

Baseline and Current Course: *Preserve, Cultivate, React*

Scenario Visions

This is a reactive scenario, which is limited in new development and revenue growth. This scenario assumes that perceptions about development in the town remain mostly unchanged. Over the short-, medium-, and long-term, it is understood that in the course of accommodating economic, social, and housing trends some changes may be necessary.

Challenges

Office park vacancies, abatements, and stagnant commercial property values strain the tax base. Revenue streams for municipal services will need to adjust for the shifting tax base. Planning for capital projects and housing demand.

Approaches:

Using marketing and collaboration to support existing businesses and attract appropriate uses to fill vacancies. Preserving and leveraging existing assets, such as open space and historical assets.

Outcomes

Boxborough addresses issues as they arise, without substantial change for the next 15-20 years. Continued decline of commercial tax base, with increasing residential tax burden. Preservation and potential growth of open space.

Issues Addressed in this Scenario

This scenario incorporates and compliments the Rural and Village-Style Development scenarios, while maintaining the current actions the town is taking to address tax abatement and vacancy concerns in the office parks, new business development and municipal water concerns. It supports regulatory changes in all commercial districts as identified in the 2030 Master Plan and creates new synergies and efficiencies between them and amplifies the success of new developments in each district.

Maintaining a balanced business environment

Business

Location: Blue Coat Tech Central



Challenge:

- High office park vacancy rates.
- Stagnant value of commercial and industrial properties in town.
- Impact on tax base.

Approach:

- Collaborate with property owners to develop a marketing strategy that will attract businesses to fill vacancies and appropriate types of business for existing land uses.
- Create a business association to hear issues from and support current business owners.

Existing Assets

Location: Beaver Brook



Challenge:

- Potential for supportive economic activity is limited by a lack of new development.
- Make places in town economically sustainable without changing town character.

Approach:

- Develop a scenic or heritage guide to promote engagement with natural and historical assets.
- Increase programming and events at conservation and recreation spaces.

Manage municipal services and capital projects

Municipal Services

Location: Fire Station



Challenge:

- Funding capital projects and high-quality municipal services without new commercial or industrial tax revenue.

Approach:

- Adjust tax rates as needed to support demand placed on services by residents.
- Alter zoning to support continued demand for housing in Boxborough, in order to add more residential tax revenue.

Implementation Process

Short Term

- Work to attract businesses to fill vacancies and support existing businesses.
- Develop a strategy for leveraging existing assets.

Medium Term

- Investigate the development of new municipal facilities.
- Investigate policies that support high-quality municipal services.

Long Term

- Revisit economic development strategies for the next 15-20 years.
- Assess future growth and how to accommodate housing demand and costs.

