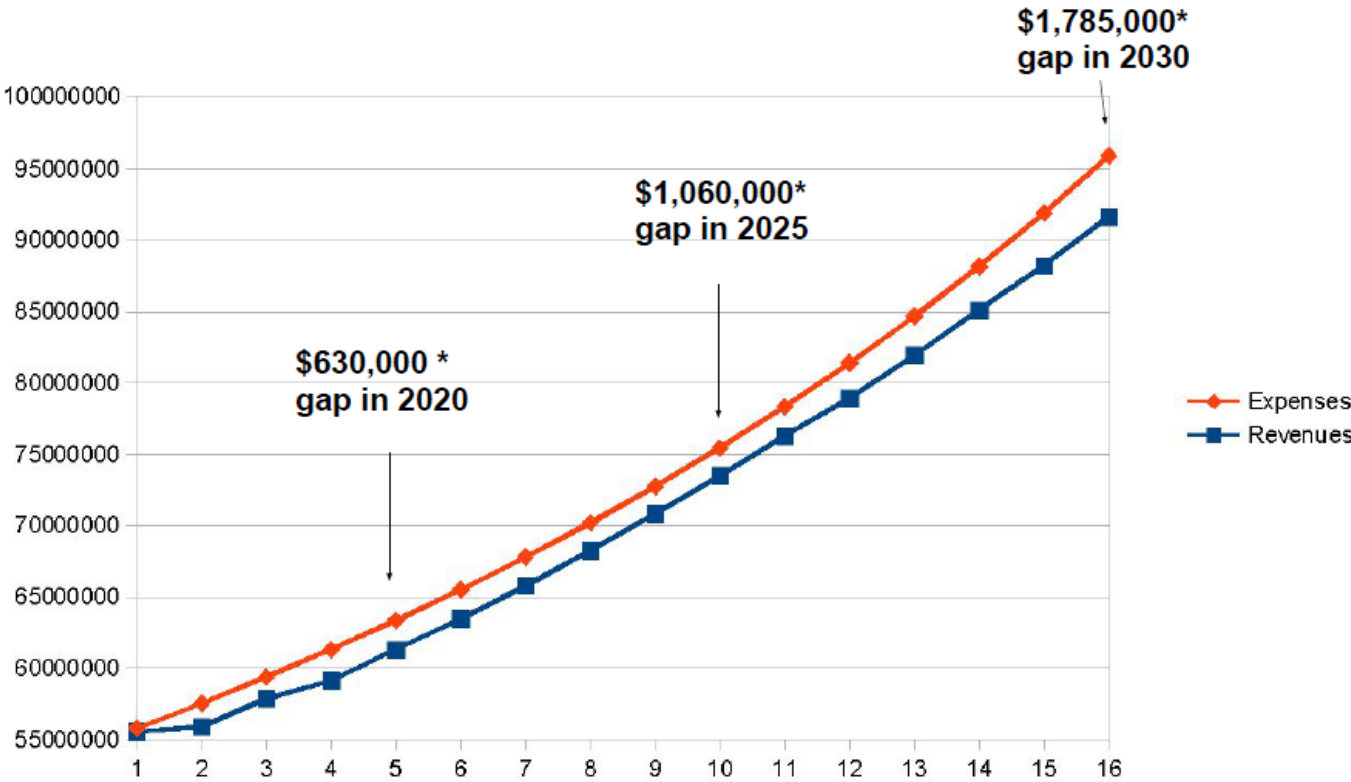
Spellios also noted that 91.4% of the town's expenses have historically grown greater than 2.5%.

91.4% of Our Expenses have historically grown greater than 2.5%



He also noted the town's widening budget gap:

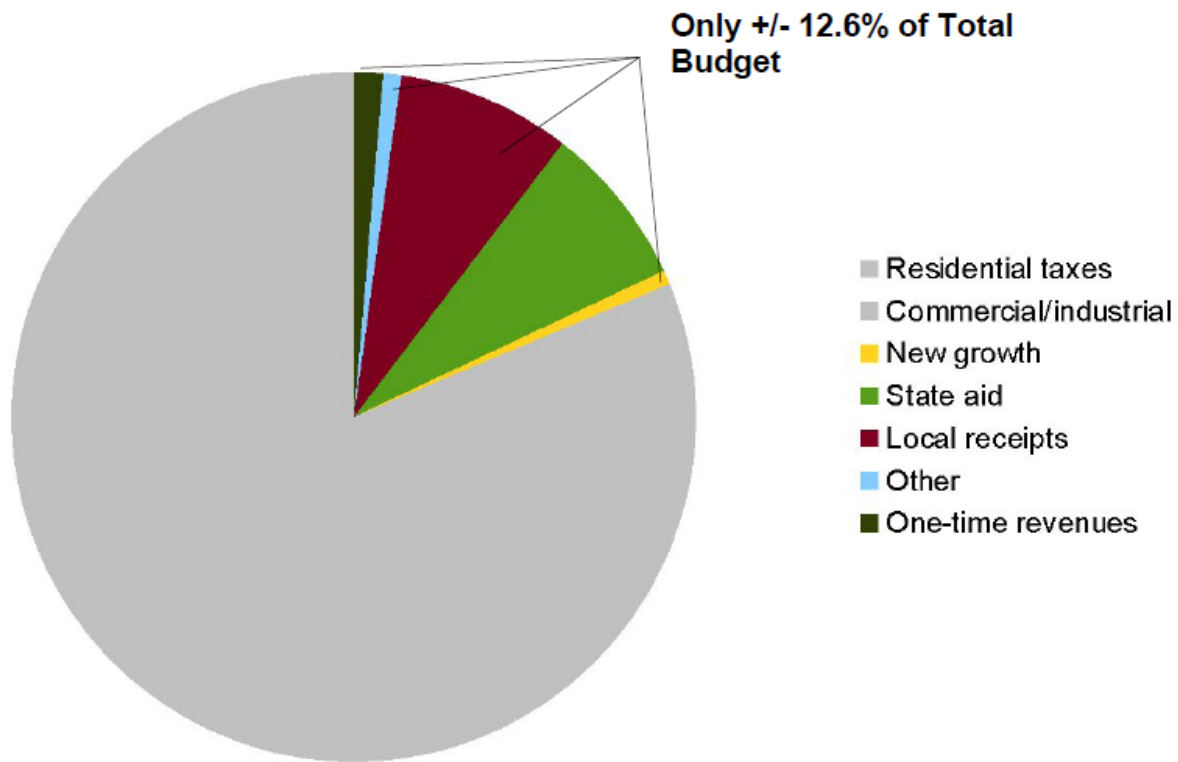
Widening budget gap



* Approximation. Does not include any new significant capital projects or paydown of unfunded OPEB liabilities

Spellos also highlighted revenues not subject to Prop 2 ½ and within the town’s control: only 12.6% of total budget.

Revenues not subject to Prop 2 ½ and within Town control



Revenues not subject to Prop 2 ½ and within Town control

Represents Only +/- 12.6% of Total Budget

- Local Receipts: Motor Vehicle Excise
Meals Tax
Permit / License Fees
Penalties / Violations

- One-Time Revenues: Free Cash
Assessors Overlay

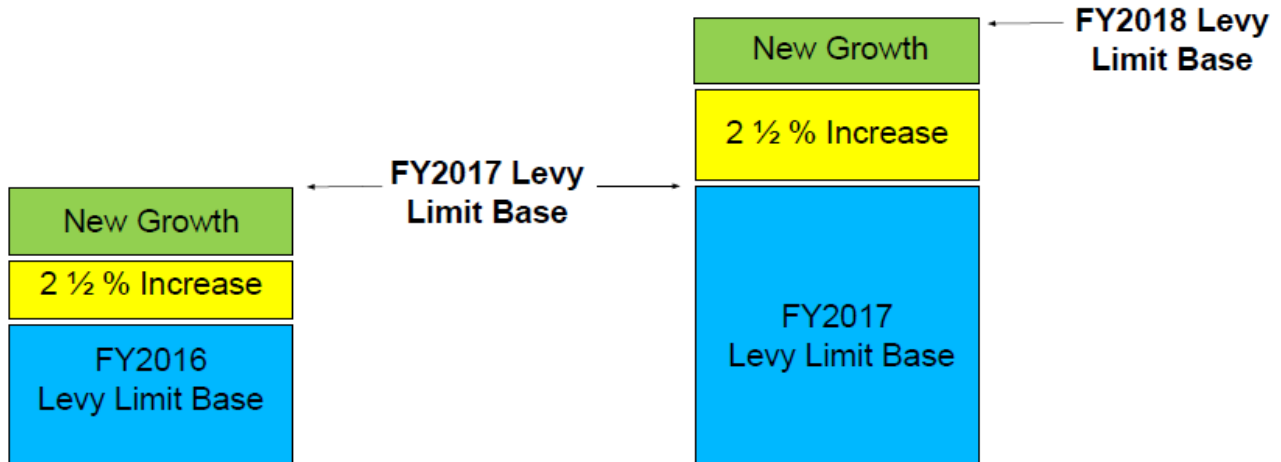
- Other: Misc. non-recurring items (movie
revenues, judgements)

- New Growth: Real Estate Taxes from Properties /
Projects Subject to Taxation for the
First Time

Spellios discussed that new growth becomes part of the prior year's levy limit base, and thus increases at the rate of 2 ½ percent each year as the levy limit increases.

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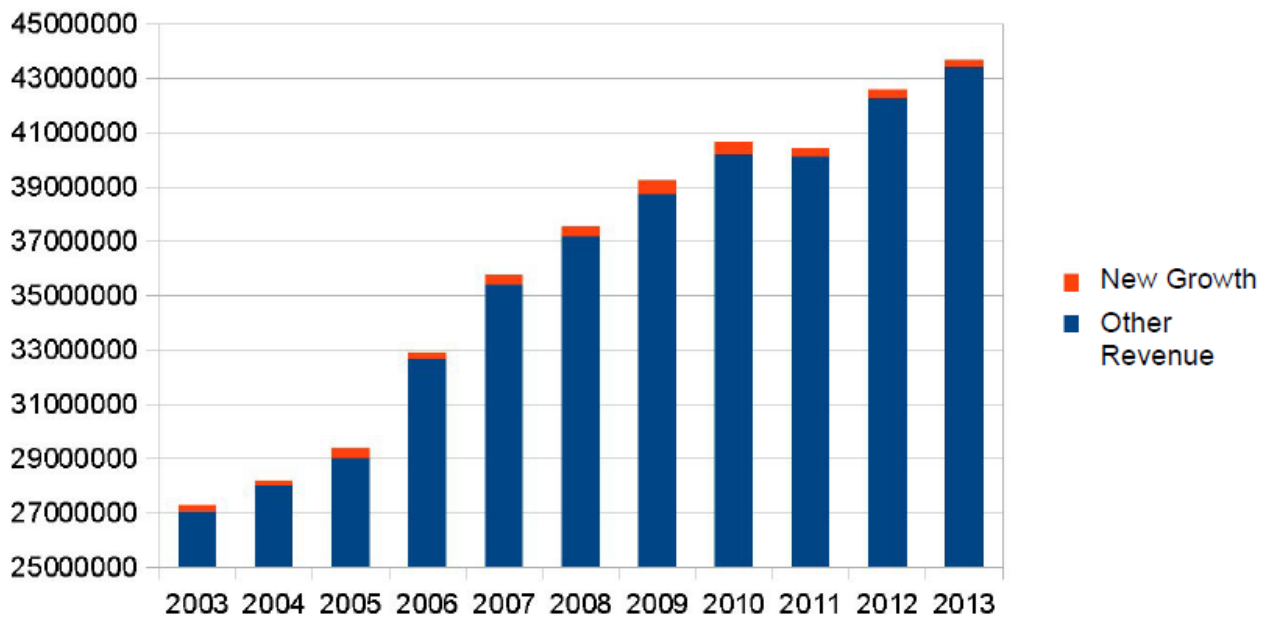


- “New Growth” :
- Increases in taxes because of development / expansion
 - Exempt real property returned to the tax roll
 - New personal property
 - New subdivision parcels and condominium conversions

Spellios highlighted the historic role of new growth.

Historic role of new growth

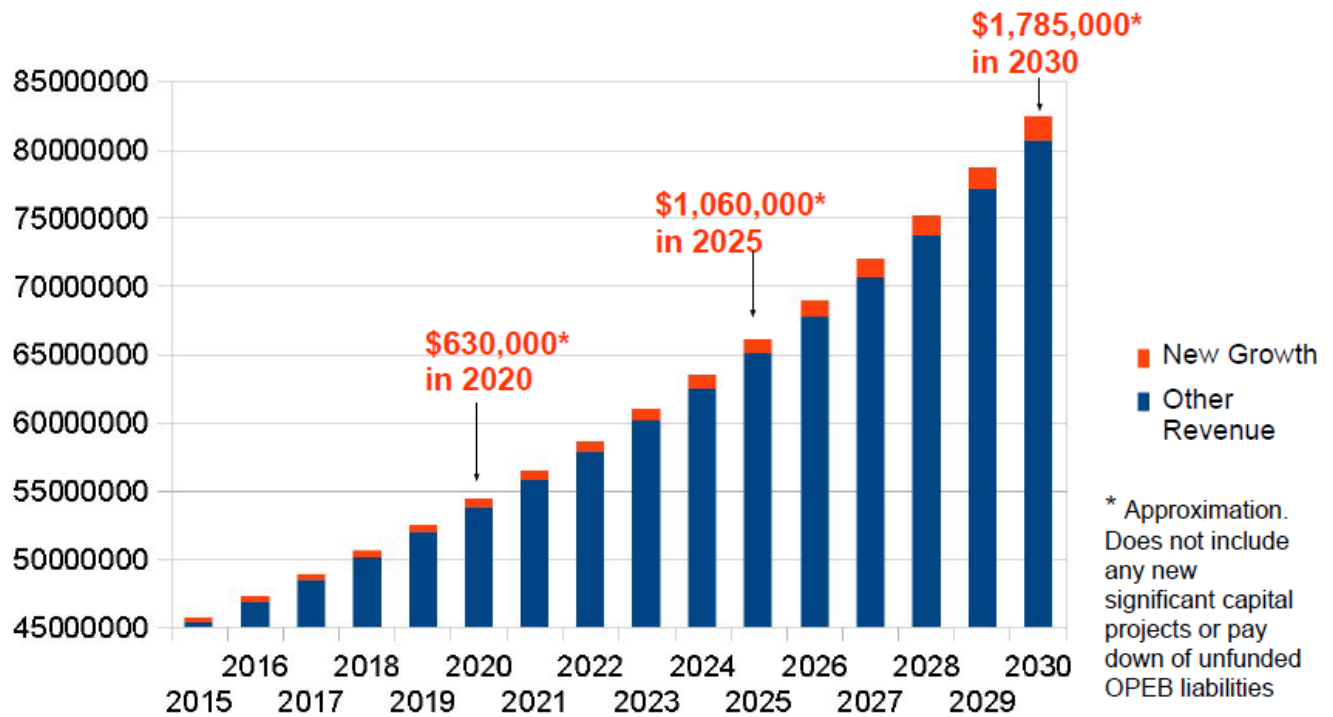
Average New Growth (2003-2013):
\$335,000 / year



Spellios also noted that new growth plays a larger role in the future; 11% increase year over year are required.

New growth plays a larger role tomorrow

11% increase year over year required



Spellios concluded his remarks by noting the following

- +/- \$12,650,000 of revenue from new growth will be required over the next 15 years – this equates to +/- \$500,000,000 in new property assessments – a 20% increase over current assessments (+/- \$2,500,000,000).
- The Master Plan must promote new commercial and residential growth, that is:
 - planned and controlled
 - in appropriate areas
 - with appropriate scale and design
- The Master Plan can be the effective “Blueprint” in:
 - achieving the Town’s economic requirements; and
 - maintaining and improving our town’s character.

What does this all mean?

▪ +/- \$12,650,000 of revenue from new growth will be required over the next 15 years – **this equates to +/- \$500,000,000 in new property assessments – a 20% increase over current assessments (+/- \$2,500,000,000).**

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DISCUSSION: DRAFT OPEN SPACE ELEMENT (30 MINUTES)

Document Overview

MAPC sought comments on existing conditions: What needs greater emphasis and what should be added/removed?

MAPC also sought comments on goals/recommendations: What should be the key priorities?

Goals and Strategies

DISCUSSION: DRAFT / SETTING THE STAGE & LAND USE ELEMENT (30 MINUTES)

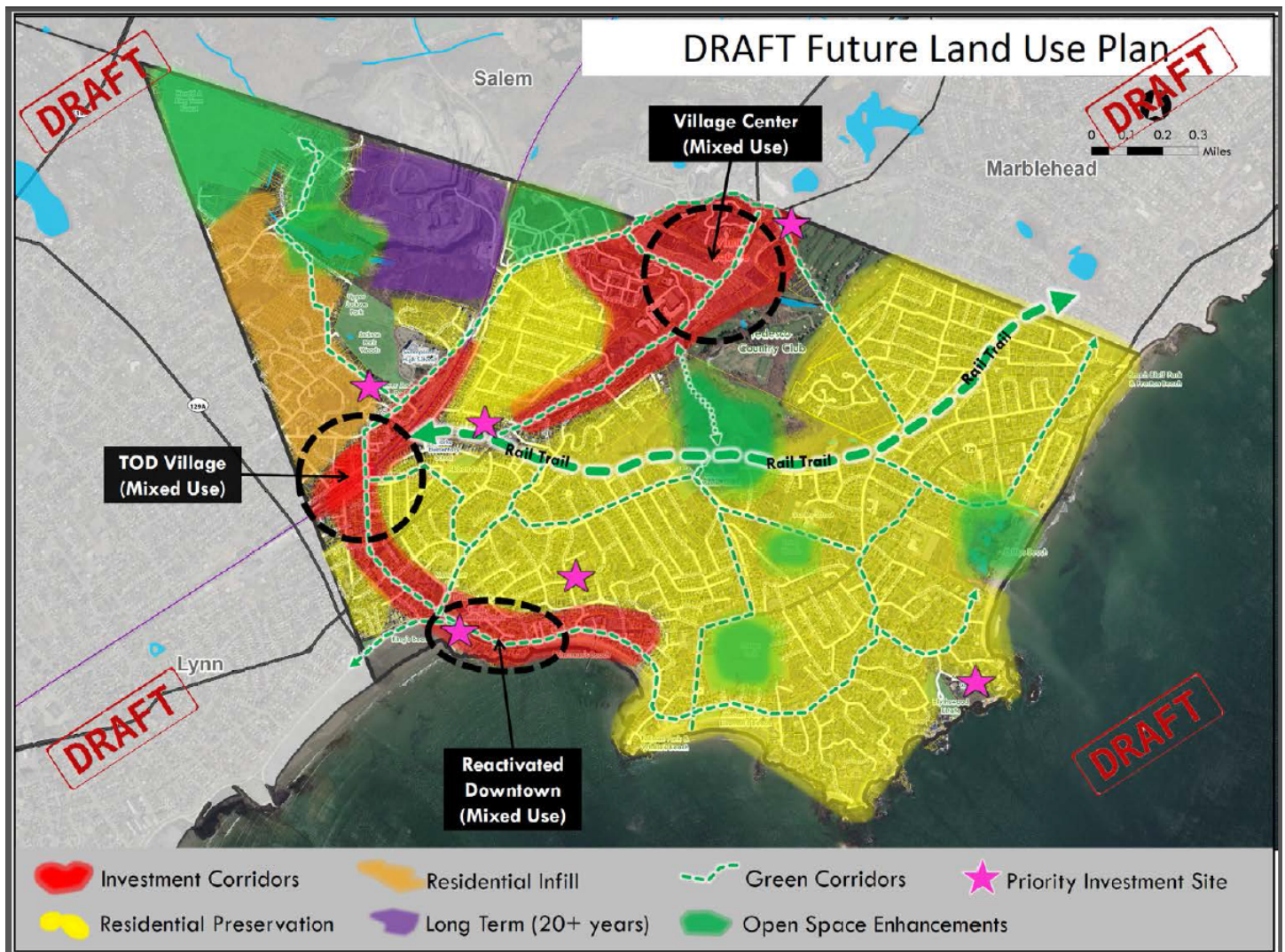
With respect to land use, MAPC outlined the following priorities.

1. Economic development
 - a. Focus on redevelopment opportunities – multifamily residential, mixed use.
 - b. Expand housing and commercial opportunities for transit-oriented development around the Swampscott train station.
 - c. Explore opportunities for development of a new hotel with conference and function facilities.
 - d. Improve multi-modal connectivity between the commuter rail station, commercial areas and open space.
2. Facilities Element:
 - a. Lease or sell vacant town-owned buildings (89 Burrill Street, Machon School, Greenwood School, DPW facility)
3. History:
 - a. Enhance efforts to protect and maintain Swampscott's historic and cultural resources.
4. Open space
 - a. Ensure that the rail trail is completed within the next 5-10 years.
 - b. Establish a green corridor network.
 - c. Expand and improve open spaces and recreation facilities.
 - d. Preserve the scenic character of town.
 - e. Work with Marian Court to develop a preservation plan.
5. Transportation:
 - a. Construct the Swampscott Rail Trail.
 - b. Pedestrian improvements along Humphrey Street and in Vinnin Square.
 - c. Adopt a Complete Streets Policy

With respect to land use goals, MAPC identified the following:

1. Preserve character of Swampscott's residential neighborhoods.
2. A revitalized, vibrant, attractive and accessible mixed-use Humphrey Street.
3. Encourage mixed-use, walkable centers that enhance quality of life, provide greater housing options, and maximize value of undervalued land.
4. A robust green network to improve quality of life, protect natural landscapes and improve connectivity.
5. Prioritize new growth and investment to improve the Town's long-term fiscal health.

MAPC presented the following draft future land use plan:



And posed the following questions about the map:

1. Does the concept map make sense to you?
2. Are the categories appropriate?
 - a. Would you prefer different categories?
 - b. Do they need more specificity?
3. How specific should we get about recommendations for the three mixed use centers?
 - a. What are the key elements for each?

MAPC also asked what land use changes should be prioritized:

1. Investment areas such as Vinnin Square, Train depot, and Humphrey St.
2. Investment sites such as Machon, 89 Burrill, Greenwood school, Marion Court, DPW site, Hawthorne/Anthony's site.

DISCUSSION: HOUSING ELEMENT

With respect to housing, MAPC noted that Swampscott is primarily a residential community. MAPC noted that a majority of units are single family. There are some single family alternatives and small multifamily. There are few multifamily options of 10+ units.

MAPC noted that the majority of households are families.

MAPC noted that households projected to get small over the next 10-20 years. Household size will fall from 2.46 in 2010 to 2.29 in 2030. MAPC notes that Swampscott will need 416 HHs/units to house same number of people in 2030. MAPC noted that Swampscott's housing stock is relatively old. MAPC noted that older stock near walkable amenities. MAPC noted that housing price are high and increasing. Also, MAPC noted that incomes are high, but many are "housing cost burdened."

HPP Update

MAPC noted that constraints to housing creation.

1. There is a lack of developable land.
2. Development costs are high.
 - a. Redevelopment is more expensive than greenfield.
 - b. Labor/materials costs on the rise.
 - c. Need density and/or incentives to make feasible.
3. Zoning
 - a. Limited opportunities for multifamily and/or mixed use in town
 - b. Special permit required for multifamily

MAPC highlighted locations for future housing development by participants at the Oct. 15 HPP meeting.

Goals and Strategies

MAPC presented the following ideas for discussion:

1. Provide seniors and persons with disabilities with greater housing options in Swampscott
 - a. Encourage or require accessible and adaptable units in new developments
 - b. Support aging in place/community initiatives
 - c. Encourage small unit creation. (Refer to mixed use strategy.)
2. Increase affordable housing opportunities in town.
 - a. Adopt an inclusionary zoning ordinance.
 - b. Explore other opportunities for 40R zoning.
 - c. Create an affordable housing trust.
3. Encourage mixed use development at appropriate locations.
 - a. Rezone Vinnin Square and Train Depot areas.
 - b. Meet with property owners and developers .
 - c. Consider adoption of Community Preservation Act to support affordable housing creation (and Open Space and Historic Preservation).

NEXT STEPS

The next event is the December 1st Public Forum. MAPC discussed outreach efforts (fliers, press release, email blasts) and the meeting format (open house and presentation).

The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 19, 2016.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.

Submitted by Robert Powell, Clerk, Swampscott 2025 Master Plan Committee, and Sarah Walker, At-Large