

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Statutory Basis for Master Planning

RSA 674:1 and 674:2 state that it shall be the duty of every planning board ... to prepare and amend from time to time a master plan to guide the development of the municipality. The planning board shall have responsibility for promoting interest in, and understanding of, the master plan... the master plan shall generally be comprised of a report or set of statements and land use and development proposals with accompanying maps, diagrams, charts and descriptive matter designed to show as fully as is possible and practical the planning board's recommendations for the desirable development of the territory legally and logically within its planning jurisdiction.@

These statutes require that a master plan contain the following information:

AI. A general statement which shall include such topics as the objectives, principles, assumptions, policies and standards upon which the constituent proposals for the physical and socioeconomic development of the municipality are based.

II. A land use section which takes into account natural conditions and which shows the existing conditions and the proposed location, extent, and intensity of future land usage.

III. A housing section which analyzes existing housing resources and addresses current and future housing needs of residents of all levels of income of the municipality and of the region in which it is located, as identified in the regional housing needs assessment performed by the regional planning commission pursuant to RSA 36:47, II.

IV. A transportation section showing the location and types of facilities for all modes of transportation required for the efficient movement of people and goods into, about, and through the municipality.

V. A utility and public service section analyzing the need for and showing the present and future general location of existing and anticipated public and private utilities, their supplies and distribution and storage facilities.

VI. A community facilities section showing the location of, type, and need for educational or cultural facilities, historic sites, libraries, hospitals, fire houses, police stations and other related facilities, including their relation to the surrounding areas.

VII. A recreation section which shows existing recreation facilities and which addresses future recreation needs.

VIII. A conservation and preservation section which may provide for the preservation, conservation, and use of natural and man-made resources. The conservation and preservation section of the master plan should include a local water resources management and protection plan as specified in RSA 4-C:22. This plan should be reviewed and revised as necessary at intervals not to exceed 5 years.

VIII-a. A construction materials section which summarizes known sources of construction materials which are available for future construction materials needs, including, at a minimum, the location and estimated extent of excavations which have been granted permits under RSA 155-E, as well as reports filed pursuant to RSA 155-E:2, I (d) with respect to non-permitted excavations.

IX. Appendices or separate reports, where appropriate, which contain the underlying scientific and statistical data for the master plan and its constituent elements. @

The purposes of a master plan are spelled out in RSA 674:3, as follows:

AThe master plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing coordinated and harmonious development which will, in accordance with existing and probable future needs, promote health, safety, order, convenience, prosperity, or the general welfare as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development. The master plan shall include, among other things, adequate provision for traffic, the promotion of safety from fire and other dangers, adequate provision for light and air, the promotion of good civic design and arrangement, wise and efficient expenditure of public funds, and the adequate provision of public utilities and other public requirements. @

Finally, the statute provides that, Aduring the preparation of the various sections of the master plan, the board shall inform the general public and solicit public comments regarding the future growth of the municipality in order to involve citizens in the preparation of the master plan in a way which is most appropriate for the municipality. @

B. A History of Planning in Salem

Salem was among the earliest of the State's communities to adopt a zoning ordinance, doing so on May 22, 1933. However, it was not until 1958, when the Town was on the brink of substantial growth, that the Town Meeting approved the creation of the Planning Board and vested them with the power to approve subdivisions. Subdivision Regulations were adopted within a year, and by 1962, the Board had adopted its first Master Plan as prepared for them by the James W. Sewall Company. After a decade of substantial growth, the Planning Board commissioned an updated Master Plan in 1972, which was prepared by Harry S. Weinroth Associates. A third Master Plan was authored by Hans Klunder Associates in 1986 and was modified by the Salem Planning Department in 1992.

C. The Process for the Development of this Plan

In 1995, the Salem Planning Department compiled the results of a Community Opinion Survey that was administered to a sample of Salem residents. The survey provided demographic data about the respondents as well as their opinions concerning the adequacy of municipal services and their attitudes relative to the growth and development of the Town. In January 2000, assisted by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Service, citizens of Salem came together for a weekend to identify key issues confronting their community and to strategize approaches to addressing these issues.

In June 2000, a consultant was retained by the Town to assist the Planning Board in the preparation of a new Master Plan. A series of public meetings were conducted by the Board to

review and discuss the various topical chapters of the Master Plan as it was being developed. Each meeting was televised on the local cable station, and information on the process was disseminated through the Town=s web site as well as through distribution of newsletters. In the spring of 2001, a survey was mailed out to a sample comprised of approximately one-quarter of the households in Salem in order to obtain citizen input and reaction to alternatives for the future growth and development of the Town. The survey results were utilized in the preparation of recommendations for this Master Plan.

D. Results of the Master Plan Survey

Of the 2,500 surveys mailed out, responses were received from 602 residents which represents a 24% rate of return. The returns were most frequent from central Salem (33.6 %) and the average length of residency for the respondents was 21.8 years. Some of the key results from the survey are as follows:

- X80% want higher standards for landscaping and screening for future commercial development
- X70.2% agreed that the Town should do more to control the rate of residential growth
- X68.8% support increased annual funding for road improvements to improve traffic congestion
- X62.8% think Salem should seek alternative solutions in order to reduce traffic flow on Main Street between the Fisk and Woodbury Schools
- X56.7% support the Town=s efforts to provide water and sewer service to the Lakes area
- X54.8% favor Town funding of the acquisition of open space and undeveloped land
- X68.2% oppose allowing taller buildings (4 or 5 stories) along Route 28

A summary of the results of the Salem Master Plan Survey is found in an appendix of this Plan.