

I. VISION

The essential purpose of the Master Plan is to express a vision for the future of Grantham. In particular, as guided by New Hampshire statutes, RSA 674:2, this vision tries to encompass the next ten years. In reality, however, what is done (or not done) to plan for the next ten years, and the resulting tangible changes that occur in the town over that ten-year period, will affect Grantham much farther into the future.

It should be recognized that the rate of development (principally residential) in Grantham has been very high in recent years.

Development of any kind, once accomplished, is not easily reversed. Moreover, decisions made in the near future (such as those regarding public education, infrastructure investments, and conservation and preservation efforts) will contribute to what Grantham will be like as a community in the years to come. Thus the desired character of Grantham in the future is to be determined in several different ways—for example, by recognition of widely held community aspirations, by increased participation in town affairs, by administrative action, and by the adoption or amendment of carefully prepared plans and regulatory controls.

The views, hopes, and concerns of the town's residents and property owners have been expressed in responses to the Community Survey conducted in 2003. In addition, the findings of the Build-Out Analysis (conducted for the town by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission) provide insight to the opportunities and limitations affecting future development in Grantham. (The Community Survey and the Build-Out Analysis are presented in Appendices A and B, respectively.) And finally, there have been the efforts of the Master Plan Committee members—to listen, identify, record, consider, and express the ideas that constitute this Master Plan. All of these contribute to the vision for the future of the Town of Grantham expressed here.

This chapter may be viewed as an executive summary of the essential elements of the Master Plan. Accordingly, greater detail on all the vision statements will be found in the remainder of the document.

The Master Plan envisions the continuation of Grantham's current attractiveness as a residential community, linked mainly to the commercial and employment centers of the Upper Valley and communities to the south. It is not anticipated that Grantham will develop an extensive employment, commercial, or industrial base to compete with those areas. On the contrary, Grantham should strive to guide the inevitable pressures of development to retain the largely rural residential character it has now. The following key actions point toward, and further define, this vision for Grantham's future:

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Overall, the Town of Grantham should:

- Aim to preserve its small town atmosphere and rural character (including uncrowded living conditions, peace and quiet, low traffic speeds and volumes) while providing housing opportunities for a wide mix of ages in the town's population.
- Place careful emphasis on protecting woods and fields, streams and ponds, ridges and hilltops, and seek opportunities to provide playing fields, parks, and recreational trails.
- Develop an integrated Capital Improvements Program covering all facilities and functions of the Town of Grantham and the Grantham Village School, and create a system of new development impact fees to partially support the CIP.
- Insure that new businesses and services are designed largely to meet local needs, while providing options for specialized niche enterprises such as home occupations.

Regarding growth and land use, Grantham should:

- Recognize that recent growth and development in town have been quite rapid, and carefully examine the suitability, possible benefits, and potential drawbacks of temporary growth control measures, such as a) a temporary moratorium on the future subdivision of land until codes, regulations, and ordinances can be updated, and b) a temporary annual limitation on building permits for primary residential structures at a reduced level compared to the annual average number of such permits for the past three years.
- Re-designate selected undeveloped portions of the town for substantially less development potential, by means of rezoning with significantly larger lot sizes and a more appropriate range of permitted uses.
- Create and apply appropriate new zoning categories for areas judged not desirable for development, such as conservation lands, hilltops and ridges, steep slopes, remote areas, and large unbroken tracts of wildlife habitat.
- Encourage the continuing existence of open space, farm lands, and forests.

In the area of housing and residential development, Grantham should:

- Recognize that Grantham is mainly made up of single-family residences, and that they should continue to be allowed in any of the rural/residential districts throughout the town.

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- Support community interest in senior housing in any district, but confine any proposed two-family or multifamily housing to the vicinity of the village center.
- Reconcile the lack of community support for manufactured housing (i.e., mobile homes and related parks) with the provisions of RSA 674:32, which directs towns to provide reasonable opportunities for siting manufactured housing. (This statement does not apply to prefabricated or presite built housing as defined by NH statutes.)
- Note the absence of community support for high density affordable housing.

Regarding commercial and industrial development, Grantham should:

- Restrict commercial or industrial growth to the zones appropriate for that use; discourage the existence of nonresidential uses in residential zones that are incompatible with residential uses.
- Reinforce the commercial/industrial zones to enhance the viability, profitability, property values, and assessed values of the properties, so they will be successful and sustained contributors to the town's tax base.
- Encourage activities designed to meet local needs, such as medical and professional offices, banks, personal services, restaurants, and small, specialized retail establishments; encourage activities that make local farm products available to the public.
- Discourage activities in any zone that generate high traffic, noise, or pollutants, and are of a scale that overwhelms the character of the town, such as (but not exclusively) heavy industry, large scale office or manufacturing space, shopping centers, or entertainment centers.

In the areas of transportation, roads, and sidewalks, Grantham should:

- To avoid destruction of the central village's character, retain NH Route 10 through the central village area as a two-lane, low-speed-limit main street, working with New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) to provide traffic calming measures as needed, and avoiding any conventional measures (widening, turning lanes, etc.) that would increase vehicle or traffic capacity.
- Provide a second access to the Grantham Village School, most likely from NH Route 10, and consider one-way traffic circulation through the GVS site.
- Consider providing sidewalks and crosswalks in the central village area, to link the Dunbar Free Library, the new Grantham Municipal Complex, the Grantham Village School, the Post Office, the Fire Station, and Sawyer Brook Plaza.

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- Consider the creation of bike paths located to provide alternatives to portions of the the road system.
- Proceed slowly with paving plans for town (public) roads, providing strong justification for each paving project.

Considering community services and facilities, Grantham should:

- Upgrade police, fire, and EMS communication capabilities by installing a UHF/VHF repeater tower (or co-location on cell towers), providing communication links internally in Grantham and to surrounding towns that offer Grantham emergency coordinating services.
- Combine the local police, fire, and EMS dispatch duties by manning the town's Command Center in the new Grantham Municipal Complex, thus better coordinating internal Grantham assets and providing the proper level of response for emergency calls.
- Upgrade the FAST Squad to an ambulance service qualified to transport victims to local hospitals.
- Add a third shift to the Grantham Police Department to improve overall service to the growing population of the town.

To provide stewardship for natural resources and serve the needs of conservation, Grantham should:

- Strongly pursue a variety of measures that will conserve and protect scenic natural resources, natural areas, wetlands, and surface and ground waters.
- Maintain intervening open spaces and green space links between the several current neighborhoods and built environments of town, with emphasis on maintaining and conserving large, interconnected, unfragmented areas.
- Encourage the conservation of forest and agricultural lands.
- Actively seek opportunities to acquire lands or obtain easements to conserve rural character, to provide for conservation and recreation activities, and to maintain scenic views.
- Strengthen, coordinate, and add where absent, appropriate powers to the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Board of Selectmen, Code Administrator, and any other relevant board or official to control, restrict, or prohibit adverse impacts on natural resources in the course of considering development proposals.

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For the sake of recreational, cultural, and historic resources, Grantham should:

- Explore in depth the interest, needs, and ways to meet demands for providing a variety of recreational and cultural activities, including playing fields.
- Investigate the feasibility of creating recreational bicycle paths, hiking trails, and cross-country ski trails, not associated with roadways.
- Actively promote the identification and conservation of Grantham's historic resources.
- Strengthen, coordinate, and add where absent, appropriate powers to the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Board of Selectmen, Code Administrator, and any other relevant board or official to control, restrict, or prohibit adverse impacts on historic resources in the course of considering development proposals.

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