

## Claremont Master Plan Visioning Session- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 3/3/16

### RESULTS

#### Strengths/Weaknesses Results

**Question 1: What do you think are Claremont's greatest strengths for attracting new economic development?**

#### Summary of Comments:

Historic feel  
Arts efforts - 11  
Amtrak -1111  
Proximity to transportation infrastructure  
Workforce  
Available buildings & land – 111  
Great location with easy access to Boston, Burlington, grade A nature)  
Proximity to 91/metro areas - 1111111  
Proximity/access to Dartmouth - 11  
Empty buildings near rail and interstate access  
Available land – 111  
Low cost real estate – 1111111111  
Multiple real estate options  
Plenty of empty buildings that could be renovated for prospective tenants  
Price & availability of building lots  
Opportunity for growth  
Developed land, ie utilities, etc  
Infrastructure – 1111  
A mile of water for industry  
Spaces for growth, lower rent compared to northern Upper Valley  
Location in relation to other communities and major roads  
Good geographic location - 1111  
Good planning department  
Affordable housing -11111  
Available housing stock - 11  
Access to basics  
Robust parks & recreation system - 11  
Quality of life – 111111  
Natural resources; parks, trails, waterways, lakes, mountains  
Physical location – rivers, mountains & proximity to 91 & Vermont  
(Potential) quality of life (meaning the potential is inhibited)  
Attitude of community members  
River Valley Community College  
Claremont downtown is beautiful  
Good locations available for development  
Community Center – 11111  
Schools, library  
Committed community  
Historical infrastructure  
Availability of business rental properties

The people -11  
Fair workforce  
Try to be helpful  
MakerSpace  
Relatively cheap labor  
Transportation options (train, air, public transportation)  
Central to train, major highways & recreation areas  
Access to rail & interstate  
Educational facilities to train workforce with specific skill sets  
Schools – K to Z and College  
The tech center at high school & community college  
Full day kindergarten  
Potential for future  
Picturesque community  
Potential to stop looking back & dwelling on bad choices and look to the future  
Friendly  
Low development costs  
Tremendous progress that has been happening in Claremont in the last 10 years  
Claremont’s people – who overall are very hardworking and community-minded  
Area to expand buildings – Plenty of space to be developed  
Look to the “new economy”  
Look at localizing our economy  
Local attractions – recreation, physical beauty  
Amazing amount of woods and parks; beauty - 11  
Big beautiful skys; nice wooded trails  
New businesses investing in Claremont  
Currently existing key businesses – Red River, NFR, CanAm, Common Man  
Many possibilities to set up business with available spaces  
Good central location  
Fiske Free Library  
Historic character and quality architecture  
People need positive outlook of city  
Lots of opportunity to be part of the community  
Lots of open space (buildings) = lots of potential  
Vacant buildings  
Great community; plenty of opportunity  
Big city; lots of space  
Relatively inexpensive to live here  
Cost of living  
Schools  
Lots of options; diversity in opportunity – ex small businesses in City Center, large box stores on Washington St.  
City layout  
Planning & Development department – 111111  
New Mayor - 11

**Question 2: What weaknesses are hindering Claremont's ability to attract new economic development?**

**Summary of Comments:**

Poverty wages mean that people cannot support local business  
Poverty wages mean a dissatisfied population who self-medicate to cope.  
Poverty wages mean quality employees go elsewhere  
Poverty wages mean criminal business looks inviting to poorly employed people  
Population does not have a lot of disposable income to use. Many businesses have left for this reason.  
Not a lot of disposable income  
Lack of market rate paying jobs above entry level in many fields  
Need more available jobs  
New stronger labor pool - 11  
Trained workforce to match the job openings - 11111  
Large number of minimally skilled residents – 11111111  
Lack of training programs  
Disconnect between available jobs & people to fill them  
Educated workforce (lack of) - 111  
Uneducated/unable work force – 111  
Educated drug free work force  
Need greater training in basic work skills – no drugs, etc  
Limited education  
Prevalent attitudes at education  
Low educational level  
Perception of Claremont-111  
Get welfare out of city  
Poor state of infrastructure  
Building owners vs affordability  
Not reading the people that this is truly effecting  
Favoritism in government  
Crime  
Drug issues - 111  
Develop airport the way developing Amtrak travel  
Transportation that serves all areas of Claremont  
Negative attitudes of citizens/business owners  
Negative resident attitudes, especial on social media/online  
Bad reputation  
Lacking in creative non-profits for families to identify with  
Properties that have been neglected by owners  
Derelict abandoned buildings  
Housing  
Low school standings compared to others  
Negativity - 111  
Road from Vermont to downtown, Main St., is very unattractive – 1  
Entry's to Claremont, especially from VT are not attractive. Needs to be beautiful.  
More public benches – will attract people to stay and enjoy a more socially active street scene  
Lack of vibrancy; especially in downtown  
Not much fun, social, creative stuff to do  
Arts/culture  
High property taxes - 1111111111111111

High electric rates  
Price of water  
Lack of incentives  
Historic restrictions  
Community livability – transportation, cultural options  
Not enough interested people  
Lack of high quality early childhood education –11  
Focus on youth  
Middle class is gone  
School system – 1111  
School district reputation  
Education – from cost of to output (students)  
Poor education of students  
Better paved main roads  
Poor roads & sidewalks – lack of, condition, maintenance  
Finishing rail trail – walking path around Claremont  
Connections (roads) to other areas for quick & easy access  
Low income housing  
Need to get Pleasant Street full, Charlestown and River Roads developed/industry & retail that will drive even more people from Walpole up & VT side also  
Misconception of tax rate verses actual tax bill  
Perception of taxes  
A more open-minded view of positive change in our common spaces – ie give more thought on the social uses of our parks  
Absentee landlords – just don't care about our future  
Lack of young families  
Keeping young families here  
Lack of workforce housing  
The people  
Not have people attending these meetings  
Removing drugs from streets  
Deteriorating City Center; look of downtown – 11  
Downtown with so many vacant stores. However, city is finally doing something by putting properties up for auction  
Perception of poor schools - 11  
The perception is that Claremont's schools are weak. Improve the schools & they will come  
Poor perception of others of the community, especially schools  
Bring in the arts  
Closed mindedness  
Fear  
High levels of poverty and mental illness/drug use - 11  
Need more walking paths that are not used as ATV or snowmobile traffic – strictly for walking  
Schools – tear down CMS/Maple and construct modern middle/elementary school. Tear down Bluff & Disnard and rebuild  
Stop spending money to put a band-aid on roads which last 18 months & make the investment to solve the issue, ie Grissom, Buenavista, OHS  
Work with landlords to fix downtown business. If not rented, put up window dressings.  
Communication. Unless you drive by the H.S. you may not know when school budget vote is.  
Need an additional convention hotel  
City Management  
Regulations

Need a larger staff for Planning Dept  
Disconnect between city, county & schools  
Planning Board  
Zoning Board  
Lack of staff expertise in planning  
Far too harsh & arbitrary building codes  
Difficulty to get approvals  
Old ordinances  
Convoluting processes (planning/zoning, etc)  
Too hard – In any business (which the city of Claremont is) you need to make it easy for people. They have other options – make them choose us  
Building codes – 11  
Cost of renovation of buildings to bring them up to code  
Need more code flexibility  
Too many demands being made to developers and change of use properties that are discouraging. A long time old complaint (fire and building codes)