



## **Edgartown Planning Board**

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### **Municipal Master Plans - Q & A**

#### **WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN?**

In simple terms, a Master Plan is a vision for how a Town will develop over time.

In Massachusetts, cities and towns are required periodically to develop a master plan that defines municipal goals and policies relating to:

- land use,
- housing,
- economic development,
- natural and cultural resources,
- open space and recreation,
- services and facilities,
- transportation, and
- master plan implementation.

According to State statute, each master plan should be “designed to provide a basis for decision-making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality.”

#### **DO WE HAVE TO HAVE A MASTER PLAN?**

Yes. Section 81D of Chapter 41 of the General Laws requires that any town with a Planning Board develop a Comprehensive Master Plan.

#### **WHY IS A MASTER PLAN IMPORTANT?**

It provides local elected officials with guidance regarding how areas should be zoned, the standards that should be incorporated in the Zoning Bylaw and other development standards.

Information in a Master Plan can help a wide variety of public and private entities, including schools, utilities, emergency services, etc., and help Town Officials plan for and implement long term capital and service needs.

#### **WHAT SHOULD BE IN A MASTER PLAN?**

By law, a Master Plan must include sections on Natural & Cultural Resources, Economic Development, Housing, Land Use, Open Space & Recreation, Facilities & Services, and Circulation & Transportation. A Master Plan may consider other areas, i.e., harbor management, fishing and aquaculture, etc.

A Master Plan must also have an implementation section, describing how – and when - goals are to be achieved.

**DON'T WE HAVE ONE ALREADY?**

Yes. In April 1990, The Edgartown Master Plan was adopted by Annual Town Meeting. The plan is available for through the Planning Board section of the Town's website.

**HOW IS A MASTER PLAN ORGANIZED?**

There is no required format for a Town's Master Plan. As a town develops its master plan, it may employ a format or organization that best suits their needs.

**WHAT SHOULDN'T BE IN A MASTER PLAN?**

Master Plans should provide top-down guidance for a Town, and should establish an overarching "mission" statement, set some goals with a timetable for achievement, and even suggest some strategies for reaching those goals. However, a well-written Master Plan will not bind the town to any specific task or operation, leaving the decisions regarding critical details to the town employees, elected boards and Town Meeting.

**HOW WILL THE CURRENT MASTER PLAN BE UPDATED?**

In late 2019, the Edgartown Planning Board will be appointing a Master Plan Steering Committee. That Committee will be charged to update the plan in 2020-2022.

**WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF THE PLANNING BOARD AND EDGARTOWN TOWN MEETING IN THE MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS?**

The roles of these entities are established by Massachusetts General Laws, and can be summarized as follows:

The Planning Board prepares a proposed Master Plan, which usually incorporates individual Master Plan elements. The Planning Board reviews and recommends to Town Meeting the zoning map and ordinance and any amendments thereof.

Edgartown Town Meeting will review and adopt the Master Plan.

**WHERE CAN I FIND A COPY OF THE CURRENT MASTER PLAN AND/OR THE ZONING BYLAW?**

Digital copies of the 1990 Master Plan and other Planning Documents, as well as the Edgartown Zoning Bylaw can be accessed from Planning Board page on the Edgartown municipal web site.

All of these documents are also available for review at the Planning Office during regular business hours, Monday thru Friday between 8:00 AM and 4:00PM.