

Notes from Public Session, January 13, 2015, at Town Offices
Arranged by topics

General

- Falmouth should play to our strengths
- Plan for growth
- Goal of economic development in comprehensive plan was to balance the tax base. Otherwise higher property taxes will force some residents out.
- Paradigm shift from Falmouth as a bedroom community to employment center
- Falmouth doesn't have to be everything to everyone
- Elite school system is a draw
- Location – transportation, access to the airport
- What role should town have in vacant spaces?
 - Tax incentives for renovations
 - Other means?
 - Help renovate?

Younger Workers

- Employees of high-tech, entrepreneurial companies prefer urban, pedestrian friendly, community rather than “Big Box” stores
- Can Falmouth be “more urban” or is it suburban?
- Affordable housing for workers
- Higher density – apartments, condos for younger workers. Where are my kids going to live?
- Can we get young people? Is it “right” for Falmouth? Maybe young families rather than singles. Is Falmouth “cool”?
- Recreational opportunities for 25-45 year olds, e.g., softball
- Folks from Tyler Tech use the sidewalk on Johnson Road.
- Artist spaces, lofts, condos, apartments
- Amenities attract both residents and workers, but mostly workers. Workers want to know where to eat lunch, recreate, exercise, etc.
- Demographics – now that we're older, stay what we are.

Rt. 1 General

- Cluster residences, e.g. Tidewater
- Mixed use in some commercial zones
- New Rt.1 changes are exciting
- Hotel?
- Choice: large shopping or amenities for workers (small shops, restaurants)? Critical choice as we shift to employment center.
- Rt. 1 couldn't be walkable – it's a major thoroughfare.

- Next step of the Rt. 1 upgrade should be a by-pass for I-295, Rt. 88. Signage, divert some traffic, double density of commercial buildings, mixed use, e.g. Malden, MA.
- Demand for 1500-2500, as much as 4500 sq ft office space, Class A

Retail in Rt. 1 South

- Recognize that Rt. 1 is a retail space
- Consider how to use vacant buildings such as the theatre near Walmart and Old Shaw's. E.g. smaller shops, restaurants, subdivide the space.
- Infrastructure – Rt.1 as a commuting route not conducive to retail. Need to separate commuting from local traffic.
- Is retail attracting folks from outside the town? What community should we be attracting from? Could/should Falmouth be destination retail? Is this only Big Box?
- It's a problem if the shopping center is half empty – it drives away business. Also, if the shopping center is at the entrance to the area.

Rt. 100

- Don't forget West Falmouth, Rt. 100 area
- Potential new Turnpike exit into W. Falmouth north of Exit 53 could be a game changer

Zoning

- Zoning ordinances have "paralyzed" renovation of Big Box spaces. The numbers don't work. Demographics also work against it. Specifically, changing the theatre at all triggers \$millions of improvements. Where's the payback?
- Renovations of small amounts of space triggers high costs – not level playing field versus new construction.
- Is it the big box issue or would smaller shops work? Costs are in retrofits to current standards triggered by small amount of space improved.
- Some zoning ordinances do not meet national standards, e.g., lighting, signage. If used Falmouth standards, would not meet national safety standards.
- Simplify zoning ordinances – too time consuming for development
- Overlapping zones can be complicated