

Chapter I **INTRODUCTION**

"Growth is inevitable and desirable, but the destruction of community character is not.

The question is not whether your part of the world is going to change. The question is, how?"

Edward T. McMahon, Conservation Fund.

- Loudon 2001 Master Plan Steering Committee

PURPOSE OF A MASTER PLAN

The purpose of a municipal Master Plan, as stated in the New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSA) 674:2, is to describe the "Planning Board's recommendations for the desirable development" of the Town. The information compiled for the Master Plan should include sections on a general statement of the intentions of the Master Plan, land use, housing, transportation, utilities, community facilities, recreation, conservation and preservation, and construction materials. The public is invited by the Planning Board to participate in the process. A Master Plan is typically updated every five to seven years. The Town's Master Plan is the basis upon which the Zoning Ordinance and the Site Plan Review Regulations and Subdivision Regulations (known as the Land Development Regulations in Loudon) are written and revised.

LOUDON'S MASTER PLAN HISTORY

Loudon's first Master Plan was adopted in 1981. It was guided by the efforts of the Planning Board, which conducted a community survey in 1977. The Master Plan was updated in 1985, then again in 1992. Between 1981 and 2001, the span of twenty years has not significantly changed the general goals of the Town. Issues such as maintaining rural character, encouraging the protection of natural resources, encouraging forestry and agriculture, and providing safe and adequate services for the residents are timeless in Loudon.

A Master Plan should be a guide to what we want our Town to be like in the future as well as be a guide for the townspeople and Town Officials to determine which measures should be taken to accomplish our goals. Development of land and of the Town's population will both expand over the coming years in order to meet increasing demands. To protect at the same time the character of a small, rural town, as preferred by the majority of townspeople, requires the ability to plan and regulate these demands before such uncontrolled changes have occurred. In order to accomplish both an increase in economic activity and a preservation of small town character, a willingness to regulate development through land use and building requirements must be paired with strong volunteer commitments. Although changes will inevitably occur, it is up to the townspeople to lead these changes into the proper channels that preserve the Town's character without compromising its enterprising opportunities. This Master Plan makes a number of Recommendations for the Town to act upon and to ensure that, as much as possible, Loudon can retain its sense of identity and yet stimulate economic development.

In 1997, the Town held a Community Profile with the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension that attracted sixty residents to brainstorm the driving issues in Town and subsequently developed specific items for action. The resulting ideas and continuing development in Town were the impetus for creating the 2001 Master Plan.

THE 2001 MASTER PLAN

The quotation on the first page, excerpted by the 2001 Master Plan Steering Committee, is a summation of the intricate issues that must be addressed and of the paradoxical growth versus preservation dilemma. The Steering Committee, comprised of the Planning Board and other Town Board and Commission Chairs, felt it would be an appropriate theme for the 2001 Master Plan based upon the current sentiments and activities in Town.

The Planning Board contracted with the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) to manage the Master Plan project in January, 2000. The Master Plan process began shortly thereafter with the development of the Community Survey, and finalized in September 2001 with the adoption of the 2001 Master Plan by the Planning Board. Public Hearings were held on April 4, 2001 to adopt the Historical and Cultural Overview, Population, Economics, and Housing Chapters, and on September 19, 2001 to adopt the remaining chapters.

March 2000 Community Survey

The process began with the mailing of 1,784 surveys to all of the households in Loudon and to 343 out-of-town property owners, for a total of 2,127 surveys. The eight-page survey contained an extraordinary number of opinion questions that were objectively designed to assess the views of Loudon residents and landowners. With a business reply envelope enclosed, a total of 784 (or 36.8%) of the surveys were returned. The results were thoroughly tallied and are found in respective chapters of this Master Plan.

In general, the recurring themes from the survey included preservation of community and rural character, and economic development, which are often considered contradictory to one another, as well as concern for community services. This finding echoed past efforts of the previous Master Plan processes and the Community Profile process. The following are excerpted statistics from the responses:

Selected Survey Responses

- ± 57% believe Loudon should encourage non-residential growth; 23% said no
- ± 69% believe (population and new home) growth is an important issue; 12% said no
- ± 60% believe an affordable senior housing development should be encouraged; 19.8% said no
- ± 54% would support a portion of the land use change tax to be directed to the Conservation Commission for land protection; 21% said no
- ± 53% were in favor of encouraging the improvement of traffic flow during race events; 22% said no
- ± 63% favored the creation of a greenway along the Soucook River; 16% said no

The March 2000 Community Survey, all calculated results, and extensive citizen comments are found in the APPENDIX.

Master Plan Creation Process

This Master Plan fulfills two purposes. The first purpose is to paint a broad picture of what Loudon is, what it has to offer, what it looks like, and who the people are who live here. This perspective, this "inventory" of the Town, allows us to then create the second purpose, a series of goals and objectives for the Town to accomplish. These recommendations have been based on the data collected, including from the Community Survey, through the Community Profile process, and on statistical data. The goals and objectives for Loudon are discussed in CHAPTER II.

Beginning in April 2000, the Master Plan Steering Committee members chaired subcommittees which worked to document existing conditions within Town and to prepare a series of recommendations on all aspects of Loudon. The result is a series of chapters, also referred to as "elements", which categorize the findings into tangible sections:

<u>Elements of the 2001 Master Plan</u>	
I	Introduction
II	Goals and Objectives
III	Historical and Cultural Overview
IV	Population
V	Economics
VI	Housing
VII	Conservation, Preservation, and Open Space
VIII	Community Facilities
IX	Recreational Facilities
X	Utilities
XI	Transportation
XII	Existing and Future Land Use
XIII	Appendix

For the preparation of this Plan, many information sources were used. Information from the NH Office of State Planning, NH Department of Employment Security, previous Master Plans, past and, where available, 2000 Census data, town records and maps, and town staff, in addition to the sources previously mentioned, comprises the bulk of the Plan. Additional data from various sources is also included.

Because four Chapters were originally adopted in April 2001, prior to the release of the exact 2000 census of population in Loudon, the Steering Committee chose to retain the projected 1999 population figures throughout the entire Master Plan. For the record, the 2000 Census determined Loudon's population as 4,481. For the purposes of this Master Plan, the projected figure of 1999, a population of 4,635, was used in all of the Chapters in lieu of any more recent data. Detailed Census information relating to employment, housing, and demographics will begin to be released by the US Census Bureau in the summer of July 2002 and should conclude by July 2004.

After these final numbers have been released, the Planning Board intends to update this Master Plan based upon the newest Census figures.

Graphical depiction of many of the features inventoried was essential; therefore, a series of 20 maps was also generated to assist with future planning:

<u>Maps of the 2001 Master Plan</u>	
1	Base and Topographic Map
2	Historic and Cultural Features Map
3	Major Employers Map
4	Residential Building Permits Issued 1990-00
5	Conservation and Public Lands Map
6	Soils Map
7	Prime Agricultural Soils Map
8	Water Resources Map
9	Community Facilities Map
10	Recreational Facilities Map
11	Utilities Map
12	Private, Gravel Class V, & Scenic Roads with Bridges Map
13	Bicycle Infrastructure Map
14	Pedestrian Infrastructure Map
15	Accident Locations and Traffic Count Locations Map
16	Existing Land Use Map
17	Existing Zoning Map
18	Development Constraints Map
19	Construction Materials Map
20	Future Land Use Map

All 20 maps have been reproduced in color on 11x17 pages and are included with this document. In addition, the maps have been produced as full-sized color display maps that are available for public viewing at the Town Office/Community Building.

For the preparation of the maps for this Plan, the source data was from the NH GRANIT (Geographically Referenced Analysis Information and Transfer) system which was then modified by CNHRPC. Other data layers or information were obtained from the NH Department of Environmental Services, the NH Department of Transportation, Society for the Protection of NH Forests, or digitized by the CNHRPC into maps. Loudon volunteers assisted with the identification of many features present on these maps.

Public Participation

Almost forty residents of Loudon actively participated in creating the 2001 Master Plan:

Patricia Bigwood	Clem Lyon* (Housing)
Colin Cabot	Roger Maxfield
Barbara Cameron	Roy Maxfield* (Utilities)
Tim Cayer	Tom McCue
David Colby	Arthur Monty* (Conservation)
Douglas Cole	Tom Moore* (Transportation)
Raymond Cummings	Robert Ordway* (Historical and Cultural)
Alan Davidson	Patricia Ordway
Thomas Dow* (Population)	George Page
Greg Fillmore	Kendall Perkins
Robert Fiske	Rodney Phillips
Muriel Ford	Stanley Prescott* (Existing and Future Land Use)
Terry Hamel	David Rice
Michael Harris	Julie Robinson
Christopher Hodges	Ed Robinson
Jeffrey Huntington	Peter Smith
Henry Huntington* (Comm. and Rec. Facilities)	Mary Ann Steele
Katie Jones	David Steele
Deborah Kardaseski	Gary Tasker* (Economics)
Melanie Kiley	James Transfaglia
Patrick Kiley	

**Denotes a Steering Committee member/Subcommittee Chair*

Coupled with the involvement of residents and landowners through the tremendous Community Survey response rate of nearly 37%, we are pleased to present the 2001 Master Plan for the Town of Loudon.

