

COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENTS

This chapter offers three sets of guidelines for the future of Kensington. The first set is derived from the previous master plan. The second series of guidelines is derived from the Town's involvement in a community profile/visioning exercise overseen by UNH Cooperative Extension Service and the towns community master plan survey. The final set of guidelines was developed by the New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions. Each of these instruments provides direction for the Town in meeting the future needs of its residents.

The last master plan updated and adopted by the Town was completed in 2001. In this document specified goals were spread throughout the chapters, which outlined ideas regarding land use and future planning directives for Kensington. The goals developed in the most recent master plan update, as well as the goals and recommendations established in master plans prior to this update were reviewed, found to be relevant, and are included herein as a way to carry forward the vision concepts established from previous master plans.

2001 Master Plan Goals

- [*Preserve the rural character of Town*
- [*Encourage and foster development that is low impact and discourage and avoid development that is high impact*
- [*Retain rural characteristics and community atmosphere existing in Kensington*

The Town of Kensington participated in two visioning sessions provided by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension in the winter of 2011. One forum was held to gain input from school aged children and the other was held to gain input from adults. Approximately 15 youth and 45 adult residents were in attendance at each of the respected visioning forums. The benefit of holding these visioning forums is that they provided information to community decision stakeholders for prioritizing future land use directives and the overall character a community will take.

The town also developed a Community Master Plan survey in the winter of 2011. In order to keep the master plan consistent with the hopes and desires of the people who reside in Kensington, it was determined to evaluate, and include within the community vision section of the master plan, ideas generated from the master plan survey respondents.

In this section the vision of the community vision forum participants are reviewed. In addition, the priority visions determined by the community forum are discussed with respect to their relevance to the community master planning process.

The following statements are the result of the community forum and participants being asked to detail their ideas for the future of Kensington. The statements also include questions that were generated and answered in Kensington's master plan survey. These are not necessarily reflective of the thoughts of a majority of residents in town but do display the wide range of topics thought to be important by the forum participants, master plan survey respondents as well as the

Kensington Planning Board. These ideas have been grouped into 7 topic areas simply to facilitate their inclusion in the master plan and to generate a broad vision for the future of Kensington.

1.0 FUTURE LAND USE VISION

- [Protect Kensington's surface and groundwater from pollutants and misuse
- [Expand and enhance recreational bike paths and walking trails in town
- [Expand safe, non-motorized connectivity throughout town
- [Support and make provisions for elderly housing in town
- [Utilize, promote and protect agricultural land, and activity in town
- [Connect conservation land throughout town
- [Promote small scale commercial development
- [Review and plan for areas in town where limited types of commercial development could be zoned
- [Promote and develop architectural standards for commercial development in commercially zoned areas of town
- [Preserve and protect open space
- [Promote access and preservation of natural resources
- [Maintain Kensington's rural character
- [Promote and allow affordable housing for working families in town
- [Promote home occupations throughout town
- [Enhance and define a "Downtown Kensington" that contains a mixture of uses, is walkable and aesthetically attractive
- [Ensure orderly growth and discourage sprawling and haphazard development
- [Maintain the historic features in Town

2.0 RECREATION VISION

- [Support the development of hiking paths on town conservation lands and within developments that abut conservation lands
- [Promote nature trails as a recreational benefit in town as well as an effective way to preserve open space in town
- [Promote and encourage the development of bike paths along town and state roads
- [Enhance communication in town to promote recreational opportunities for youth and adults
- [Encourage greater opportunity for recreational programs for all citizens
- [Encourage the use and development of a shared senior/youth recreational facility
- [Promote connectivity and safe walkability around Sawyer Park, the school and public library area or "Downtown" area of Kensington
- [Promote the continued use and upkeep of Sawyer Park

3.0 FUTURE COMMUNITY FACILITIES VISION

- [Utilize existing spaces for community services such as the grange hall (teen/senior community center)
- [Consider reviewing areas around the library or “Downtown area” where parking could be expanded
- [Maintain volunteer fire department services
- [Water and sewage needs have to be planned for as town grows
- [Promote walkability to and around the library, church, Sawyer park and school
- [Promote better publicity to utilize existing recreation facilities in town
- [Maintain the current municipal, police, fire, school and town library facilities but be receptive to future needs for upkeep of these facilities
- [Maintain and or upgrade drainage facilities to ensure optimal treatment and storage of stormwater runoff
- [Promote communication with Seabrook regarding potential future sewer/water connections

4.0 HOUSING VISION

- [Promote affordable housing for seniors
- [Provide a place where children now can afford to live in the future
- [Ensure connectivity to and from community destinations “Downtown” to residential neighborhoods
- [Promote affordable housing to meet the needs of all age groups
- [Promote energy efficient/sustainable strategies for residential development
- [Encourage and facilitate the development of conservation open space subdivisions
- [Promote a town with a greater balance of development (workforce, affordable, senior, commercial)
- [Allow for people to live and work in the same town
- [Promote diversity of housing types

5.0 NATURAL/CULTURAL RESOURCE VISION

- [Protect Kensington’s water, forested land , farm and historical assets
- [Enhance and promote agricultural activities in town as part of Kensington’s rural fabric
- [Protect aquifers and drinking water sources in town from overuse and potential contamination
- [Create and connect a multi-use pedestrian friendly trail system
- [Conserve key parcels of land for recreation, habitat and agriculture
- [Foster community-based agriculture (i.e. community farms, local farms)
- [Preserve community character defined by natural, historical, cultural and architectural assets
- [Preserve and protect agricultural activities and land throughout town
- [Protect wetlands in town

- [Promote and allow public access to public land and trails
- [Examine and potentially implement the need to institute greater wetland buffers between development and wetlands
- [Support and develop policies that promote the use of alternative energy resources throughout Town including but not limited to solar, wind, and geothermal processes
- [Create a conservation overlay area/district to identify and prioritize land areas for conservation and connectivity
- [Protect hillsides and steep slopes from development

6.0 FUTURE TRANSPORTATION VISION

- [Encourage public transportation
- [Ensure a viable commercial/residential pedestrian zone
- [Promote community based transportation that includes seniors
- [Maintain town roads and require safe travel speeds
- [Promote traffic management
- [Encourage responsible development that requires pedestrian accommodation
- [Promote strong municipal, regional and state coordination when working on transportation projects (i.e. memorandum of understanding “MOU”)
- [Monitor town road conditions in order to promote safe transportation access in and around the town of Kensington
- [Promote and plan for multimodal transportation in Town
- [Ensure a safe walkable downtown area for Kensington residents especially kids and seniors alike
- [Promote a safe bicycle friendly Kensington
- [Monitor and potentially reconfigure the corner at the intersection of Amesbury Road and Lamprey Road

7.0 FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION

- [Support and encourage home occupations in Kensington
- [Promote architecturally attractive commercial development
- [Enhance and promote agricultural business as a significant economic asset in town
- [Allow for development of small viable retail stores (meets goal of youth) that is architecturally intertwined with the historical/rural atmosphere in town
- [Balance the tax rate by encouraging a balance in commercial input
- [Study the feasibility of connecting to Seabrook’s water/sewer system in the commercial district
- [Analyze the possibility of a mixed-use downtown area where architecturally appealing residential and commercial uses share the same building
- [Promote economic development that fits the nature of the town

- [Promote family friendly business
- [Support local business
- [Develop policies that plan for limited business growth and prevents business/commercial sprawl
- [Promote commercial architecture that matches the historic nature of Kensington

After reviewing all vision statements the Planning Board arrived at six priority concepts that were determined to be of great importance to the Town. These priority concepts are as follows:

- ❖ Preserve Kensington's rural character and small town atmosphere
- ❖ Protect natural resources through conservation easements, aquifer protection, education on land conservation, agriculture, protection of wetlands and surface waters
- ❖ Promote home industry and agriculture throughout town
- ❖ Enhance and promote recreation areas in Town for youth and seniors to utilize
- ❖ Examine and promote policies that ensure a balanced and diverse housing stock
- ❖ Connect trails and promote safe multi-modal opportunities for travel throughout town

These vision topics will be examined in greater detail in corresponding master plan chapters in order to better describe and articulate a framework for implementation.

The following principals were developed by the New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions to articulate a framework to achieve good planning in New Hampshire. Central to these principles is the concept that decisions are made at the local level, in the spirit of regional cooperation, with public participation. As such the Kensington Planning Board finds most of them to be helpful in forming a vision for Kensington's future.

Rather than enumerating specific recommendations, the principles are intended to establish a broad framework to assist communities in making decisions. The planning principles can improve the outcome of development and ultimately the quality of New Hampshire communities in the future.

The principles have been organized within four general categories: **prosperity, sustainability, mobility and livability**. The town recognizes that the principles are strongly interrelated and often relevant to more than one category, and therefore they are best considered as a comprehensive framework rather than individual principles.

8.0 PROSPERITY

The Kensington Planning Board believes that planning for economic development should be fully integrated in the planning process. Too often the needs and concerns of economic development are considered separate from, and even at odds with, community planning. Communities need to understand and plan for the development they want, while keeping in mind

the development they wish to avoid. Prosperity must be considered both at the broad level of community and region, but also at the individual level of the property owner.

Planning objectives must therefore seek to achieve a balance of interests which is effective in achieving community objectives yet fair to the individual. A prosperous region considers long-term costs and non-monetary values in policy decisions, and employment opportunities are in balance with the cost of living.

Principles to achieve prosperity for the community:

1. Support the economic and cultural vitality of regional and local centers by providing the ingredients needed for successful mixed use.
2. Prevent costly problems in the future by carefully considering potential environmental impacts of alternative development scenarios today.
3. Plan for those with limited means to have access to affordable housing.
4. Work cooperatively in the region to support a sustainable diversified regional economy, and support mechanisms to share the costs and benefits of growth.
5. Seek opportunities to benefit from the economies of scale necessary for cost effective high quality infrastructure and services.
6. Conserve the working landscape of rural areas to maintain rural economy and character.
7. Encourage a transportation system that supports economic development by being both financially efficient and effective at moving both people and products.

9.0 SUSTAINABILITY

The Kensington Planning Board believes that a central role of planning is to ensure the long term value and sustainability of the environment that maintains choices for future generations. There exists a need to direct future development in ways that conserve land and open space, protect water resources and wildlife habitats.

Poorly planned development, whether resulting in too much development too fast, development of the wrong type, or in the wrong place, can have harmful and costly consequences for generations to come.

Principles to achieve sustainability for the community:

1. Preserve environmentally sensitive areas and link them together with other undeveloped open space into a network of beneficial corridors and large land areas for a diverse mix of wildlife and plants to flourish.
2. Encourage in-fill development (the reuse and repositioning of obsolete or underutilized buildings and sites) in appropriate built areas.
3. Promote best forest management practices.
4. Utilize best management practices to minimize construction impact around prime and important agricultural soils.
5. Implement water quality monitoring programs, develop plans to protect those resources, and protect water quantity.
6. Encourage diversity in housing opportunity and promote the logical placement of new housing developments throughout town.
7. Use low impact development strategies in retrofitting existing developments and in designing new developments.
8. Design new facilities and retrofit existing facilities to provide for efficient energy use and better air quality.
9. In order to prevent depletion of resources, match the intensity of development with the carrying capacity of natural resources.

10.0 LIVABILITY

The Kensington Planning Board believes that good planning principles should be applied to local decisions to direct development in ways that maximize public benefit and contribute to quality of life. The communities we plan for and build are the communities we will live with (and in) for

generations. Although future development will be mostly determined, as it has been in the past, by private investment decisions, development should be encouraged to create communities that offer such attributes as town centers with mixed uses, walkable neighborhoods, housing affordable to a wide range of incomes, aesthetically attractive buildings that ‘fit’ the character of the community, the preservation of historical landmarks and scenic landscapes. It also means planning for development that provides ample opportunities for daily interaction and which builds the social and cultural fabric of the community.

Principles to achieve livability for the community:

1. Emphasize development of town and village centers which creates walkable communities.
2. Encourage building size, architecture, signage and site design that enhances the aesthetics of the built environment.
3. Promote infill development and redevelopment to bring vitality to the Town center and to maximize use of built-up areas.
4. Encourage appropriate mixed use in a town center, and in new planned developments to increase opportunities for residents to work close to home.
5. Encourage a well integrated network of sidewalks, walking trails and bicycle facilities to create safe alternative modes for short distance travel and for recreational use.
6. Identify and preserve key natural, cultural and scenic resources to help preserve the appearance and character of places even as they grow and change.
7. Identify and conserve a system of open space and conservation areas in Kensington to protect wildlife habitat, scenic vistas and endorse passive recreational opportunities.
8. Preserve, improve and create public spaces such as Sawyer Park, pocket parks, and playgrounds to provide for civic and cultural gatherings.

11.0 MOBILITY

Kensington Planning Board believes that to have prosperous and livable communities, we must have a transportation system that provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Our transportation system creates the connection that makes our regions and communities work. That system also plays a major role in influencing how and where future development occurs. To date, the system consists almost exclusively of roads and highways for the automobile. As our communities have grown larger, more congested and more dispersed it has become increasingly difficult to “keep up” with the need to expand the capacity of those facilities.

We must move toward a more balanced transportation system which makes appropriate use of other modes of travel to meet our needs, such as bus, rail, pedestrian, and bicycle modes for moving people, and freight rail for moving goods. We must create and plan development in ways which reduce the need for travel rather than accelerate it.

1. Advocate and plan for the most efficient use of the existing and future transportation systems.
2. Develop a true multi-modal transportation system with appropriate support for pedestrian, bicycle, and other forms of transit that may include future rail and bus service.
3. Regional decision making processes should have a meaningful role in selecting and prioritizing transportation improvements.
4. Place a high priority on transportation system safety.
5. Make transportation investments and land use decisions that are mutually supportive.
6. Increase roadway network connectivity and provide additional route choices in all new development.
7. Implement access management techniques that will preserve existing roadway capacity.
8. Support adequate investment in all modes of transportation within the system.