

CHAPTER IX

FUTURE LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

Increased population growth, evolving housing needs and changing social and economic trends discussed throughout this Master Plan have had – and will continue to have – a direct impact on the landscape of Bradford. With development pressure moving north from Concord and relatively large tracts of undeveloped land within the Town’s border, Bradford has the opportunity now to choose how it will look in the future.

Factors and issues which will be considered in this chapter include road access and parcel frontage, environmental constraints, existing development, and state and local conservation lands. The Master Plan will help to guide future land use in Bradford considering these and other factors. A review of the land use goals and objectives that have been established in previous chapters of this Master Plan, as well as a discussion of techniques to shape future land use will guide the growth of the Town into the future.

Land Use Vision

The land use vision of the Town of Bradford is to provide a plan for the preservation of Bradford’s rural character, while allowing for future growth with minimal impact on the natural resources of the community.

The following are principles that can help guide this vision of Bradford.

- Involve the community in planning and implementation by ensuring that development retains and enhances the sense of place, traditions, goals, and values of Bradford.
- Manage growth locally, but work cooperatively with neighboring towns to achieve common goals, and address common problems more effectively.
- Encourage development that is conducive to community life.
- Maintain traditional villages and neighborhoods by using land, resources, and investments in infrastructure efficiently.
- Incorporate a mix of uses by providing a variety of housing, employment, shopping, services, and social opportunities for all members of the community.
- Preserve Bradford’s working landscape by sustaining economically viable farm and forest land, and other rural resource lands, to maintain contiguous tracts of open land and to minimize land use conflicts.
- Provide choices and safety in transportation by creating livable, walkable communities that increase accessibility for people of all ages, whether on foot, bicycle, or in motor vehicles.
- Protect environmental quality by minimizing impacts from land development activities, and planning for and maintaining natural areas that contribute to the health and quality of life of communities and people in Bradford.

Overview of Chapter Recommendations

The Master Plan is a comprehensive document which discusses all aspects of the community. There are five Chapters contained in this Master Plan which outline the community's goals for the future land use patterns within Bradford. By looking at the goals of the Master Plan and applying them, the Future Land Use Chapter begins to take shape. The goals that apply to future land use are listed below. The complete lists of goals can be found in the corresponding Chapters within the Plan.

Historic and Cultural Resources Chapter

This chapter looks to highlight local historic and cultural resources, describes why they are significant, and looks to provide the resources, recommendations, and tools to plan for the preservation, protection, and enhancement of those resources.

Goal: Historic Sites and Resources

- Encourage developers and landowners to consider preserving the historic and cultural resources found upon the landscape.
- Require that developers identify the historic and cultural resources of the property, possibly including photographs for posterity.

Goal: Visual Quality and Character of the Landscape

- Identify and protect range roads, and upgrade only as necessary while preserving the historical integrity of the roadway.
- Identify and designate scenic roads within the community to protect shade trees, stonewalls, and other cultural landscape features.

Community Facilities Chapter

The purpose of this Chapter is to inventory and assess current town facilities and programs, identify and assess the adequacy of existing equipment and future equipment needs, identify current and long-term staffing needs, and identify long-term facility and service needs.

Goal: Town Facility Needs

- Conduct an evaluation of space needs, identify a town owned site for the construction of new facilities.

Goal: Use of Town Owned Properties

- Pursue proposals that include the renovated Marshall Barn, a new Historical Society Building, and a bandstand.
- Explore future options for Brown-Shattuck Park, the old Marshall Property, and the 40 acre tract of land where the solid waster transfer station is located.
- Pursue the development of walking trails and bike paths.

Natural Resources Chapter

This Chapter describes the major elements of the natural environment that are within the Town of Bradford. The protection, conservation, and enhancement of the natural environment are important to the residents of Bradford.

Goal: Preserve Rural Character

- Pass zoning ordinances to regulate light and noise pollution.
- Include provisions for the retention of scenic vistas in the Subdivision Regulations
- Educate landowners about the benefits of open space and conservation easements.

Goal: Protect Natural Resources

- Make the utilization of the land use change tax more effective in preserving the Town's prime natural resources.
- Increase awareness of the impact of development on stormwater and drainage.
- Encourage native landscaping in housing development subdivisions and site plans.

Goal: Preserve wildlife habitat

- Require a wildlife management assessment inventory for major subdivisions, as appropriate.

Goal: Enhance recreational resources

- Promote knowledge of trails and encourage responsible use of the walking and hiking trails in Town.

Transportation Chapter

This Transportation Chapter reaffirms a commitment to the preservation of the rural and open space character of Bradford and seeks to provide an integrated system of transportation for the 21st Century that will minimize traffic congestion and promote an attractive entry corridor and a vibrant community. The purpose of this Chapter is to provide an inventory and assessment of Bradford's transportation network, detail sources of funding for projects, identify new alternative modes of transportation for the Town's population, and provide policy recommendations to improve the existing transportation network and achieve the overall community transportation goals.

Goal: Plan Bradford's future transportation system

- Develop road standards that are appropriate for new rural developments, based on size of development, using the UNH Road Technical Standards as a guideline.
- Identify future transportation system priorities using the Road Surface Management System program through University of New Hampshire Technology Transfer Center. The UNH Technology Transfer Center provides technology, services, products, and education resources to municipal public works and highway departments. The Road Surface Management System helps users prepare multiyear maintenance plans.

Goal: Manage Growth

- Include funding of the long range transportation plan in the capital improvements program.
- Create a policy for development on non-priority roadways.

Goal: Plan for Pedestrian, Bicycle and Transit Systems

- Develop a plan for upgrading existing sidewalks and constructing new sidewalks in strategic locations to link the sidewalk system together.
- Work with the School District to review existing and proposed school bus routes and plan for most effective system.
- Investigate possibilities of connecting Bradford to a public transit system.

Housing Chapter

The Housing Chapter is intended to identify the current supply of housing in Bradford and the way this inventory has evolved as the community has grown. The Chapter tries to guide land use such that the rural character of the Town is preserved, maintained, and enhanced. The Chapter also recognizes that providing housing opportunities for families, individuals at different stages of their lives, and people at different income levels helps to promote a vibrant and sustainable community.

Goal: Maintain diversity of housing types in Town.

- Consider creating regulation that address multi-unit housing guidelines.

Goal: Improve effectiveness of open-space residential development regulations

- Provide developers with information on open space development techniques for new housing development, including recommendations for meeting the open-space criteria.
- Consider innovative types of open-space residential development.

TECHNIQUES TO SHAPE FUTURE LAND USE

Zoning Ordinance

A Zoning Ordinance can contain three components: Zoning Districts, Zoning Overlay Districts, and Other Zoning Ordinance Provisions. The Zoning Ordinance recommendations presented here should be viewed as a first step in multi-step process. The Master Plan is the starting point for land use regulations. Any changes proposed to the Zoning Ordinance need to be approved by the voters at Town Meeting, in addition to going through the Planning Board public hearing process. This section describes zoning regulations which may be appropriate for the Town to adopt.

Zoning Districts

The power to regulate private property is one of the most important powers allocated to local government. The following are Zoning Districts which may help Bradford to better manage its future growth – the allowed uses, dimensional requirements, and purposes.

Village District (VD)

The purpose of the Village District is to encourage the mixed use development and compact settlement patterns that have historically been located in villages in Bradford and throughout New England.

The District would allow new smaller lots to be developed (0.5-1.0 acres) with commensurate frontage and setback requirements. The types of residential uses allowed would be single-family, duplexes, and 3-5 unit multi-family units. As well, professional offices, such as doctors, lawyers, and architects; small retail, such as bookstores, bakeries, and hairdressers; and bed-and-breakfasts would be allowed. Mixed-use buildings would be encouraged.

New development within this District would need to complement abutting properties and enhance the character of the area.

Residential District (RES)

The purpose of the Residential District is to allow for residential neighborhoods to be developed. The uses allowed would be single family and duplex residential units, small home businesses, and bed-and-breakfast businesses. The lot size requirement for new lots would be a minimum of 2 acres.

In the 2005 Community Survey, 37% felt that home-based businesses were desirable in Bradford.

Conservation District (C)

The purpose of the Conservation District is to allow for the use of land for residential and agricultural uses in a rural setting. The uses allowed in this District include single-family homes, bed-and-breakfast businesses, and agricultural uses. The lot size requirements for new lots would be a minimum of 5 acres. The location of the Conservation District will be determined based on the scientific suitability of land for development and will be based on coordination with

the Bradford Conservation Commission. Areas to be included in the Conservation District will include those identified as having valuable natural characteristics, including water resources, agricultural and forestry land, and geologic resources.

Commercial/Retail District (CR)

The purpose of the Commercial/Retail District is to provide an area of town where this type of development would be allowed by right and to create standards for the review and development of retail and commercial proposals. Designating strategic “pods” for commercial/retail areas is a priority of the Planning Board.

In the CR Zone, the lot size would be based on a formula, with a ratio of developed square feet of commercial/retail space (including impervious parking areas) to land needed for a minimum lot size. There would be a cap on the square footage allowed in this Zoning District. There would also be requirements for buffers, landscaping, and architectural design elements to be included in all plans.

The types of uses allowed include all those allowed in the Village District, plus automobile sales, restaurants, gas stations, retail stores, and bed-and-breakfasts. Single-family homes would also be allowed.

Commercial/Industrial District (CI)

The purpose of the Commercial/Industrial District is to provide an area of town where this type of development would be allowed by right and to create standards for the review and development of commercial and industrial proposals. In the 2004 Community Survey, 72% of respondents indicated that the Town should have separate zones for industrial or commercial uses.

In the CI Zone, the lot size would be based on a formula, with a ratio of developed square feet of commercial/industrial space (including impervious parking areas) to land needed for a minimum lot size. There would also be requirements for buffers, landscaping, and architectural design elements to be included in all plans.

The types of uses allowed include automobile service stations, warehouse facilities, raw material storage and processing, and manufacturing. Single-family homes would also be allowed.

Lake Front District (L)

The Lake Front District is a targeted area, surrounding the Town’s lakes and ponds, in which consideration should be given to the protection of the shore areas, as well as environmental concerns and waster water management. Minimum buildable area, lot frontages and other dimensional requirements should be adjusted in the Zoning Ordinance so as to allow reasonable use of the land in the Lake Front District without detrimental impacts to water quality.

Overlay Districts

Overlay Districts are superimposed upon the regular Zoning Districts so that the regulations pertaining to the Overlay Districts shall be *in addition* to the regulations of the regular Districts.

The land within the town may be used if and to the extent that such use is permitted in the applicable regular and Overlay Districts.

Aquifer Protection District

An Aquifer Protection District could be established to preserve and maintain the existing and potential groundwater supplies, aquifers, and groundwater recharge areas of the Town, and protect them from adverse development or land-use practices; to preserve and protect sources of drinking water supply for the public health and safety; and to conserve natural resources. As more and more development occurs within Bradford, it is important that the current aquifers be maintained and protected from incompatible uses. For more information on aquifers, see the Natural Resources Chapter.

Wetlands Overlay District

The purpose of a Wetlands Conservation District is to protect and regulate the use of wetlands and buffer areas in the Town of Bradford. This District is intended to:

- Control the development of structure and land uses within the District that would contribute to the pollution of surface waters and groundwater;
- Prevent the destruction of wetlands which provide flood protection, groundwater recharge, pollution abatement, and the enhancement of stream flow during dry periods;
- Prevent unnecessary or excessive expenses to the Town to provide and maintain essential services and utilities which arise because of unwise use of water resources;
- Encourage those uses which can be appropriately and safely located in the District;
- Protect potential water supplies and existing aquifers and their recharge areas;
- Preserve and enhance those aesthetic values associated with this area;
- Protect wildlife habitats and maintain ecological balances; and
- Protect unique and unusual natural areas

For more information on wetlands, see the Natural Resources Chapter.

Other Zoning Ordinance Provisions

In addition to Zoning Districts and Overlay Districts, communities have the ability to adopt numerous other Land Use Regulations that influence and help shape the land use patterns in Town. Some of these Zoning Ordinances are specific to a District, while others can be applied to the entire Town, when certain criteria are met. The following is a summary of these other current Zoning Ordinance provisions.

Growth Management Ordinance

The purpose of a Growth Management Ordinance (GMO) is to regulate and control the timing of residential development in accordance with the objectives of both the Master Plan and the Capital Improvements Program, which need to be adopted by the Planning Board before a Growth Management Ordinance can be implemented. If needed in the future, a Growth Management Ordinance can ensure that Bradford grows in accordance with the Town's land use vision.

Growth Management Ordinances typically contain statistical information, such as number of building permits issued, number of new lots created, tax rate, population estimates, school enrollment figures, as well as others, that cover a ten –year period. In addition, these types of Ordinances can be developed so as to look at growth trends only within the town or as compared to adjacent communities. Growth Management Ordinances are written to give special consideration to bona fide affordable or elderly housing, lots of existing record at the time of adoption of the Ordinance, a method to “carry-over” unused building permits from year to year, and with a sunset provision. Many communities have adopted GMOs but have not implemented the Ordinance because the growth “triggers” contained in the Ordinance have not been met, i.e. the level of growth to justify the Ordinance has not happened.

Impact Fee Ordinance

A municipal impact fee represents a one-time, up-front charge on a new subdivisions and site plans to pay for future public capital costs serving new development, or to recover past expenditures in capacity to accommodate that development. Impact fees are most commonly used in New Hampshire for the funding of schools, roads, and recreational facilities. However, impact fees are also being used for fire protection, police department, library, solid waste, water and sewer, and municipal administrative facilities.

The amount of any assessed impact fee should be a proportional share of the municipal capital improvement costs, which are related to the capital needs created by the new development. The impact fees must not be spent on upgrading, replacing, or maintaining existing facilities and services, which already exist prior to any new development. The Town has six years in which to spend the collected fee. If it is not used within that period of time the money must be returned to the property owner.

Site Plan Regulations

Commercial, industrial, and multi-family housing developments may have significant impacts on the community. The existing zoning and site plan review regulations do not contain performance standards related to the aesthetic or environmental impact of commercial and industrial developments. Such performance standards should be reviewed and considered by the Town as a way to retain the desirable qualities of Bradford.

All of the recommendations under this Site Plan Regulations section apply to non-residential development, thus excluding single-family and two-family development. This in no way impacts the development of individual homeowners in Bradford.

Signs

Signage can have a significant impact on the visual character of a community. The purpose of sign regulations are to:

- Encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication;
- Maintain and enhance the aesthetic environment of the Town while retaining the Town’s ability to attract and encourage economic development and growth;
- Improve traffic safety;
- Minimize possible adverse effects of signs on nearby public and private property; and
- Enable fair and consistent enforcement of these sign regulations.

Parking Requirements

Parking requirements impact a community in numerous ways, including pedestrian and driver safety, visual appeal, aesthetics of building design, and environmental impacts.

Landscaping and Screening

Proper landscaping and screening of a site can positively impact the community's visual, environmental, and aesthetic character.

Exterior Building Façade

The outside façade of a structure tells the story and history of a community. Bradford has a rich history that is consistent with most small New England villages. This is something to be proud of and encouraged.

Lighting Standards

Lighting is a critical component of non-residential site design that is used for advertising, safety, and design purposes.. Many communities adopt Lighting Standards to ensure that outdoor lighting does not negatively impact abutting properties or diminish the ability to view the stars at night. These standards could regulate the placement, type, style, number, and wattage of proposed outdoor lighting for commercial entities.

Environmental Performance Standards

Environmental performance standards should be developed in order to protect the long term environmental quality and overall vitality of commercially developed areas. The variety of permitted uses, taken together with often intensive land use patterns and an inventory of environmental resources, necessitates environmental performance standards. Sample environmental performance standards are provided below:

Performance Standards Related to Odors

Uses and activities which produce continuous, regular, or frequent odors and/or emissions, detectable beyond the boundary of the property from which the odor originates, shall be prohibited, in whole or in part, if the odor or emission in question is a known health risk or danger or if the Planning Board judges such odor or emission to be harmful to the rights of others to enjoy their property(s).

This standard is not intended to discourage farming in any of the Zoning Districts, as long as the farms are following established best management practices and meeting all state and local health standards. Due to the rural character of Bradford, limiting odor ordinances to a proposed Village District or Commercial/Retail District may be appropriate.

Performance Standards Related to Noise

The Performance Standards governing noise are intended to ensure that the rights of property owners, as well as the overall health and general welfare of the community, are not diminished by unreasonable noise levels generated by commercial and industrial uses. Specific items that should be included in a noise performance standard include:

- 1) The maximum permissible sound level produced by any continuous, regular, or frequent source of sound or noise, produced by any permitted use or activity on the property and on abutting properties.
- 2) Methods for measuring noise levels.
- 3) Provisions allowing the use of Sound or Noise Abatement techniques.
- 4) An inventory of activities and devices exempt from the Noise Performance Standards that get reviewed and updated periodically.
- 5) Hours of operation that the activity can take place.

This standard is not intended to discourage farming in any of the Zoning Districts, as long as the farms are following established best management practices and meeting all state and local health standards. Due to the rural character of Bradford, limiting noise ordinances to a proposed Village District or Commercial/Retail District may be appropriate.

Subdivision Regulations

Most of the land development in Bradford over the past ten years has been for residential subdivisions. Because this type of development is so prevalent and the results of which impact all aspects of the Town, having comprehensive and understandable Subdivision Regulations is important.

Non-Regulatory Recommendations

The following information and recommendations specifically focus on non-regulatory ideas, recommendations, strategies, and changes that the Town can implement to meet the future land use vision.

Land Use Boards

The Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment are the two boards in Bradford that determine land use development activity. Those serving on the Planning Board and ZBA are elected by Town Meeting, with members serving 3 year terms. The Boards develop their own rules of procedure, application processes, and meeting schedules.

Build-Out Analysis

A build-out analysis is a process by which land use regulations and physical land constraints are analyzed to see how many lots/areas can be developed under those conditions until there is no more developable land remaining – the town would be “built-out.” The development of this analysis gives the Planning Board a tool that can be used to evaluate current land development standards. It also gives other Town Departments and the School Department the information necessary for their future planning. Alternative build-out scenarios can also be done showing build-out with various inputs, i.e., zoning changes and land purchase by Town. The results of the analyses will help the Town plan for future community facilities expansion as well as provide input on the impacts of proposed zoning changes and land development purchases.

Zoning Code Enforcement

Code enforcement encompasses enforcing the Zoning, Site Plan, and Subdivision Regulations of the town. Zoning Enforcement includes ensuring that what is being built and operated in

Bradford meets the current Zoning Regulations and that what has been approved by the Planning Board is being built according to the approved plans (Subdivision and Site Plan Review).

SUMMARY

As the Town continues to grow, it will be important to guide land use so that Bradford maintains its rural character and preserves natural and cultural resources. By using Zoning Ordinance, Site Plan and Subdivision Regulations effectively, the Town can ensure that development occurs in a way which will not compromise Bradford's rural heritage.