

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A. INTRODUCTION

The 2002 Master Plan update is the product of sixteen months of data collection, analysis, public input and review. This chapter provides an overview of the plan and the various methods of public involvement, and a series of goals and objectives for each plan topic. The goals and objectives were developed from the perceptions and concerns of the Master Plan Committee and the Planning Board, and the results of the 2001 Community Opinion Survey and the 2002 "Community Profile" event. The Master Plan is designed to guide growth and development in Pelham over an eighteen year period. However, changing conditions will require an update of the Plan's basic components at five year intervals.

1. Purpose



Prepared in accordance with New Hampshire RSA 674:1 through 674:4, the 2002 Pelham Master Plan is a policy statement for guiding local land use regulation, transportation improvements, environmental protection and capital improvements for the 2002 to 2020 period. The Plan is also a resource for Pelham citizens, private business and for state and regional officials. The chapter topics include: 1) Population and Housing; 2) Existing Land Use; 3) Natural Resources; 4) Transportation; 5) Community Facilities; 6) Historic Resources; and 7) Future Land Use and Recommendations. Each chapter contains data and analysis, information from a variety of sources presented in tables, illustrations or maps, and specific policy recommendations.

As a political entity, the Town of Pelham does not exist in isolation, and must therefore consider the external forces which influence the community. Wherever possible, the information presented for Pelham in the document is done so within the context of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission region, Hillsborough County, the State of New Hampshire and other areas or regions as appropriate. The Master Plan represents a consensus of the community for addressing the issues and concerns which confront Pelham today and are anticipated to do so in the future. The document represents the final result of the

Town's long-term planning efforts for the 2002 to 2020 period.

2. Community Opinion Survey

For a Master Plan to be effective, it is essential to provide for the participation of Town residents in its development. To ensure public participation, a community opinion survey was conducted in 2001. The results of the community opinion survey were utilized throughout the planning process. The Town mailed out 4,494 surveys, or one for each US Postal Service address in Pelham, in September 2001. In addition, an opportunity was afforded to pick up questionnaire forms for those residents who did not receive one through the mail or when more than one adult per mailing address wished to complete a survey. The survey was also posted on the web site at www.pelham-nh.com. Of the 4,494 surveys sent out, 950 were returned. This is a 21% return and is accepted as a statistically valid response to the survey. The results of the 2001 community survey, as they apply to various chapters of this master plan, can generally be summarized as follows:

a. Population and Housing

When asked “*which statement best characterizes Pelham’s rate of residential growth,*” an overwhelming majority responded “*Pelham is growing too quickly.*” Similarly, an overwhelming majority responded that they “*very much dislike*” the rate of residential growth.

When asked their opinion about which types of housing they wished to see in Pelham, a majority responded that they did not want any more 3 & 4 bedroom apartments or mobile homes. A majority responded that there was not enough elderly housing (age 62 or higher).

b. Natural Resources

When asked about the importance of preserving natural resources, the highest response for the protection of each of: agriculture; groundwater; wetlands; wildlife; forests; open fields; historic buildings; conservation lands; scenic vistas; and trail systems was “*extremely important.*” A majority responded that they would support zoning restrictions to protect all of these resources. A majority responded that taxes should be used to protect conservation lands, forests, groundwater, wetlands and wildlife, but did not support using taxes to protect the remaining listed natural resources.

When asked about various aspects of Pelham, a majority responded that “*Pelham’s rural lifestyle*” very much appeals to them.

When asked about land protection, a majority responded that they would support a land conservation fund if the tax impact were found to be modest.

c. Transportation

When asked about Route 38, Mammoth Road and Windham Road, a majority responded that bike lanes should be added and rural character should be preserved.

When asked about secondary roads, a majority responded that a pedestrian trail system should be created, non-resident traffic and speeds should be reduced and rural character should be preserved. A majority did not support adding sidewalks or an ATV trail system to the local road system.

d. Community Facilities

When asked about additional services, support was given for an outdoor public ice skating rink and a youth recreational facility if the tax impact were found to be minimal. Support was not indicated for an outdoor public swimming pool.

e. Historic Resources

When asked about protecting historic resources in the Town Center, an overwhelming majority responded that they would “*support a program to preserve its historic significance*” and “*support a program to increase the ‘common’ green area and work to beautify and preserve the center’s public space.*”

f. Future Land Use

When asked about what types of commercial activities should be encouraged, a majority responded that the Town should discourage auto repair, gas stations, hotel/motels, junk yards and tattoo parlors. In general, support was given for antique shops, banks, bed and breakfasts, childcare facilities, elder care, garden shops, medical offices and restaurants.

When asked about zoning restrictions, an overwhelming majority supported further restrictions on residential growth and commercial signs. A majority also supported further restrictions on commercial and industrial growth and lighting in the residential district. A majority supported encouraging home businesses within the home but not within accessory buildings.

When asked about rates of industrial and commercial growth, a majority responded that Pelham should “*encourage more light industry.*” An equal number responded that Pelham should “*encourage more commercial*” and “*be cautious about encouraging more commercial.*”

A copy of the actual survey and the raw results are provided in Appendix A. The surveys themselves are stored at the Town of Pelham Planning and Building Department for individuals wishing to review the returns. Many of the goals and objectives of the Master Plan update reflect the results of the community survey.

3. Pelham Community Profile

The Pelham “Community Profile” was held on January 25 and 26, 2002. It was facilitated by the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Cooperative Extension and was organized by a committee of Town residents in cooperation with UNH. The community profile is a process by which communities take stock of where they are today and develop an action plan for how they want to operate in the future. Over 300 Town residents participated in the two-day event. The community profile event begins with the identification of what residents like and dislike about their community, and a series of priorities are identified. These priorities are then brainstormed in break-out groups and solutions to the issues are developed and ranked in order of importance. The results of the 2002 Community Profile indicates that Town’s highest priorities are to:

1. Develop a community cultural/recreation center in the Town Center.
2. Improve, expand and increase the use of recreation facilities.
3. Hire a Community Information Coordinator to oversee all community events.
4. Manage growth and development by re-visiting and enforcing zoning and limit growth while respecting private property rights.
5. Establish public kindergarten.

A copy of the results of the community profile is available from UNH or their web site at: <http://www.pelhamweb.com/envisionpelham/>. Many of the goals and objectives of the Master Plan update reflect the results of the community profile.

B. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Overall Goals

1. Identify, protect and enhance the principal natural and man-made features of the Town, which, collectively, define the character of Pelham.
2. Direct change and promote development consistent with the goals of the community within the constraints of Pelham’s natural and man-made characteristics.
3. Foster and enhance a sense of community spirit within the Town.

2. Population and Housing

1. Provide for a moderate rate of growth, in keeping with the Town's capacity to provide for community facilities.
2. Accommodate the changing needs of Pelham's population due to changes in demographics (i.e. school age children, elderly, people with disabilities, etc.).

3. Accommodate the Town's fair share of the region's population growth.
4. Encourage high quality residential developments which maintain and enhance the natural character of the land and promote the health, safety and welfare of their residents.
5. Provide realistic housing opportunities for families of all income levels and household types (elderly, families without children, people with disabilities, etc.), where possible, within the natural and public facility constraints of the Town.
6. Maintain Pelham as a town of predominantly single-family housing units, while accommodating a fair share of the region's need for elderly and affordable housing.

3. Natural Resources

1. Preserve and protect the natural resources of the Town of Pelham in order to provide a safe and attractive community for current and future residents and to protect such resources from the adverse impacts of development. These natural resources include wetlands, floodplains, air, forest, soils, agricultural lands, wildlife habitats, open space, scenic vistas, ground and surface water and other sensitive resources.
2. Maintain and create a clean, unpolluted environment free of land, air, water, visual and noise pollution.
3. Preserve and enhance the Town's prominent natural features.
4. Protect the quantity and quality of the Town's water resources.

4. Transportation

1. Work with the State to maintain and improve the State highway network as it affects Pelham.
2. Encourage development that promotes both safety and the effective flow of traffic.
3. Encourage the development of a hierarchy of streets and roads to service local residential and non-residential development as well as through traffic.
4. Promote the high quality and safety of new roads and maintain and improve existing Town roads.
5. Provide safe facilities for alternative forms of transportation such as walking and bicycling.

5. Community Facilities

1. Provide cost effective, centrally located community facilities and services (including schools, recreation, fire, police, library and solid waste disposal) for Town residents consistent with both demand and the Town's ability to pay.
2. Encourage developers to pay their proportional share of public facility and road improvements made necessary by their developments.
3. Expand the Town's parks and recreational facilities to meet or exceed accepted minimum standards.
4. Consider in all planning actions, the property tax ramifications to the residents of the Town, keeping in mind that high property taxes result in less economic diversity and a

disproportional burden on the Town's lower income and elderly residents, and negate many of the goals contained in this plan.

5. Provide for public access, use, and enjoyment of the Town's great ponds and streams and other natural resources.

2. Historic Resources

1. Preserve, protect and enhance historic buildings, structures, sites and areas.
2. Preserve and enhance the open, rural character of the land as well as its natural, historic and scenic resources.
3. Protect archaeological sites.

3. Future Land Use

1. Promote the preservation, protection and enhancement of well-balanced land use patterns capable of meeting present and future community needs in an efficient, environmentally sound, economical, equitable and aesthetically pleasing manner.
2. Promote land use patterns based on the developmental limitations imposed by prominent natural and man-made facilities of the community whenever possible.
3. Provide for a diversity of zoning districts to meet the community's need to broaden the tax base while retaining the rural/residential character of Pelham.
4. Provide for a transition or buffer between incompatible land uses.
5. Encourage the preservation of active agricultural lands.
6. Discourage "strip development" and encourage non-residential design to be in keeping with Pelham's historic community character.
7. Discourage scattered or premature development.

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