

Chapter II GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

"The term 'smart growth' is no longer just an indifferent phrase pertaining to other communities in other states. In Loudon, we must now exercise smart growth in order to provide adequate services for our residents and to create a healthy environment in which to raise our families in anticipation of inevitable and most often desirable development."

- Loudon 2001 Master Plan Steering Committee

2001 MASTER PLAN GOALS

The definition of a "goal", for Master Planning purposes, is the general target to be reached through completing a series of tasks. These tasks are called "objectives" which are designed to meet the goal. Specific "recommendations" are made which accomplish the objective. Historically, the terms are used interchangeably and this chapter attempts to synthesize the old material, where applicable, into an appropriate designation for ease of understanding and comparison.

The goals of a Master Plan not only direct the focus of the actual Master Plan preparation, they are also the basis for regulation changes, for capital improvements program funding, and for future planning priorities. In order to move forward with new recommendations for the Town, it is necessary to examine the past efforts and outcomes of previous Master Plan and community endeavors.

From looking at the past, we can help gauge our present and guide ourselves into the future. In addition to the 1992 and 1997 findings, the answers to the 2001 Community Survey gave us more insight into the priorities and concerns of the public. From there, from the previous findings, and from knowledge gained by collecting new statistical data about the Town, a set of 2001 Master Plan Goals are being recommended as the culmination of this Plan:

2001 Master Plan Goals

1. Preserve and protect historical structures, locations, and features and continue to provide cultural opportunities to Loudon residents.
2. Continue to monitor and analyze population data and trends to ensure that services and needs are adequately provided and growth is directed through regulatory means.
3. Promote economic expansion of commercial and industrial enterprises, the revitalization of the Village District, and the creation of aesthetically pleasing nodal development along NH 106.
4. Assess the demand of future growth in Loudon to accommodate a reasonably fair share of the region's housing demand, including providing for continued housing opportunities for seniors and low and moderate income households, as well as encouraging various types of development, including open space development.
5. Establish a working relationship between the Conservation Commission, various Town boards, and local, state, and regional organizations to preserve and protect Loudon's open space, agricultural lands, forests, water bodies, and wildlife.
6. Anticipate, plan, and budget for the adequate provision of public services, community facilities, recreation, protection of the aquifer, location and protection of a future public water supply, open space and conservation lands, and other resources for a growing and changing population.
7. Provide recreational opportunities for citizens of all ages and abilities in Loudon, which can include the creation of new or the expansion of existing facilities.
8. Expand cable and cellular coverage and provide the necessary infrastructure of water and natural gas to all households in Loudon.
9. Assess the existing transportation infrastructure, identify its strong points, and adopt new strategies to improve vehicular, pedestrian, and non-motorized uses.
10. Identify those areas of Town most appropriate for commercial or industrial uses, minimize future land use conflicts in the interest of preserving property values, the quality of existing neighborhoods, historic sites and buildings, and the Town's rural environment.

2001 MASTER PLAN CHAPTER-SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Each chapter of this Master Plan lists a series of Recommendations at the end of the chapter in order to reach the Objectives set forth in the beginning of each chapter.

Chapter III - Historical and Cultural Overview

- To preserve the historical resources of Loudon, including stone walls, old buildings, landmarks, cemeteries, and cellar holes, and to encourage their stewardship;
- To promote the collection and preservation of historical artifacts relative to the history of Loudon;
- To encourage cultural events and the participation of residents in such events within Town through workshops, guest presentations, Old Home Day, and the Historical Society; and
- To develop, maintain, and update the history of the Town of Loudon.

Chapter IV - Population

- To provide the most accurate population numbers which will influence how the Town responds to the continuing residential growth;
- To analyze the risks and benefits of the current growth rate to assist the other Chapters of this Master Plan; and
- To examine the locations of potential future residential and commercial growth and to predict their effects on the community.

Chapter V - Economics

- To promote “quality of life” economics that capitalize on the Soucook River, trail systems, cultural areas, farms, bed-and-breakfasts, and other recreational and tourism opportunities in order to preserve these resources, as well as to encourage appropriate businesses which environmentally support these enterprises;
- To promote businesses in the Village District which will create a thriving Village Center with a sense of community where residents can obtain services and products, and participate in social opportunities within a short walking distance;
- To promote the creation of new retail businesses and professional offices which are easily accessible along Route 106, Route 129, Shaker Road, and in the Village but are contained as such that other businesses are drawn to their locations and possibly expanding those areas by the creation of access roads in a manner that harmonizes the traditional and rural characteristics of the community with commercial use;
- To promote commercial and industrial enterprises in orderly, well-landscaped developments which take advantage of highway accessibility through the use of access roads and existing commercial/industrial parks; and

- To promote architectural and landscaping standards within the Village and along Route 106 to retain historic and rural character.

Chapter VI - Housing

- To encourage the development of a senior housing complex within the Village as an affordable housing option in order to meet the needs of the community;
- To encourage energy-conservation methods and design for the construction of new homes and for the rehabilitation of existing homes, including the use of solar energy and energy-efficient materials;
- To encourage the use of open space development, which is currently known as cluster development in the Land Development Regulations, in order to preserve open space and retain the Town's rural character; and
- To promote wise residential development as Loudon grows and to guide both population and housing growth in a proactive manner.

Chapter VII - Conservation, Preservation, and Open Space

- To preserve the visual character of the Town of Loudon by protecting its natural, historic, scenic, and agricultural resources;
- To promote the conservation, protection, and sound management of the Town's natural resources;
- To provide recreational opportunities for all ages and user groups;
- To educate the citizens and Town officials in Loudon on the importance of protecting the Town's natural resources and open space;
- To modify local land use controls to protect natural and cultural resources;
- To ensure local compliance with Federal and State Regulations, which would include gravel excavation and bio-solids;
- To acquire development rights, conservation easements, or fee ownership of lands of special importance; and
- To involve town boards, and public, private, and state organizations in the protection of Loudon's resources.

Chapter VIII - Community Facilities

- To assess the present condition of the Town's community facilities, equipment, and services and gauge the residents' opinions on how well they feel the Town is performing these services;
- To anticipate future demands on Loudon's community facilities in consideration of future population growth and development; and
- To inventory capital equipment which can be placed into a Capital Improvements Program for planned replacement.

Chapter IX - Recreational Facilities

- To identify existing recreational facilities and opportunities within Loudon and to determine if they meet the needs of the population;
- To determine potential locations for future recreational opportunities; and
- To facilitate the linkage, via trail or sidewalk of Village Road, to Loudon's recreational opportunities to promote safety in recreational programs.

Chapter X - Utilities

- To gauge the current and maximum capacity levels of utility service, including telephone, cable, telecommunications, gas, electricity, and internet in Town;
- To identify the locations and range of service for each service provider;
- To project the anticipated future need for services given population growth and new technology development; and
- To inform citizens of technology options and raise awareness of our deficiencies in public water and sewer systems.

Chapter XI - Transportation

- To encourage the safe travel of pedestrians and bicyclists along North Village Road, South Village Road, and School Street, as well as for the safe passage between the Elementary School, Town Offices, Recreational Fields, the Safety Complex, and the Library;
- Provide a well-maintained, safe, and cost-effective transportation system that meets the functional and aesthetic needs of the community;
- To identify hazardous roadways, intersections, and conditions and recommend ways to make the transportation network safer and more efficient; and
- To maintain a commitment to the rural and historic character of the community.

Chapter XII - Existing and Future Land Use

- To evaluate the past and present uses of the land in Loudon;
- To review community opinion and the existing regulations and ordinances on the use of the land in Loudon;
- To provide suggestions for the future utilization of land in the form of amendments to the regulations and ordinances;
- To promote the orderly growth of the Town by providing for public and other open space while encouraging reasonable development of land;
- To prevent scattered premature or undesirable subdivision and development of land as would involve danger or injury to health, safety, welfare, and prosperity of the community by the reason of the lack of water supply, satisfactory drainage, adequate transportation, or by other public services that would require excessive expenditure of public funds to provide such services;
- To protect and preserve the value of land, buildings and improvements of land throughout the municipality and to minimize the conflicts of uses between land and buildings;
- To provide safe traffic circulation and access management, including adequate entrances and exits, traffic flow, sight distances, curb cuts, turning lanes, and traffic signage and signalization;
- To ensure harmonious and aesthetically pleasing development of the Town in its environs;
- To encourage the use of open space development, which is currently known as cluster development in the Land Development Regulations, in order to preserve open space and retain the Town's rural character; and
- To promote the monitoring and enforcement of gravel pit reclamation of all gravel operations.

COMMUNITY GOALS: FROM THE 2000 COMMUNITY SURVEY BACK TO THE 1981 MASTER PLAN

2000 Community Survey

As explained more fully in the INTRODUCTION, an eight-page Community Survey was produced and mailed in March 2000 to all households and out-of-town property owners in Loudon to obtain their opinions on a variety of issues within Town. A 36.8% response rate was obtained and the tabulated results are depicted in their respective chapters.

Definitive, but unsurprising, themes emerged from the results (the full survey results are found in the APPENDIX). These themes included the desire for keeping Loudon rural, the attraction of tourism-based businesses, increased recreational opportunities, the building of senior housing, and concerns of the impacts of the New Hampshire International Speedway on community character. These themes were integrated into the 2001 Master Plan as it was being developed and also helped to form the 2001 Goals and Objectives.

1999 Preliminary Chapter Work

The Planning Board worked for many months on beginning the process of a Master Plan update in 1997. Rough draft chapters were produced in 1999 that yielded some interesting information that is quite useful for the comprehensive 2001 Master Plan.

1999 Preliminary Chapter Work

Key Issues

- The largest groundwater aquifer in New England underlies 20% of the Town, and appropriate protection measures should be investigated.
- The growing population will require more/better Town services and programs.
- The transportation network should be well-maintained and safe for residents and visitors.
- Since new home construction and business/industry locations are on the rise, thought should be given to appropriate placement of new structures in conjunction with the revision of Town regulations.

Some of the data and information that was collected in the preliminary work has been used in this Master Plan.

1997 Community Profile

A Community Profile was held in November of 1997 in conjunction with the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension (UNHCE). Attended by over 70 townspeople, this intensive, two-day session yielded a number of long- and short-term goals. In addition, a number of specific ideas were collected on this series of topics that were the focus of the Community Profile: Effective Community Leadership, Informed Citizen Participation, Intergroup Relations, Keeping our Cultural Heritage Strong, Education and Social Services, Community Infrastructure, Natural Resources Base, Working Landscape, Economic Vitality, and Local Business and Local Wealth.

November 1997 Community Profile Findings Summary

Key Issues

- Develop Town Center and Community Life
- Communication/Cooperation
- Economic Development
- Natural Resource Protection and Rural Life Preservation
- Education: Human Resource Protection and Development

Project Priorities

- Community Information Coordinator
- Town Center
- Establish and Enforce Local Standards to Protect Quality of the Environment
- Economic Development Plan

Several projects emerged as a result of this workshop. The Loudon Communications Council formed to communicate Town activities to its residents through the *Loudon Ledger*, a publication that is distributed approximately every six weeks. They also produced a website (www.loudonnh.com) in conjunction with the Loudon Economic Development Committee to allow residents and non-residents alike access to Town activities, through an on-line copy of the *Loudon Ledger*. The website also gives an economic and opportunity overview of the Town to attract businesses, and encourages businesses to list their enterprises on the website.

Another group, the Village District Committee, formed to investigate the need for a downtown area whose residents would have access to community facilities, recreational opportunities, and stores, and to ensure that the character of the village remained rural and pleasant. All groups have put forth tremendous effort, with a great deal of success, to unite the people and the community of Loudon.

1985 and 1992 Master Plans

The 1985 Master Plan was the first comprehensive inventory of the Town and provided the basis for adoption of the Zoning Ordinance in March 1987 and the consolidated Land Development Regulations, comprised of both the subdivision and new site plan review regulations, in July 1987. Most of the recommendations of the 1985 Master Plan dealt with establishing policies and regulations, including a growth management strategy and a Capital Improvements Program.

The 1985 and 1992 Master Plans shared the same goals, but provided many different recommendations in order to reach these goals. Priorities may have changed, but ultimately, these goals still reflect the sentiment of townspeople today.

The 1992 Master Plan utilized new 1990 Census data and made comparisons with neighboring communities to formulate a detailed list of recommendations for each chapter of the Master Plan.

1985 and 1992 Master Plan Goals and Objectives

1. To provide a rational and scientific basis for fair and environmentally sound land development practices and appropriate levels of regulation in the Town of Loudon;
2. To identify critical areas including wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, and aquifer resources and provide for the maximum feasible protection of the town's water resources;
3. To assess the demands of future growth in Loudon which accommodate a reasonable, but not burdensome, share of the region's housing demands, including providing for continued housing opportunities for low and moderate income households;
4. To identify those areas of town most appropriate for commercial or industrial uses to encourage a balanced property tax base, and to concentrate such uses near major highways to reduce the impact of such developments on existing and future rural residential areas;
5. To minimize future land use conflicts in the interest of preserving property values, the quality of existing neighborhoods, historic sites and buildings, and the town's rural environment;
6. To retain and encourage active agricultural productivity and the protection of agricultural land resources;
7. To direct the pattern of future economic and housing growth, including the preservation of opportunities for traditional home occupations and home-based businesses at a scale which ensures the retention of the residential character of rural and non-commercial areas;
8. To anticipate and plan for the adequate provision of public services, community facilities, recreational, open space and conservation lands, and resources for a growing and changing population;
9. To integrate community attitude and opinions about growth and development policies with the techniques of land capability analysis and statutory requirements for Master Plan preparation into a plan for future patterns of land use; and
10. To encourage an on-going public discussion of Loudon's future, its land use and regulatory process, community facilities planning, and other issues relating to desirable and environmentally sound growth management policies.

Some of the successes that resulted from the 1992 Master Plan process include the creation of areas for industrial development on International Drive and at the Shaker Industrial Park; the approval of Pine Ridge Estates' expansion to encourage affordable housing opportunities; expanded opportunities for home occupation through zoning changes; on-going action to revise the 1992 Master Plan based upon current issues; creation of the Village District in order to accommodate mixed uses and to foster a community downtown character; the rehabilitation of existing and the creation of new structures for a new community building, a new library, and a new fire department; modification of regulations to encourage agricultural enterprises; digitizing the tax maps onto an AutoCAD system for easier updating and tracking of properties in Town; and creation of an active Conservation Commission which has been busily working on protecting significant resources in Town for present and future generations.

1981 Master Plan

Developed by the volunteer Planning Board over a period of several years, the 1981 Master Plan's goals were all-encompassing in their simplicity:

1981 Master Plan Goals

- Maintain the rural and residential character of Loudon
- Assure that the basic needs of health, safety, and dwelling are met for all residents
- Encourage the continued use of lands for agriculture and forestry activities
- Encourage the protection of natural resources and areas of educational, environmental, and/or historic value
- Direct development activities in such a manner so as to be compatible with the general purposes of this Master Plan

The recommendations of the 1981 Plan included establishing a committee to closely examine growth and its impact on community facilities; establishing a committee to attract new commercial and industrial development and where they should be located; establishing a committee to examine recreational opportunities; and a listing of specific options for the protection of agricultural land, forests, the Soucook River, wetlands, and historic sites.

Although the Planning Board and Conservation Commission were active Boards in Town, the 1981 Master Plan became the catalyst for the contemporary planning process through which the official Zoning Ordinance and site plan review regulations were developed after the completion of the 1985 Master Plan. Subdivision Regulations had been in place since 1970.

SUMMARY

The history of community goals for the Town of Loudon is extensive. Most goals are ongoing and require attention on a regular basis in order to keep pace with changing rules, regulations, and social conditions. With a thorough list of 2001 Goals for Loudon, Objectives for each Chapter, and a comprehensive inventory of implementable Recommendations, the 2001 Master Plan is designed to be a document to shape the growth of the Town for the coming years.