

# Chapter I

## Introduction



"To achieve great things, two things are needed:  
a plan, and not quite enough time."

*~Leonard Bernstein*

# Chapter I

## Introduction

The Master Plan Committee is pleased to submit this 2008 revision of the Tamworth Master Plan for review and approval by the Tamworth Planning Board.

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

#### *Authority*

New Hampshire RSA 674:1(I), states: “It shall be the duty of every planning board established under RSA 673:1 to prepare and amend from time to time a master plan to guide the development of the municipality.” The duties of the planning board are varied, but the only duty specifically required is the maintenance of the town’s master plan. The sole purpose of the master plan is to aid the planning board in the performance of its duties.

The purpose and description of master plans were changed considerably by amendments to RSA 674:2, the enabling legislation, which became effective July 14, 2002. In the introduction to the bill which revised the law on master plans it was recognized by the legislature “that growth and development are changing the look and feel of New Hampshire, against the desires of most citizens.” The newly enacted legislation was designed to provide more definitive guidance in planning and managing future growth, not only within a municipality, but within the region as well. This new legislation changed both the required and recommended sections of master plans for towns in New Hampshire.

#### *Purpose*

In simple terms, a master plan is a planning document that serves to guide the overall character, physical form, growth, and development of a community.

The primary purpose of a master plan is to set down, as clearly and practically as possible, the best and most appropriate future development for the community; guide the planning board in performance of its duties to achieve principles of smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection; establish statements of land use and development principles; and establish legal standing to implement ordinances and other measures of the planning board.

The plan provides recommendations on ways to maintain or improve features of the town and enhance the unique quality of life and culture of Tamworth. It provides guidance to local officials when setting public policy, and serves as the primary reference when making community decisions.

A master plan articulates the vision, desires, and concerns of a community. Through the preparation of a new master plan, Tamworth residents are acting to define a vision for the

town and a means of achieving that vision. The shared vision is based on historical patterns of development, local and regional trends and, most importantly, input from Tamworth residents and property owners on how to accommodate future growth and development, while preserving those characteristics that make Tamworth a desirable place to live.

Equally important, a master plan is needed to ensure that growth and development are orderly and predictable, to save taxpayers' money by avoiding premature development and costly sprawl, and to plan efficiently for capital improvements.

The legal significance in New Hampshire is that a master plan is required as a prerequisite for adopting a zoning ordinance, a historic district ordinance, establishing a capital improvement program, and adopting a growth management ordinance. By reference this can also be implied to include innovative land use control ordinances adopted under RSA 674:21. The master plan gives legal standing and aid to the planning board in designing and implementing ordinances and other measures.

The Tamworth Master Plan is a collection of information, ideas, and recommendations to help the town make decisions about future growth and development in Tamworth.

*"Plans are useless, but planning is indispensable."  
~Dwight D. Eisenhower*

## 1.2 PROCESS

### *Initiation*

This revision of the Tamworth Master Plan was initiated by unanimous approval of petitioned warrant article #4 at the 2006 Town Meeting.

In April 2006 the Planning Board appointed Tom Peters as Chairman of the Master Plan Committee. In July 2006 the Planning Board appointed 27 members to the Master Plan Committee.

A public hearing on the revised Master Plan was held on November 18, 2008, and the Plan was formally adopted by a vote of the Planning Board on November 19, 2008.

### *Public Participation in the Planning Process*

RSA 674:3.III provides:

“During 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.”

The Master Plan Committee spent considerable time and energy obtaining public input and comments to be used as the basis for this document.

An 8-page community survey was developed and distributed in March 2007 with copies of the *Tamworth Civic News* to 1,800 local addresses, and mailed to an additional 884 out-of-town property owners, in an attempt to reach everyone in the community. Additional copies of the survey were available on the town website, at the libraries, Post Offices, and the town office.

There were 507 surveys returned, which is a response rate equivalent to 19% of households. While that may appear to be a low number, it is actually quite respectable for community surveys. The 1993 community survey had 317 responses, which was 36% of households. By comparison, the 1977 survey had 471 responses, and a phenomenal 90% of households responding. But those were simpler times. The 2007 community survey results are included as chapter XVI of this document, including all 137 pages of comments.

On June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007, there was an ice cream social held at the Brass Heart Inn, to explain the Master Plan revision, describe the survey process, and discuss survey results. The responses to the demographics question showed disproportionately low participation by anyone under age 30. In an attempt to engage younger residents and through them their parents, a poster project was held at the Kenneth A. Brett School. The posters, showing what Tamworth students want to see in 20 years, were also displayed at the ice cream social, and some of them illustrate this document.

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007, there was a free breakfast and land use forum held at the Kenneth A. Brett School. (See chapter IV for minutes of the meeting and report of the forum.)

Throughout the course of the revision, the Master Plan Committee used an open, inclusive process, taking advantage of the strength of our diverse community. A large number of residents who weren't originally part of the committee joined and contributed. Meetings were publicly noticed, and minutes posted on the Tamworth Exchange and the Town Web Site [Tamworthnh.org](http://Tamworthnh.org).

## *Local product*

Following the inspiration of *Sustainable Tamworth*, this version of the Tamworth Master Plan is a home-grown product. The committee members who wrote the document were all volunteers, residents, and amateurs.

Consultants were used for two workshops. Thanks in part to a donation from the Green Mountain Conservation Group, on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Steve Whitman, of Jeffrey H. Taylor and Associates, conducted a workshop to help develop the vision statement from comments in the community survey. And, thanks to funding from The Tamworth Foundation, Steve Whitman and



Jeffrey Taylor conducted the land use forum on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007. Nancy Johnson, of the Lakes Region Planning Commission initially advised on conducting the community survey, and Mike Izzard advised on the content of the land use chapter.

But all of the writing, layout, and design were done by Tamworth residents. So any errors or omissions are our own.

The disadvantage of not using outside consultants to produce the Master Plan is that we don't get the benefit of their professional expertise. And the end result may not be a slick product. But because the work was done by town residents there was more sensitivity to local conditions, total costs were less than \$6,700, and we didn't get a cookie-cutter solution.

Tamworth is made up of many individuals, with diverse and sometimes discordant viewpoints, each contributing their strengths. Likewise, this document's separate chapters speak in multiple voices, though they share a common vision, derived from the community survey.

While the Master Plan Committee is responsible for the whole document, chapters were written by individuals, with unique styles and approaches. Several chapters can and do stand on their own, as distinct documents. Some parts are exceptional, there's some redundancy, and some parts could use a little more work. It is a homespun product with a few rough edges, just as the town has room for improvement.

## 1.3 CONTEXT

One big challenge of developing a master plan for Tamworth is addressing the town's history with zoning. Why does it make sense to go through the effort, since the town has repeatedly voted against zoning? There is a long history of strongly held anti-regulation views in town. In reviewing the situation, there are two points to be considered.

There have been six votes on zoning in the last 25 years:

Year	Yes	No
1984	367	452
1989*	398	303
1989	331	338
1991	341	386
2000	247	474
2003	423	553

**Table 1.1 Zoning Votes**

\* The one time zoning passed, the vote was invalidated because the warrant hadn't been properly noticed.

Yet the surveys produced far different results:

Year	In favor of zoning
1993	60%
2007	69%

**Table 1.2 Zoning Survey Questions**

One possible explanation is that people who fill out surveys aren't the same people who vote. The 2007 surveys were distributed to out-of-town property owners, as well as residents. But the results from those identified as voters were even higher: 71% of them favored zoning.

An alternative explanation is that there is a difference between favoring zoning as a concept, and voting for a particular zoning ordinance. In a multi-choice survey question, "zoning" represents whatever you think it means. But in the voting booth, the only choice is the article as written.

This explanation is supported by the fact that while Tamworth doesn't have a comprehensive zoning ordinance, it does have several specific ordinances adopted under the enabling legislation for zoning. The flood plain ordinance, the wetlands ordinance, and the cell tower ordinance are all zoning ordinances that Tamworth has adopted.

Zoning ordinances which were defeated may have been too complex and cumbersome. The Planning Board may not have done enough to solicit ideas and input on what would be acceptable to the community. Or the Planning Board needed to do more education before presenting an ordinance for a vote.

Even if Tamworth never adopts zoning, a master plan is still required. The Planning Board needs to carry out all of its functions, and that includes updating the Master Plan. The Planning Board needs to use this document as a guide to manage future growth, make land use decisions, protect resources, develop ordinances, and achieve smart growth with whatever tools voters support.

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."  
~ Theodore Roosevelt

## 1.4 CONTENT

### *Sources*

A complete list of references is included in the Bibliography. But there are a few sources and inspirations that stand out and should be noted. The 1980 Master Plan was an excellent resource, and was heavily used. Many of its observations and recommendations are still applicable today. The 1995 Master Plan revision was also consulted frequently. *Tamworth Today*, published in 2000 by the Tamworth Civic Association, was heavily used as a source for several chapters. A guidebook prepared by the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission: *Preparing a Master Plan for Your Community* was very helpful. Master Plans from numerous other towns served as examples. A template for the Natural Resources chapter was provided by the Ossipee Watershed Coalition.

## *Document organization*

The revised statute defining master plans has two required sections and thirteen optional sections. The 2008 Tamworth Master Plan includes the required vision section as chapter II and land use section as chapter IV, in accordance with New Hampshire RSA 674:2.

This plan also includes eleven of the thirteen optional sections, included as chapter III and chapters V–XIV. The two sections that have not been included are neighborhood plan and community design. Given the current status of planning and zoning in town, these sections were deemed more sophisticated or highly developed than was appropriate for Tamworth today.

The document includes additional sections not specified in the RSA: this introduction, the community survey, maps, and a bibliography.

The sequence of chapters follows the order in the RSA, with the exception that Implementation is moved forward to chapter III. An emphasis is placed on the Implementation chapter, because unless action is taken, the town will not grow in a way that the citizens surveyed requested.

Chapters IV through XVI are meant to be used as reference material, or backup documentation for the plan, as laid out in the implementation chapter.

## **1.5 NEXT STEPS**

Unlike other “master devices,” a master plan has no force of law, no way to generate action, and no way to raise the resources required for its implementation. The Tamworth Master Plan can only be implemented through organizations of the townspeople and through the democratic town meeting system. The true power of the document is derived from the citizens, as they will ultimately approve the staffing, funding, regulatory options, and strategies identified by this plan.

A master plan can be a powerful tool to help shape a community by giving suggested direction to appointed and elected officials. The Tamworth Master Plan is a prerequisite to adopting zoning or land use ordinances, and the Capital Improvement Plan. But no direct results come from its adoption.

We urge attention be focused on the steps outlined in chapter III, Implementation, to achieve those results.

*“It takes as much energy to wish as it does to plan.”  
~Eleanor Roosevelt*



## Master Plan

### RSA 674:2

#### **674:2 Master Plan; Purpose and Description. –**

I. The purpose of the master plan is to set down as clearly and practically as possible the best and most appropriate future development of the area under the jurisdiction of the planning board, to aid the board in designing ordinances that result in preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life and culture of New Hampshire, and to guide the board in the performance of its other duties in a manner that achieves the principles of smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection.

II. The master plan shall be a set of statements and land use and development principles for the municipality with such accompanying maps, diagrams, charts and descriptions as to give legal standing to the implementation ordinances and other measures of the planning board. Each section of the master plan shall be consistent with the others in its implementation of the vision section. The master plan shall be a public record subject to the provisions of RSA 91-A. The master plan shall include, at a minimum, the following required sections:

(a) **A vision section** that serves to direct the other sections of the plan. This section shall contain a set of statements which articulate the desires of the citizens affected by the master plan, not only for their locality but for the region and the whole state. It shall contain a set of guiding principles and priorities to implement that vision.

(b) **A land use section** upon which all the following sections shall be based. This section shall translate the vision statements into physical terms. Based on a study of population, economic activity, and natural, historic, and cultural resources, it shall show existing conditions and the proposed location, extent, and intensity of future land use.

III. The master plan may also include the following sections:

(a) transportation **section** which considers all pertinent modes of transportation and provides a framework for both adequate local needs and for coordination with regional and state transportation plans. Suggested items to be considered may include but are not limited to public transportation, park and ride facilities, and bicycle routes, or paths, or both.

(b) A **community facilities section** which identifies facilities to support the future land use pattern of subparagraph II(b), meets the projected needs of the community, and coordinates with other local governments' special districts and school districts, as well as with state and federal agencies that have multi-jurisdictional impacts.

(c) An **economic development section** which proposes actions to suit the community's economic goals, given its economic strengths and weaknesses in the region.

(d) A **natural resources section** which identifies and inventories any critical or sensitive areas or resources, not only those in the local community, but also those shared with abutting communities. This section provides a factual basis for any land development regulations that may be enacted to protect natural areas. A key component in preparing this section is to identify any conflicts between other elements of the master plan and natural resources, as well as conflicts with plans of abutting communities. The natural resources section of the master plan should include a local water resources management and protection plan as specified in RSA 4-C:22.

(e) A **natural hazards section** which documents the physical characteristics, severity, frequency, and extent of any potential natural hazards to the community. It should identify those elements of the built environment at risk from natural hazards as well as extent of current and future vulnerability that may result from current zoning and development policies.



(f) A **recreation section** which shows existing recreation areas and addresses future recreation needs.

(g) 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, both local and regional, including telecommunications utilities, their supplies, and facilities for distribution and storage.

(h) A section which identifies **cultural and historic resources** and protects them for rehabilitation or preservation from the impact of other land use tools such as land use regulations, housing, or transportation.

(i) A **regional concern section**, which describes the specific areas in the municipality of significant regional interest. These areas may include resources wholly contained within the municipality or bordering, or shared, or both, with neighboring municipalities. Items to be considered may include but are not limited to public facilities, natural resources, economic and housing potential, transportation, agriculture, and open space. The intent of this section is to promote regional awareness in managing growth while fulfilling the vision statements.

(j) A **neighborhood plan section** which focuses on a specific geographical area of local government that includes substantial residential development. This section is a part of the local master plan and shall be consistent with it. No neighborhood plan shall be adopted until a local master plan is adopted.

(k) A **community design section** to identify positive physical attributes in a municipality and provide for design goals and policies for planning in specific areas to guide private and public development.

(l) A **housing section** which assesses local housing conditions and projects future housing needs of residents of all levels of income and ages in the municipality and the region as identified in the regional housing needs assessment performed by the regional planning commission pursuant to RSA 36:47, II, and which integrates the availability of human services with other planning undertaken by the community.

(m) An **implementation section**, which is a long range action program of specific actions, time frames, allocation of responsibility for actions, description of land development regulations to be adopted, and procedures which the municipality may use to monitor and measure the effectiveness of each section of the plan.



