

COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENTS

This chapter offers three sets of guidelines for the future of Kingston. The first set is derived from the previous master plan. The second series of guidelines is derived from the Town's involvement in a community profile exercise overseen by UNH Cooperative Extension Service. The final set of guidelines were developed by the New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions. Each of these instruments provides direction for the Town in meeting the future needs of its residents.

The last master plan adopted by the Town was completed in 1986. In this document there was a goals and objectives section which outlined a number of ideas regarding land use and future planning directives for Kingston. A review of these earlier master plan goals finds them to remain relevant and are included here as a way to carry forward these concepts from the previous master plan.

Goal 1

To protect and maintain a clean and healthful environment and to promote the conservation of Kingston's natural resources.

Objectives:

- 1) Ensure clean water in the lakes, ponds, streams and groundwater systems in Kingston.*
- 2) Ensure adequate and safe disposal of residential wastes.*
- 3) Protect air quality.*
- 4) Protect wetland environments.*
- 5) Protect habitat supporting unique wildlife species.*

Goal 2

To preserve and enhance the rural, recreational, and historic character of Kingston.

Objectives:

- 1) Protect and enhance the town center as a central business district and public gathering area.*
- 2) Preserve and properly manage forested and agricultural areas.*
- 3) Maintain the integrity of the historic district.*
- 4) Maintain a mixture of rural, residential and agricultural uses in the areas surrounding the town center.*
- 5) Ensure orderly growth and discourage sprawling and haphazard development.*
- 6) Restrict commercial and industrial development to specific areas.*

Goal 3

To ensure that industrial and commercial development is appropriate to the community.

Objectives;

- 1) Cooperate with new industrial and commercial development to provide adequate public utilities and services.*
- 2) Carefully review industrial and commercial development to ensure they are safely sited and will not adversely affect the community.*

Goal 4

To ensure that adequate public services are provided consistent with the long term interests of the town.

Objectives:

- 1) Develop a Capital Improvements Program to carry out long range planning and provide necessary public services in a manner that will maintain a stable tax rate.*
- 2) Ensure a safe and well-maintained system of roads.*
- 3) Provide adequate health, educational and welfare services to meet the needs of the community.*
- 4) Maintain fire and police facilities and personnel sufficient to meet town needs.*

Goal 5

To encourage an adequate supply of housing that satisfies the needs and desires of all ages and income groups in the community, which offers an attractive living environment and which fosters interchange between new and long-time residents.

Goal 6

To encourage diverse recreational opportunities within Kingston.

Objectives:

- 1) Maintain a social sense of community within Kingston.*
- 2) Maintain and expand recreational facilities to meet the needs of the town's citizens*
- 3) Develop a system of parks and natural areas to preserve open space.*

The Town of Kingston participated in a visioning process developed by the University of New Hampshire called, "Community Profiles", in the Fall of 1999. This program asks residents to come together for one weekend and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their community and establish a framework for addressing community-wide issues in a constructive way. One of the benefits of this program is that the assembled group develops a set of priority projects and attendant actions necessary to accomplish the priority project. In several instances these priority projects provide invaluable direction to the community master planning process.

In this section the vision of the Community Profiles participants are reviewed. In addition, the priority projects determined by the Community Profile are discussed with respect to their relevance to the community master planning process.

The following comments are the result of Community Profile participants being asked to detail their ideas for the future of Kingston. These are not necessarily reflective of the thoughts of a majority of residents of town but do display the wide range of topics thought to be important by the program participants. These ideas have been grouped into 5 topic areas simply to facilitate their inclusion in the master plan.

1.0 FUTURE LAND USE VISIONS

- *There should be controlled residential expansion with a blend of responsible businesses*
- *Industrial parks are encouraged but should be away from residential areas*
- *Maintain rural character; preserve rural quality*
- *Maintain what we like now - open spaces between homes*
- *Preserve working farms*
- *Less or no used car lots*

- *Protect woodlands*
- *Maintain significant percentage of town land as green space*
- *Re-zone (for the tax base you can't see).*
- *Identify land parcels that can be encouraged to be preserved.*
- *Initiate warrant articles for capital reserve fund for purchase of conservation easements and/or open space.*
- *Grocery store*
- *Business development plan*
- *More day care centers*
- *A coffee house that serves more than drip coffee and serves as a cultural center for youth groups and all ages*
- *Routes for trucks other than around the center*
- *No neon signs around the Plains*
- *Preserving rural character including historic district and Plains (continue and expand activities).*
- *Establish a "Chamber of Commerce-type business group."*

2.0 FUTURE COMMUNITY FACILITIES VISION

- *Construct or retrofit a Senior center*
- *To create a sense of community; develop/build a community center.*
- *Define and develop public water source*
- *New highway garage and fire station*
- *Complete recreation facilities at fairgrounds*
- *More use of town owned land for recreational purposes*
- *Community television center*
- *A new auditorium with new stage for movie theater*
- *Adequate meeting facilities*
- *A new High School*
- *Local communication infrastructure*
- *Recreation Center and ball fields, enough for youth and adults*
- *New library*
- *Televised Planning and Zoning Board meetings*
- *Hire a town manager*
- *Code compliance person.*

3.0 HOUSING VISIONS

- *Retirement housing*
- *Implement Rockingham Planning Commission's affordable housing plan*
- *Have condos*

4.0 NATURAL AND WATER RESOURCES PROTECTION VISIONS

- *Protecting aquifers*
- *Protecting the small lakes from over population*
- *Comprehensive analysis of aquifer and its relationship to the community.*
- *Improve and protect water resources*
- *Need for developing master plan to preserve water resources, open space, trails, village character, and development of Route 125 as relates to town character.*
- *Need to understand risk factors and unintended consequences of development on natural resources*
- *Clearly identify those business opportunities that we can place on the aquifer without having problems in order to broaden the tax base.*
- *Understand the current rules that apply to the aquifer and why they exist as they do.*
- *Update aquifer protection ordinance to bring up to current technology.*
- *Identify what can be done outside the aquifer for growth and development.*

5.0 FUTURE TRANSPORTATION VISIONS

- *Accessible public transportation*
- *Manage Route 125 and Route 111 access.*

After reviewing all of these vision policies the participants of the Community Profile program arrived at six priority projects that were determined to be of the greatest importance to the Town. These priority projects are as follows:

- ❖ *Proactive Community Planning*
- ❖ *Creation of A Community Center*
- ❖ *Working with Kingston's Aquifer*
- ❖ *Hiring a Town Administrator*
- ❖ *Preserving Rural Character*
- ❖ *Town-wide Communication*

Of these six, community planning, Kingston's aquifer, and the preservation of rural character are frequently addressed in this master plan. Community planning was seen by participants in the visioning process as the most direct way to influence the Town's future development.

The participants viewed the aquifer issue as being like a double-edged sword. On the one side it was understood that the aquifer is a vital natural resource that needs to be protected; but on the other side concerns were raised that current protections might unduly restrict business enterprise to the future detriment of Kingston. Striking the proper balance between these sides was the desired outcome of the Community Profile participants.

Preserving rural character is the third item addressed in several section of the master plan. Historically this has been a primary goal in past master plans. Community attitude surveys as recently as 1998 ranked preservation of rural character as one of the top five desires of residents and as reflected in the chapters that follow many of the strategies discussed in this master plan are directed to the goal of ensuring that Kingston's rural tradition is fostered well into the future.

The other three topics, creation of a community center, hiring a town administrator, and town-wide communication, prioritized by the Community Profile process are mentioned to a lesser degree in corresponding master plan chapters.

The following principals were developed by the New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions to articulate a framework to achieve good planning in New Hampshire. Central to these principles is the concept that decisions are made at the local level, in the spirit of regional cooperation, with public participation. As such the Kingston Planning Board finds them to be helpful in forming a vision for Kingston's future.

Rather than enumerating specific recommendations, the principles are intended to establish a broad framework to assist communities in making decisions. The planning principles can improve the outcome of development and ultimately the quality of New Hampshire communities in the future.

The principles have been organized within four general categories: **prosperity, sustainability, mobility and livability**. We recognize that the principles are strongly interrelated and often relevant to more than one category, and therefore they are best considered as a comprehensive framework rather than individual principles.

6.0 PROSPERITY

The Kingston Planning Board believes that planning for economic development should be fully integrated in the planning process. Too often the needs and concerns of economic development are considered separate from, and even at odds with, community planning. Communities need to understand and plan for the development they want, while keeping in mind the development they wish to avoid. Prosperity must be considered both at the broad level of community and region, but also at the individual level of property owner.

Planning objectives must therefore seek to achieve a balance of interests which is effective in achieving community objectives yet fair to the individual. A prosperous region considers long-term costs and non-monetary values in policy decisions, and employment opportunities are in balance with the cost of living.

Principles to achieve prosperity for the community:

1. Concentrate development in those zones that have been approved by vote of town meeting.

2. Actively support the economic and cultural vitality of regional and local centers by channeling growth toward them and providing the ingredients needed for successful mixed use.
3. Prevent costly problems in the future by carefully considering potential environmental impacts of alternative development scenarios today.
4. Plan for those with limited means to have access to affordable housing.
5. Work cooperatively in the region to support a sustainable diversified regional economy, and support mechanisms to share the costs and benefits of growth.
6. Seek opportunities to benefit from the economies of scale necessary for cost effective high quality infrastructure and services.
7. Conserve the working landscape of rural areas to maintain rural economy and character.
8. Develop a transportation system that supports economic development by being both financially efficient and effective at moving both people and products.
9. Create an environment attractive to employers who offer livable wages.

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY

The Kingston Planning Board believes that a central role of planning is to ensure the long term value and sustainability of the environment that maintains choices for future generations. The dominant form of development we have experienced in the past half century, characterized by sprawl and an inefficient use of land and resources, will not achieve this sustainability. There exists an urgent need, therefore, to redirect future development in ways that conserve land and open space, protect irreplaceable water resources and wildlife habitats, and preserve the basic ecological services that the natural environment provides.

Poorly planned development, whether resulting in too much development too fast, development of the wrong type, or in the wrong place, can have harmful and costly consequences for generations to come.

Principles to achieve sustainability for the community:

1. Preserve environmentally sensitive areas and link them together with other undeveloped open space into a network of beneficial corridors and large land areas for a diverse mix of wildlife and plant to flourish.
2. Encourage in-fill development in appropriate built areas.
3. Promote best forest management practices.

4. Utilize best management practices to minimize construction around prime and important agricultural soils from development so that land will continue to be available for farming.
5. Implement water quality monitoring programs, develop plans to protect those resources, and protect water quantity.
6. Encourage diversity in housing opportunity and promote the logical placement of new housing developments throughout town. Efforts should be taken to ensure that new residential developments are placed near required services. For this reason the town should locate senior housing and to a lesser extent multifamily and affordable housing developments near the town center. The town center is roughly considered to incorporate a one mile radius around the Kingston Plains. Within this area the town should consider development options such as integrated or mixed use development that incorporates both commercial and residential elements in close proximity. This concept has been seen historically in this area of town and is supported by the requirements of the existing historic District I.
7. Use low impact development strategies in retrofitting existing developments and in designing new developments.
8. Design new facilities and retrofit existing facilities to provide for efficient energy use and better air quality.
9. In order to prevent depletion of resources, match the intensity of development with the carrying capacity of natural resources.

8.0 LIVABILITY

The Kingston Planning Board believes that good planning principles should be applied to local decisions to direct development in ways that maximize public benefit and contribute to quality of life. The communities we plan for and build are the communities we will live with (and in) for generations. Although future development will be mostly determined, as it has been in the past, by private investment decisions, development should be encouraged to create communities that offer such attributes as town centers with mixed uses, walkable neighborhoods, housing affordable to a wide range of incomes, aesthetically attractive buildings that ‘fit’ the character of the community, the preservation of historical landmarks and scenic landscapes. It also means planning for development that provides ample opportunities for daily interaction and which builds the social and cultural fabric of the community.

Principles to achieve livability for the community:

1. Emphasize development of town and village centers which creates walkable communities.

2. Encourage building size, architecture, signage and site design that enhances the aesthetics of the built environment.
3. Promote infill development and redevelopment to bring vitality to Town center and to maximize use of built-up areas.
4. Encourage appropriate mixed use in the existing town center, and in new planned developments to increase opportunities for residents to work close to home. The town center is generally perceived to be a roughly one mile radius around the Kingston Plains.
5. Create well integrated network of sidewalks, walking trails and bicycle facilities to create safe alternative modes for short distance travel and for recreational use.
6. Identify and preserve key natural, cultural and scenic resources to help preserve the appearance and character of places even as they grow and change.
7. The town should attempt to match growth in housing to growth in area employment in as much as the town has the ability to impact market forces outside of municipal boundaries, and take steps to allow new housing that includes a balance of styles, densities, and a distribution of prices that are affordable to a range of income levels.
8. Identify and conserve a system of open space and conservation areas in Kingston to protect wildlife habitat, scenic vistas and endorse passive recreational opportunities.
9. Preserve, improve and create public spaces such as the Kingston Plains, pocket parks, and playgrounds to provide for civic and cultural gatherings.

9.0 MOBILITY

Kingston Planning Board believes that to have prosperous and livable communities, we must have a transportation system that provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Our transportation system creates the connection that makes our regions and communities work. That system also plays a major role in influencing how and where future development occurs. To date, the system consists almost exclusively of roads and highways for the automobile. As our communities have grown larger, more congested and more dispersed it has become increasingly difficult to “keep up” with the need to expand the capacity of those facilities.

We must move toward a more balanced transportation system which makes appropriate use of other modes of travel to meet our needs, such as bus, rail, pedestrian and bicycle modes for moving people, and freight rail for moving goods. We must create and plan development in ways which reduce the need for travel rather than accelerate it. We must also increase investment in local and secondary roads and highways to increase capacity in congested areas and reinforce the existing regional process for prioritizing these needs.

1. Advocate and plan for the most efficient use of the existing and future transportation systems.
2. Develop a true multi-modal transportation system with appropriate support for the pedestrian, bicycle, transit and passenger rail modes.
3. Regional decision making processes should have a meaningful role in selecting and prioritizing transportation improvements.
4. Place a high priority on transportation system safety.
5. Make transportation investments and land use decisions that are mutually supportive.
6. Support the implementation of land use codes that encourage the use of bicycle and pedestrian modes and reduce the use of the private automobile for short local trips.
7. Increase roadway network connectivity and provide additional route choices in all new development.
8. Implement access management techniques that will preserve existing roadway capacity.
9. Support adequate investment in all modes of transportation within the system.