

CHAPTER I.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Municipalities derive their authority from state statute in New Hampshire. The Brookline Planning Board was established under the authority granted by RSA 673:1, Establishment of Local Land Use Boards. One of the planning boards duties is stated under RSA 674:1, Duties of the Planning Board. In part, this statute states; "1. 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."

It has been proven in business that companies with "Vision Statements" are more likely to be successful and prosper. The same is true for towns and cities. To understand strengths, limitations and goals of a community, aid in the development of a sound guide or "vision statement". The master plan guides logical and thoughtful growth with respect for the past while providing vision for the future. As a municipality evolves, so does this guide.

The Brookline Planning Board is committed to sound planning. As part of that commitment, we present to you this most recent update of the Town of Brookline Master Plan.

We would like to extend our appreciation to the 1997 Master Plan Update Committee that consisted of a diverse group of over a dozen citizens who contributed to this document. Our appreciation also goes out to the Nashua Regional Planning Commission who helped guide them. In addition, our thanks to the organizers, Nashua Regional Planning Commission and New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Service, and the over 125 participants of the two day Community Profile conducted in the beginning of 1997. We value the citizen's opinions on the future development of Brookline. Finally, we give our thanks to the drafters of the 1985 and 1990 Master Plans. We build upon your vision.

It is appropriate at this time to review some of the 1990 Master Plan recommendations and goals achieved to date.

- Establish an official policy as to when high intensity soils survey will be required by developers.
- Gain better control of environmentally important areas, through conservation easements, deed restrictions and purchase of development rights of land.
- Re-examine the wetlands ordinance every few years to determine effectiveness and make improvements if necessary.
- The aquifer Protection Ordinance should be reviewed every few years to determine its effectiveness and make improvements, if necessary.

- Continue the practice of naming new roads with names of Brookline historical significance (such as Conneck, McIntosh, Captain Sever, Captain Douglass, Shattuck, Parker, etc.) as advocated by the Brookline Historical Society.
- The Town of Brookline should implement a pavement management system for targeting roads for maintenance, resurfacing and reconstruction.
- The town should establish a sign ordinance to control the size, type, height and location of signs to be put up in the future.
- Each town department should develop long-term equipment needs and include these in the Capital Improvements Plan.
- Each town department should recruit and train staff and reward them with public recognition and adequate protection equipment.
- Cable TV should be hooked up in the gym to provide better access to such large events as town meetings.
- Continue the sidewalk program to link the Elementary School to the nearby area.
- Plan, develop, and geographically distribute playgrounds, tennis courts, and picnic areas to add to the town's existing recreation facilities.
- The Town's Zoning Ordinance should be changed to:
 - a Clarify with regard to manufactured housing.
 - b To accommodate innovative land use that will allow all types of housing while not increasing the housing density of 1 unit per 80,000 square feet.
- Brookline should amend the Town's existing zoning ordinance to achieve the following:
 - a Not allow new residential uses in Commercial-Industrial zones.
 - b Allow accessory units and cluster developments as a way of increasing housing diversity. These may also fit appropriately in the town center area.
 - c Eliminate zoning that splits lots, and zone along lot lines and visible features such as rivers and roads as much as possible. This will reduce confusion and the workload of the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Major recommendations (also listed at the end of each chapter), found in this Master Plan Update include:

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES (Chapter IV)

General Recommendations

Slopes

The Town should:

- Establish a policy to acquire scenic vista property, or an access easement thereto, as those lands become available.

The Planning Board should:

- Seek to ensure where possible the preservation of access to scenic vistas in new subdivisions.
- Ensure that proper safeguards are applied to steep sloped sites to minimize hazards to downslope properties, and these safeguards usually mean costly engineering and landscaping solutions. For these reasons, active use of steep slope sites should be avoided wherever possible, or approached with extreme caution and subjected to a thorough review of the safeguards to be employed. If possible, the Planning Board and Town should consider preserving such areas as open space.
- Amend the subdivision regulations by including soil erosion and sedimentation control provisions as has already been done in the non-residential site plan review regulations and the excavation site plan review regulations.

Soils

The Planning Board should:

- Replace the requirement for a High Intensity Soil Survey with Site Specific Soils Mapping Standards Society of Soil Scientists of Northern New England.

Wetlands

The Town should:

- Encourage the development of school and public environmental education programs that utilize the outdoors as natural classrooms, especially at the elementary school currently being planned.
- Gain better control of environmentally important areas, through conservation easements, deed restrictions and purchase of development rights of land.
- The Conservation Commission should:
- Re-examine the wetlands ordinance every few years to determine its effectiveness and make improvements, if necessary.

Floodplains

- Brookline should attempt to use floodplains as recreational land/open space.

Aquifers

The Conservation Commission should:

- Review the Aquifer Protection Ordinance every few years to determine its effectiveness and make improvements, if necessary.

The Town should:

- Continue exploring methods to reduce salt on Town roads, especially near watersheds.

Open space/Easements

The Conservation Commission should:

- Develop maps showing the location of its acquired open space and easement throughout town and publicize its availability. This map should also show future sites which will be targeted for acquisition or easement.
- Seek to connect greenways and wildlife corridors where possible.

Conservation and Preservation

The Town, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission should:

- Continue to monitor changes to the N.H. Shoreland Protection Act to ensure the continued protection of its two major lakes--Lake Potanipo and Melendy Pond.
- Identify and sell small town-owned parcels of land, which offer marginal public benefit and use the revenue to purchase land that will meet a top-priority need of the Town and its residents.

The Conservation Commission should:

- Prepare a Conservation Plan as allowed under RSA 36-A.
- Consider hosting a public forum such as the Community Profile sponsored by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension to seek public input on and assistance with conservation planning and implementation.

Historic Resources

The Historical Society should:

- Prepare a historic resources inventory of Brookline.

- Encourage owners of eligible structures to seek National Register listing.

The Town Boards should:

- Promote the upgrading, preservation, and protection of the Town cemeteries, and other historical resources.
- Encourage the establishment of additional scenic roads.

The Planning Board should:

- Continue the practice of naming new roads with names of significant local natural features or historical significance (such as Conneck, McIntosh, Captain Seaver, Captain Douglass, Shattuck, and Parker) with the help of the Historical Society.
- Include historic resource preservation as a priority when possible in ordinance and regulation.

RESIDENT DEMOGRAPHICS & ECONOMIC PROFILE (Chapter V)

Growth Management Recommendations

- Actions need to be taken in order to accommodate the growth while minimizing the impact on the tax rate. One of these actions must include an updated CIP, which programs the costs of capital projects as evenly as possible.
- Another part of the solution is to time the growth so that the improvements can come further along in the future, allowing the Town more time to accommodate the growth. By limiting the number of building permits, which can be issued annually, the Planning Board can help moderate the growth in school enrollments.
- Phasing plans should be required for all major subdivisions. This would ensure slow, steady growth. This would allow both the Planning Board and School Board to anticipate the growth in Town.
- The Planning Board should begin to look beyond the lifetime of the Growth Management Ordinance and consider other alternatives for managing growth.

TRANSPORTATION (Chapter VI)

General Recommendations

- Frontage roads parallel with NH Route 13 within the subdivision(s) should be encouraged in order to limit the number of curb cuts on NH Route 13.
- Access drives to developments on either side of NH Route 13 should be aligned to form a four-way intersection.
- Encourage land use patterns, which will facilitate the use of a variety of transportation modes, especially walking and bicycling, for residents of all ages.

- As a long-term strategy, the town should explore the feasibility of establishing a transit feeder route to Milford and/or Nashua to serve residents and workers.
- The Town should assess the impact of traffic on the Town's road network, which may occur as a result of the Manchester Airport expansion.
- The Town should contact the New Hampshire Department of Transportation to investigate the possibility of no salt or reduced salt zones on all state roads that drain towards Brookline aquifers or wetlands. For example, South Main Street at the Nissitissit River, Route 13 from the state line to a point north of Lake Potanipo and Melendy Pond to a point north of marsh land on Route 13.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES (Chapter VII)

Recommendations

General

- The emergency services departments should explore coordinating their activities to ensure maximum efficiency in service to the public. An annual meeting between the departments, the Selectmen, and the Planning Board is recommended.
- Provide for handicapped access to community facilities.
- Each Town Department should develop long-term plans for capital equipment needs and include those in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP).
- Each Town Department should recruit and train staff and reward them with public recognition and adequate resources to perform their duties.
- All Town Departments should explore leasing equipment instead of purchasing.

Cemeteries

- The Selectmen should explore the long-term goal of constructing a public mausoleum to house resident remains.
- The Selectmen should explore the need to re-landscape cemeteries, which are suffering from natural deterioration.

Fire Protection

- The Fire Department should continue to actively participate with the Planning Board and Building Inspector to review subdivision, site, and building plans to ensure adequate fire department access and fire protection for all new and existing developments.
- The Fire Department should consider developing a policy to address false alarms by automated systems.

- The Fire Department should explore the feasibility of sharing space with the Police department in a separate building.

Police Protection

- The Police Department should explore the feasibility of sharing space with the Fire department in a separate building.
- The Selectmen and Police Department should explore the need for establishing an independent dispatch and detective service.
- The Selectmen and Police Department should explore the need to expand staffing levels based on current and anticipated activity.

Public Library

- The Selectmen and Library Trustees should consider providing additional parking at the library.
- The Selectmen and Library Trustees should explore the need to expand staffing levels based on current and anticipated activity.

Public Schools

- Based on currently capacity constraints, the School Board should work towards constructing new school facilities within Town, which will comfortably accommodate Brookline's anticipated future growth.
- Continue the sidewalk program to link all schools to the nearby area. Sidewalks should be provided within the radius around a school in which students are required to walk.
- As the Town grows, the Selectmen and School Board should consider providing for the schooling needs of all Brookline school-age children.
- The School Board should continue to utilize school facilities as a "town center" focal point for youth activities, especially in the summer.

Recreation and Conservation Facilities

- The Recreation Commission should develop a coordinated, long-range recreation plan that will provide for the support, expansion, and improvement of park and recreational facilities within each neighborhood in Brookline.
- The Conservation Commission should coordinate and publicize the Town's open space and easements throughout the Town.
- The Town should establish a land acquisition policy so that a coordinated effort can be made to acquire land when it becomes available.

- Town officials and the Melendy Pond Authority should work together to evaluate the present status of Melendy Pond property and to develop long-range plans for its future use to maximize benefit to the Town.
- The Conservation Commission should establish a Town-wide recreational trail system for community use.

Solid Waste

- The Town should continue to develop a long-term cost-effective form of waste disposal that will meet local, state and federal requirements.
- The Planning Board should amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow greater flexibility in the design, construction, and usage of community septic systems and wells.
- The Selectmen should assess the economic implications of the current method of recycling and assess the need to expand this program.
- The Selectmen should consider making containment and roofing improvements to the battery and waste oil area at the Brookline transfer station.

Town Facilities

- The Selectmen should continue to evaluate the need for an expansion and/or improvements to Town facilities.
- The Planning Board and Selectmen should identify and sell small town-owned parcels of land which offer marginal public benefit and use the revenue to purchase a tract of land that will meet a top-priority need of the Town and its residents.

HOUSING (Chapter VIII)

General Recommendations

- The Planning Board should consider amending the current zoning ordinance to allow for accessory units. The creation of a small unit within the structure of existing homes in certain locations should be considered. This option would allow new units to be built while still maintaining the rural residential character of the Town.
- The Planning Board should develop a process to assess the impact of the Town's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations on housing to ensure that reasonable opportunities for affordable housing exist within Brookline and to promote quality, economical development.
- The Planning Board should consider amending the current zoning ordinance to allow for multi-family housing of three or more units. This will increase the amount of rental housing within town, and if sited properly by interspersing

throughout all neighborhoods, can fit in with Brookline's rural New England character. In the 1989 Master Plan survey, nearly one-third of respondents felt that allowing multi-family housing in certain area(s) of town would help provide more affordable housing--the highest response of any option.

- The Planning Board, or an appointed committee, should study the elderly housing needs within Town and develop a strategy to meet those needs, such as the creation of an elderly housing district. Issues such as access to Town facilities, transportation, unit design standards, and the requirements of the 1991 Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, should be considered. Representatives from the senior community and the development community should be involved in this effort to ensure an effective outcome.
- The Town should encourage the conversion and/or renovation of large houses into several units. While in many cases it is both practical and desirable to convert these homes into multi-family dwellings, the issues of parking, sewage disposal, structural and landscaping alterations, density, and compatibility with adjacent land uses should be reviewed by the Planning Board.
- The Town and Planning Board should attempt to increase the availability and affordability of manufactured housing. The cost of manufactured housing units should be compared to conventional single-family homes to determine if the current ordinance provides a lower-cost housing option. If it does not, consideration should be given to increasing the allowable density or designating certain areas of Town as manufactured housing districts to ensure affordability.
- The Planning Board should amend the Open Space Development Ordinance to encourage or require a variety of household types for all income categories and for special needs groups.
- The Planning Board should continue to explore innovative land use that will allow all housing types, while not increasing the housing density of 1 unit per 80,000 square feet; such inclusionary housing strategies would provide incentives for private developers to provide a variety of housing options for lower-income and special needs groups.
- The Town should utilize the expertise and assistance of citizen groups, municipal staff, non-profit housing groups, state agencies and the Nashua Regional Planning Commission in addressing current and future housing needs within Brookline.

LAND USE (Chapter IX)

Recommendations for New Commercial and/or Industrial Districts

In 1997 the Planning Board identified a need to address the lack of available commercial land within Town and the difficulty of expanding the district, as evidenced earlier in this chapter. The Master Plan Update Committee considered the opinions expressed at the Community Profile and explored a number of strategies used by neighboring communities to encourage economic development, and has come up with the following recommendations to facilitate proper economic growth within Town:

- **Brookline economic development strategy:** Facilitate the expansion of existing businesses while encouraging the growth of new small businesses which preserve and enhance the Town's rural character, provide for resident shopping needs, and offer employment opportunities with strong earning potential for all age groups.
 - **New Zoning Districts.** To enable commercial growth, new zoning districts with available vacant land should be established. The following districts and corresponding commercial uses are suitable for Brookline and are in keeping with the Town's economic development strategy. All new commercial districts should be designed to encourage concentric development patterns and discourage strip development. Key intersections of major roads in certain neighborhoods should be targeted.
1. Neighborhood Business District. The intent of this district would be to provide for those businesses that serve local shopping needs and which are compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods. Clusters of shops, small-scale shopping centers, and individual stores would be encouraged, while large regional shopping uses such as department stores would be discouraged. Examples of acceptable uses may include antique shops, banks, bakeries, beauty parlors, bed and breakfasts, child care facilities, drug stores, dry cleaners, florist shops, food stores, hardware stores, home businesses, and professional offices. Residential activity may also be permitted in the district to encourage a more integrated land use pattern.
 - This district may be appropriate at major road intersections in some Town neighborhoods.
 2. Office Park District. The intent of this district would be to attract corporate office and research facilities to a campus environment providing large open spaces, generous setback requirements, and compatible architectural and landscaping standards. Examples of acceptable uses may include corporate offices and research facilities.
 - This district may be appropriate on Route 13 near the Milford town boundary; on Route 130 near the Hollis town boundary adjacent to the Industrial District in Hollis; and west of Route 13 on the Townsend (MA) town boundary adjacent to the Outlying Commercial District.
 3. Light Industrial District. The intent of this district would be to provide for light industrial parks meeting specific performance standards. Traffic generation, building bulk, and intensity of site development would be restricted and standards would be set for environmental factors such as noise and air quality. Examples of acceptable uses may include office buildings, research and development, distribution and mailing facilities, machine shops, printing, publishing shops, and storage facilities.
 - This district may be particularly appropriate for Route 130 on the Hollis town boundary adjacent to the Industrial District in Hollis; at the intersection of Route 13 and Milford Street; and west of Route 13 on the Townsend (MA) town boundary adjacent to the Outlying Commercial District.

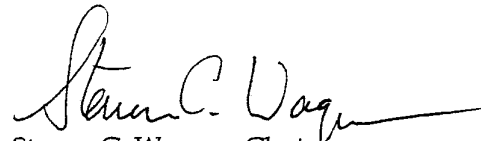
4. Town Center District. The intent of this district would be to maintain and enhance the historic character of the town center and to provide a central gathering place for town residents and visitors by encouraging commercial activity which is dependent on pedestrian traffic and which requires little land area. Examples of acceptable uses may include a community center, historic retail shops, bed and breakfasts and cottage-type businesses that cater to tourists.
 - This district may be particularly appropriate for the Main Street area, which includes Town Hall, the Library, and the Village Store.
- **Strategies to improve the economic environment.** Specific actions which may be taken by Town leaders to improve the Town's economic attractiveness include:
 1. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to remove obstacles to economic growth.
 2. Utilize public education mechanisms such as public meetings, special mailings, and media advertisements to address resident opposition to an expansion of the commercial district.
 3. Cooperate with neighboring communities to develop and conduct a marketing/advertising campaign to attract desirable industry to the Brookline region.
 4. Establish a formal, regular line of communication between Town officials and business leaders by creating a local business association, Chamber of Commerce, or Rotary Club or by utilizing more informal measures such as monthly breakfast meetings.
 5. Join the New Hampshire Main Street Program which provides technical support and training to promote historic and economic redevelopment of traditional business districts.

Telecommunications Recommendations

- A site selection committee should be formed to assess the current level of service, determine the number of towers necessary to provide adequate coverage, and research and recommend appropriate telecommunication sites within Town. Representatives from telecommunication carriers and industry experts should be included on the committee to ensure the sites are viable. This effort may result in a town wireless master plan, which could be used by the Planning Board in reviewing telecommunication facility applications. The committee should coordinate its plan with adjacent communities to ensure a coordinated regional telecommunication system, which may take the form of a negotiated regional service agreement.
- Once the plan is developed, the Town should explore the possibility of developing a strategy to purchase suitable telecommunication sites with the intent of leasing them to telecommunication providers, thus generating a steady source of revenue for such activity.

General Recommendations

1. Brookline should amend the Town's existing zoning ordinance to achieve the following:
 - a. Allow accessory units and cluster developments as a way of increasing housing diversity. These may also fit appropriately in the Town Center area.
 - c. Eliminate zoning that splits lots and zone along lot lines and visible features such as rivers and roads as much as possible. This will reduce confusion, and the workload of the Zoning Board of Adjustment.
2. The overall zoning ordinance should be reviewed and revised to create a coherent whole.
3. The Planning Board should develop and execute a process to determine what changes are required to be made to the Town's existing zoning ordinance regarding Commercial-Industrial zones in order to accommodate Commercial-Industrial growth in a manner that discourages "strip" zoning and encourages small commercial-industrial clusters.
4. The Town should ensure that existing land use regulations are enforceable.
5. The Town should identify and sell small town-owned parcels of land which offer marginal public benefit and use the revenue to purchase a tract of land that will meet a top-priority need of the Town and its residents.
6. The Town should consider the development of Neighborhood Business Districts in appropriate areas.



Steven C. Wagner, Chairman
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