

## **Chapter I** **INTRODUCTION AND COMMUNITY VISION**

### **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, Site Plan Review Regulations, and Subdivision Regulations are written and revised.

### **ALLENSTOWN’S MASTER PLAN HISTORY**

A Master Plan should be a guide to what citizens want their 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 goals outlined within these Chapters. Development of land and 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 1965, a Comprehensive Plan was developed to span the years 1965-1985. The Chapters included Population; Economic Base; Land Use; Building and Environmental Conditions; Public Facilities and Utilities; Streets, Highways, and Traffic; and Implementation. Recommendations were included for future land use, and the implementation section detailed suggested changes and improvements. Several maps were included.

In 1985, Allenstown produced a Master Plan with an Introduction Chapter, a Community Profile, a Public Opinion Chapter, a Goals Chapter, a Land Use and Natural Resources Chapter, a Housing Chapter, a Conservation and Preservation Chapter, a Transportation Chapter, a Community Facilities and Services Chapter, and a Summary and Implementation Chapter. New methodologies and sentiment have changed how Master Plans are created, but each municipality has its own unique issues and needs. Future recommendations were given for each chapter. Many of these recommendations or findings are still valid today.

Currently, the addition of an **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**, a **POPULATION AND ECONOMICS CHAPTER**, a **NATURAL FEATURES CHAPTER**, a **HISTORY AND CULTURE CHAPTER** and a **REGIONAL CONCERNS CHAPTER** in 2003 will further guide the Town to achieve its goals. While few maps were included in the 1985 Master Plan, in 2003, a series of detailed color maps were created using the newest Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies which did not exist in 1985.

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 Allenstown can stimulate economic development while maximizing the appropriate use of the land available.

### **2003 MASTER PLAN**

The Planning Board contracted with the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) to begin work on the Master Plan project in June 2001. Data was collected for the **EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USE CHAPTER** and presented to the Planning Board in April 2002. A Steering Committee was formed, comprised of the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Town Departments, and interested citizens. The Master Plan process began shortly thereafter with the development of the Community Survey between April and June 2002. The survey was distributed in June, and Subcommittees for each of the Chapters began meeting in September. A Community Visioning Session was held in October 2002.

After months of Subcommittee and Steering Committee work, the Chapters of this Master Plan, the **INTRODUCTION AND COMMUNITY VISION . GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, HISTORY AND CULTURE, POPULATION AND ECONOMICS, HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, NATURAL FEATURES, COMMUNITY AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND UTILITIES, and EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USE CHAPTERS, IMPLEMENTATION, REGIONAL CONCERNS, and APPENDIX CHAPTERS** were adopted by the Planning Board at a duly noticed public hearing on February 19, 2003.

**June 2002 Community Survey**

After three months of developing questions specific to each Chapter of the Master Plan, the Steering Committee produced an eight-page Community Survey. The survey contained an extraordinary number of opinion questions that were objectively designed to assess the views of Allenstown residents and landowners.

The survey was distributed in June 2002 through two mediums. The process began with the hand-delivery of nearly 1775 surveys to residents and first-class mailing of nearly 170 to out-of-town property owners. All responses, sent to the CNHRPC for tabulation, were confidential. A total of 25.0% of the surveys (478) 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 taxes, education, Bear Brook State Park, and manufactured housing. These themes were integrated into the 2003 Master Plan as it was being developed and also helped to form the 2003 **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**.

The June 2002 Community Survey, all calculated results, and extensive citizen comments are found in the **APPENDIX**. Following are excerpted statistics from the responses:

**Table I-1**  
Do you live in Allenstown:

	Total	Percent
Year-round	449	92.2%
Seasonally	7	1.4%
Do not live in Allenstown	31	6.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table I-2**

If you feel that Allenstown is a desirable place to live, please check all that apply.

	Total	Percent
Small Town/ Rural Atmosphere	346	23.8%
Proximity to Cities	341	23.4%
Employment Opportunities	25	1.7%
Education System	66	4.5%
People/Community Spirit	108	7.4%
Recreational Facilities	58	4.0%
Town Services	146	10.0%
Scenic Areas	118	8.1%
Historic Character	77	5.3%
Affordability	141	9.7%
No Opinion	13	0.9%
Other	16	1.1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1455</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table I-3**

Should the Town repeal its SB-2 status and return to a traditional Town Meeting format?

	Total	Percent
Yes	180	42.3%
No	76	17.8%
Unsure	84	19.7%
No Opinion	86	20.2%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### **October 2002 Community Visioning Session**

In October 2002, a Community Visioning Session was held with community residents and town officials. Sponsored by the Master Plan Steering Committee, over thirty residents attended and offered their opinions about the transportation, land use, history, natural features, community facilities, housing, and population and economics. Steering Committee members and CNHRPC staff facilitated Chapter-based discussion groups to identify key issues within each Chapter. Members of the Steering Committee, many of whom had volunteered to Chair a Subcommittee for a Master Plan Chapter, led their respective discussion group through a series of questions to help guide them to broad issues of concern. Later in the evening, the Chairs presented the key issues identified through the Visioning Session and discussion groups pertinent to their particular Chapter. The full results of the Visioning Session are displayed in the **APPENDIX CHAPTER**.

#### **2002 Community Visioning Session Highlights**

##### Issues Excerpted from Discussion Groups

Commercial Development  
 Education  
 Taxes  
 Bear Brook State Park Advantages and Opportunities  
 Motorized Recreation  
 Bus Routes (both public transit and bussing students to Pembroke)  
 Town Identity  
 Volunteerism

A Visioning Discussion was held with the Armand Dupont School Student Council the day prior to the Community Visioning Session. Students aged 10-14 were asked their opinion about the recreational opportunities available to them, where they walked and biked, and what they felt “downtown” was. The summarized results are found in the **APPENDIX CHAPTER**.

A second Visioning Discussion was also held at the Suncook Senior Center in December 2002. Seniors described the lack of affordable senior housing, limited recreational opportunities, and limited transportation options. The summarized results are found in the **APPENDIX CHAPTER**.

### **Master Plan Creation Process**

This Master Plan fulfills two purposes. The first purpose is to paint a broad picture of what Allenstown 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 townspeople to then create the second purpose, a series of goals, objectives, and recommendations for the Town to accomplish. These recommendations have been based on the data collected, including from the Community Survey, through the Community Visioning process, and on statistical data. The goals and objectives for Allenstown are discussed in **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES CHAPTER**. The recommendations, or action items, are listed at the beginning of each Chapter.

Beginning in September (July for the Transportation Chapter), 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 Allenstown. The result is a series of Chapters, also referred to as “elements”, which categorize the findings into tangible sections:

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 current 2000 Census data, Town records and maps, and from Town staff and volunteers, in addition to the sources previously mentioned, comprises the bulk of the Plan. Additional data from various sources is also included and is appropriately cited.

**Elements (Chapters) of the 2003 Master Plan**

I	Introduction and Community Vision
II	Goals and Objectives
III	History and Culture
IV	Population and Economics
V	Housing
VI	Natural Features
VII	Community Facilities
VIII	Transportation
IX	Existing and Future Land Use
X	Regional Concerns
XI	Implementation
XII	Appendix

Graphical depiction of many of the features inventoried was essential; therefore, a series of 18 maps was generated to assist with future planning:

**Maps of the 2003 Master Plan**

- 1 Base Map with Contours
- 2 Historic and Cultural Features Map
- 3 Employers Map
- 4 Residential Building Permits Issued 1996-2001 Map
- 5 Conservation and Public Lands Map
- 6 Water Resources Map
- 7 Scenic Vistas and Farms Map
- 8 Community Facilities Map
- 9 Recreational Facilities Map
- 10 Utilities Map
- 11 Private Roads, Trails, and Bridges Map
- 12 Bicycle Infrastructure Map
- 13 Pedestrian Infrastructure Map
- 14 Accident Locations and Traffic Count Locations Map
- 15 Existing Land Use Map
- 16 Existing Zoning Map
- 17 Development Constraints Map
- 18 Future Land Use Map

All of these maps have been reproduced on color 11x17 pages and have been included with the appropriate Chapters within this document. In addition, the 18 maps have been produced as full-sized 24x36 color display maps that are available for public viewing at the Town Hall.

For the preparation of the maps for this Plan, the primary source of 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, from Cartographic Associates, Inc (tax maps) or digitized by the CNHRPC into maps.

## Public Participation

Nearly 35 residents of Allenstown actively participated in creating the 2003 Master Plan over the 11-month process:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ✍ Harriet Bean  | ✍ Robert Lee                                   |
| ✍ James Boisvert ( <i>Community and Recreational Facilities with Utilities</i> )* | ✍ Carol Martel ( <i>History and Culture</i> )* |
| ✍ Laura Bonk  | ✍ Robert Martin                                |
| ✍ Dana Clement  | ✍ James McGonigle                              |
| ✍ Ray Chouinard   | ✍ Jerry McKenney*                              |
| ✍ Lou Conley*   | ✍ Sandra McKenney ( <i>Housing</i> )*          |
| ✍ Harriet Cunha   | ✍ Shaun Mulholland                             |
| ✍ Julie Demers  | ✍ Daniel Murray                                |
| ✍ David Eaton   | ✍ Linda Murray                                 |
| ✍ Kenneth Field   | ✍ Felicia Rodger                               |
| ✍ Steve Fowler  | ✍ James Rodger ( <i>Transportation</i> )*      |
| ✍ Dennis Fowler   | ✍ Susan Rowland                                |
| ✍ Karen Gendreau ( <i>Population and Economics</i> )*                             | ✍ Judy Silva ( <i>Natural Features</i> )*      |
| ✍ Thomas Gilligan*  | ✍ Lori Thompson*                               |
| ✍ John Hayward  | ✍ Phil Trowbridge                              |
| ✍ Leon Henderson  | ✍ Armand Verville                              |
| ✍ Arthur Houle ( <i>Existing and Future Land Use</i> )*                           | ✍ Claudette Verville                           |
| ✍ Lorette Houle   | ✍ Pamela Vezina                                |

\*Denotes a Steering Committee member

() Denotes a Chair person of a Subcommittee

Participation in the Master Plan process included developing the Community Survey, attendance at Steering Committee meetings or Subcommittee Meetings, attending a Community Visioning Session, and contributing information for Chapters. Many other individuals have additionally participated by attending a meeting or Visioning Session or by providing information for a Chapter. Without all of these important volunteers, this Master Plan would not have been possible.

Coupled with the involvement of residents and landowners through the Community Survey response rate of 25%, we are pleased to present the 2003 Master Plan for the Town of Allenstown.