

REPORT OF THE PLANNING BOARD 1998

The Planning Board is pleased to present the results of the Community Survey as this year's report.

The survey was sent to 600 property owners in town. One hundred and forty responded, many with very helpful comments. The Board hoped to determine the opinions and attitudes of all property owners regarding a full range of planning issues. The results of the survey will be incorporated into the perennial effort to redraft the Master Plan, especially the chapter on Managing Growth.

DESCRIBING WHO YOU ARE

1. Why did you choose to live in Kensington? (Vote for the three most important reasons.)

Reported in Rank Order by Number of Votes

Rural atmosphere	116
Friendly atmosphere	42
Proximity to major highways	41
Close to employer	40
Proximity to the ocean	36
Economy of living	30
Quality of public schools	29
Hometown	24

2. What is the size of your household?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
Reported by # of respondents	15	70	26	17	6	1	1

3. How many children are in your household?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
Reported by # of respondents	81	24	18	6	1	0	1

4. Are your children educated (K-12)?

Publicly	37
Privately	2
Both	8
No children	49
Too young	6

5. Which best describes the source(s) of your household income?

Single wage earner	43
Dual income family	53
Retired	50
Other	3

6. How many miles do you commute to work (one way)?

0 miles	34
1 - 10	32
11 - 20	22
21 - 50	35
Over 50	9

7. At present, do you consider any of the following issues to be serious local problems? Please rate the following local problems by checking the appropriate box on each line.

Reported in Rank Order by Composite Score of Relative Importance

1. Loss of woods/open space	360
2. Property taxes	351
3. Loss of wetlands	325
4. Crime	(tie) 319
4. Increased schooling costs	(tie) 319
5. Traffic speed on all roads	310
6. Code (zoning) enforcement	309
7. Pedestrian safety, esp. for children	294
8. Gravel pit operations	285
9. Traffic density on town roads	276
10. Road maintenance	275
11. Traffic density on state roads	258
12. Recreation trails	251
13. Restrictions on home occupations	210
14. Lack of bicycle paths	204
15. Off-road vehicle use	200
16. Lack of affordable housing	161
17. Preservation of snowmobile trails	156
18. Availability of daycare	126
19. Lack of elderly housing	105

Please note that on the last eight issues there were ten or more residents who expressed no opinion. In at least some cases, no opinion meant that the respondent did not know enough about the issue to rate its importance.

8. Listed below are possible future Town Capital Expenditures. Please rank all of the items listed below:

Reported by # of Respondents

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	LEAST IMPORTANT	NO OPINION
A. Library Expansion	17	57	56	7
B. Receiving gifts of land and open space	63	53	13	6
C. Purchase easements to protect streams and watersheds	64	51	17	3
D. Town recreational facilities	13	70	48	6
E. Larger town office facilities	5	31	88	10

DEFINING RURAL CHARACTER

9. Using a scale of 1 for least importance, 2 for medium importance, and 3 for high importance, please rank the importance of the following attributes of rural character.

Reported in Rank Order by Composite Score of Relative Importance

Natural landscapes in their natural state	363
Historic records of change: stone walls, historic homes, old buildings	336
Less pollution than urban areas	336
Slower pace of life, more privacy and quite through less overall activity	333
Safer and more wholesome, especially for children	323
Cultural landscapes, such as farms and other land modified by human intervention	316
Protected areas, areas of natural beauty or cultural value	315
Uncrowded and accessible, recreational space/trails	309
The perception that life is better in the countryside	304
Independence and self-reliance; very local government	296
Rural personalities	259
Individuals are more visible and there is more personal exchange	257

RANKING PRINCIPLES OF ETHICAL LAND USE

Please rank questions 10-17 by answering yes, no, or no opinion.

Reported by % of Respondents.

10. A landowner has the right to grow and harvest trees and crops, to sell or otherwise transfer ownership of the land, and the rights to mine, subdivide, and develop. Given these rights, should private land ownership be subject to constraints and restrictions imposed by society.

Yes - 77% No - 20% No Opinion - 3%

11. Should all land-use decisions incorporate consideration of their cumulative, long-term effect on future generations?

Yes - 94% No - 5% No Opinion - 1%

12. Should land-use policies protect social and environmental rights due every individual without respect to income or social position?

Yes - 90% No - 5% No Opinion - 6%

13. Should land-use policies be designed to protect people and the environment; those who fail to meet these policies should be held accountable?

Yes - 88% No - 4% No Opinion - 8%

14. Should land-use policies establish and promote a certain physical community character while allowing for a diversity of lifestyles?

Yes - 80% No - 8% No Opinion - 12%

15. Should obligations such as affordable housing, waste disposal, open space and recreation be planned for and provided both locally and regionally.

Yes - 79% No - 8% No Opinion - 13%

16. Should land-use policies be formulated through a fair, equitable process which incorporates the needs of all community interests?

Yes - 89% No - 8% No Opinion - 3%

17. Does the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment have a responsibility to uphold the desires of the community through the careful development of their land use regulations, Master Plan, and through their decisions?

Yes - 92% No - 5% No Opinion - 3%

PREVENTING SPRAWL (Unmanaged Growth)

Experts on rural land-use acknowledge that you cannot stop population growth, but you can prevent sprawl. Sprawl means spreading development out in an awkward way, taking up more land than necessary. It is a pattern of development that leap-frogs beyond existing population centers into the rural countryside. Residential sprawl consumes large amounts of land, prematurely converting rural land to suburban uses. Sprawl changes the rural landscape, in Kensington's case, from a working town to a commuting town. Land previously used for production and active use, such as farming, forestry, gravel excavation, workshops of all types and recreational uses such as hunting and snowmobiling is increasingly used for consumption; the buying and selling of house lots.

To test your feelings about suburban sprawl in Kensington, please indicate your agreement with the following statements as to whether you agree, disagree, or have no opinion.

Reported by % of Respondents.

18. There are benefits to sprawling residential developments for the new homeowner; privacy on a large lot, affordable land on which to build, and a sense of being in the country.

Yes - 57% No - 31% No Opinion - 11%

19. Sprawl provides the greatest opportunity for landowners to make money from the development of land.

Yes - 46% No - 37% No Opinion - 17%

20. Sprawl development has been the American way for the last 50 years and should continue.

Yes - 13% No - 74% No Opinion - 12%

21. There are economic costs to sprawl; new school buildings, student bussing costs, and road construction and maintenance.

Yes - 90% No - 10% No Opinion - 0%

22. The rural landscape the attracts dispersed suburban development is destroyed by it.

Yes - 80% No - 15% No Opinion - 5%

23. Sprawl results in a decline in the quality of life; increasing isolation - especially for the elderly as friends are often too far away to "drop in", increasing commuting time and increasing time for all activities.

Yes - 47% No - 37% No Opinion - 16%

24. Zoning ordinances that mandate large lot sizes (2 acres in Kensington) throughout the town can unintentionally promote sprawl.

Yes - 41% No - 43% No Opinion - 16%

25. Sprawl harms the environment through increased air pollution, fragmentation of wildlife habitat and increased water pollution.

Yes - 67% No - 23% No Opinion - 10%

26. As suburban sprawl increases, productive rural land uses such as agriculture, gravel excavation, hunting and forestry are deemed unattractive and squeezed out of town.

Yes - 75% No - 19% No Opinion - 6%

GIVING DIRECTION TO THE PLANNING BOARD

27. Should the Master Plan focus on the prevention of sprawl?

Yes - 82% No - 18%

28. Should the Planning Board modify the Subdivision Regulations to allow for development of different land types, such as Town Center, farmland, woodlands, etc. and not mandate uniform development everywhere?

Yes - 80% No - 20%

29. Should the Planning Board allow new roads to be as narrow, winding, and steep as attractive and workable existing roads, rather than requiring suburban-style wide, flat roads?

Yes - 77% No - 23%

30. Do you think that Kensington's zoning should facilitate housing affordability, by allowing appropriately scaled multi-family housing, accessory apartments, small-lot development, factory built housing, or other lower cost forms of housing?

Yes - 26% No - 74%

31. Should the Planning Board's criteria for development approvals include studies of impacts on wildlife habitat, historic and archeological assets, and scenic views?

Yes - 84% No - 16%

32. If you wish to expand on your answers or would like to make any other suggestions or observations regarding the future of Kensington, please comment:

Note: Sixty-five respondents wrote brilliant commentary. The

selections below typify the range of responses.

I would like to see controlled growth in Kensington. Protection of open spaces - for human use as well as animal use both wild and domestic. I would like the town to accept gifts of land for preservation.

I would like to keep Kensington just the way it is. Small town. less government, open area, peaceful, good education and a wonderful environment to raise children. I believe some of us would be willing to contribute money to a fund for preserving open spaces.

The Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals have the responsibility to uphold the desires of the community...this is most important for the future of this great town, keep up the good work and careful development of all the land, wetlands, and streams. Purchase easements...for the future. Build larger town hall including a new police station.

[It is important that we are] sensitive to the aesthetic quality of development - that we maintain those characteristics in building and planned roads (driveways), or proposed commercial uses of property, or even "traditional" (such as gravel pits) current uses of land resources which give Kensington its appealing visual aspects.

To people brought up in the vicinity of Kensington, it is obvious that it is no longer rural. During the day most of my neighbors are gone to return at 5:00 PM. If that isn't a bedroom community I don't know what is.

We need to protect our environment and our rural setting and wildlife habitats. Through traffic in town is too fast and they discard rubbish at alarming rates. The town should have close cooperation with the state in the purchase of development rights in order to protect large tracts of land...

...There is an encroachment of commercial uses in residential areas in many parts of town. Commercial development should at least be limited to state roads. Existing gravel pits should be permitted, but regulated.

...Lessons can be learned from surrounding towns. Should we make the same errors, we will have to live with them forever...we have the chance to prevent mistakes.

We live in a new development, therefore are part of "sprawl" but soon there will be too many developments...We think there should be limits on new houses being built every year.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to think about this and to comment. Kensington's growth is inevitable - it's so important we plan for it and put certain restraints in place. What happened in Stratham will happen here without careful and thoughtful planning. Cluster housing makes for good mini-neighborhoods. Allow the town center to develop with small shops/meeting place/recreation area, perhaps a medical clinic, a few offices - but contain it.

We are new in town. We were drawn here by the country charm, friendliness, and small town atmosphere. I want my child to grow up

friendliness, and small town atmosphere. I want my child to grow up knowing what the country looks like...I think it is great to look up in the sky and see the stars so bright at night...Also I like to hear the crickets in the summer, you don't hear crickets in the suburbs.

Rural = farms and forests, not gravel pits, mines, sawmills, parking lots, truck stops, etc.

The town needs to realize that the gravel pits in town bring in much-needed tax dollars. Also we need to work with the pit owners, not against them.

Important to encourage a [sense] of community, Kensington as a town everyone feels included in. As we grow more populated, commitment to volunteering fades including assuming offices in town government. The church's "Community News" has helped to bring people together.

Respectfully submitted,
James B. Webber, Chairman

Proposed 1999 Planning Board Budget

Circuit Rider Contract	\$6,500
Rockingham Planning Comm. Dues	1,490
Other Expenses	3,000
Matching Grant	<u>1,000</u>
Cost to Town	11,990
Less chargeback to developers	3,250 (estimated)
Less reimbursable expenses	<u>1,800</u>
NET COST	\$6,940

REPORT OF THE KENSINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT 1998

As your Chief of Police, I am pleased to report to you a few concerns and activities of the Kensington Police Department for the calendar year 1998.

As I have mentioned over the years, New Hampshire is still growing rapidly. To be exact, it is the second fastest growing state east of the Mississippi River. Portsmouth, New Hampshire, is reported to be the tenth fastest growing municipality in the United States and the sixth fastest growing metropolitan area. This growth forces surrounding seacoast towns to plan for future police services beyond the norm.

As the population and traffic in the seacoast increases, it will not only need more police officers in direct ratio to population to take care of this added growth, but often will find that as people live closer together in neighborhoods, ethnic conflicts, crime, and other urban problems will show itself and increase the ratio of police needed per population.

As more people from larger towns and cities move into towns such as Kensington, they demand more in the way of police services. Many towns are no longer satisfied with only being able to reach their local police at certain times of the day or night. Kensington is one of the

APPENDIX B: 1980 PLANNING BOARD COMMUNITY SURVEY AND RESULTS

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KENSINGTON MASTER PLAN: NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A public meeting will be held on OCTOBER 28, 1980, 7:30 P.M., at the Town Hall. We will be discussing the results of the questionnaire and specific proposals for the drafting of the Master Plan. Please try to attend. The Committee needs your help and input.

I. Summary of Questionnaire Results. (700 questionnaires sent out; 275 replies received)

1. Most Important Planning Goals: Keeping taxes down, encouraging agriculture, restricting residential development to a specified growth rate and preserving the Town's rural character.

2. Least Important Planning Goals: Stimulating residential development, promoting local jobs, encouraging shopping facilities, and encouraging trailer parks.

3. Growth Rate: 44% want a 2% growth rate for the next 10 years, 19% want a higher rate, 13% want a lower rate. 64% want an ordinance specifically limiting growth rate.

4. Type of Residential Development: 37% favor conventional, single-family development with new interior roads and two acre minimum lot size. 25% favor random development on existing roads on 1 acre lots. 19% favor new 1 acre subdivisions on interior roads. 18% favor cluster developments and 2% favor apartments, condominiums and multi-family.

5. New Industry: 66% want no additional industry, 34% favor new industry. For type of industry, people generally preferred light or home industry, home business, professional service offices (doctors, lawyers, dentists, etc.), office space, banks, etc. Less people favored new shopping areas, corporate headquarters, machine shops, etc. Generally, people favored activities which were small, clean and non-polluting, and activities which would not require town water or expansion of town services. Several people indicate that some industrial development would be good for the tax base.

6. Location of Industrial and Commercial Development: 78% voted in favor of restricting industrial development to a particular location. Those responding to the question of what location generally favored restricting it to Routes 150 and 107, with many suggesting south of 107 near South Hampton.

7. Town Services: The following percentages voted that the designated services are now adequate: (a) fire protection: 75%; (b) police protection: 55%; (c) highway maintenance: 65%; (d) traffic control: 65%; (e) ambulance service: 50%.

8. Wetlands. 85% voted in favor of further activities of the Conservation Commission to protect wetlands; with the emphasis on (a) protective zoning and (b) encouraging donation of conservation easements.

9. Water Supply. 21% of the people responding said they had problems with the quality of their well water. 13% had occasional supply problems.

II. Topics For Discussion at Meeting.

1. Questionnaire results. 2. Do we want a new zoning ordinance regulating residential growth? 3. Do we want a new ordinance designating specific areas for industrial development? 4. Do we want a new ordinance restricting commercial and industrial development to certain types of things, with Planning Board or Board of Adjustment review in each case to apply standards for the Town's protection? 5. If so, what should the standards be? 6. Should the Master Plan contain specific suggestions about the school and other town services and buildings? 7. Should the Master Plan restrict residential and commercial development in those areas where the soils, slope, water table, etc. indicate that development is unsuitable or marginally suitable? 8. Anything else anybody wants to discuss.

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