

MASTER PLAN

PRECINCT of HAVERHILL CORNER, NH

It is the function and duty of the Haverhill Corner Planning Board to make and to perfect from time to time a Master Plan for the development of the Precinct. The Master Plan was originally designed and written in 1988 (Appendix A) with the intention of showing as fully as was possible and practical the Planning Board's recommendations for the desirable development of the land within the Precinct. The purpose of the Plan was to guide and accomplish a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the precinct which, in accordance with existing and probable future needs, would best promote health, safety, prosperity, and the general welfare, as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development. This Master Plan was made according to the authority granted to the Planning Board in N.H. Revised Statutes Annotated, Chapter 674:1-4.

The same statutes recommend that the Planning Board "amend from time to time" and revise the Master Plan every 5 to 10 years. [674:3] This document updates the 2008 review and revision of the 1988 Master Plan.

OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The Master Plan for Haverhill Corner that is presented in this report is proposed to serve as a general guide for the growth and development of the community during the coming years.

The goals and objectives described in this plan represent the views of the Haverhill Precinct Planning Board. They are based on (1) the original 1988 Master Plan, (2) the results of the questionnaires that were distributed in 1987 and then in 2007 to all residents of the Precinct in order to establish community goals and values and (3) a review of information gathered regarding current land use and Precinct services.

I. Precinct Vision

The Precinct of Haverhill Corner is one of several geographic villages or village districts in the Town of Haverhill. The Precinct is unique among these with its history and its many historic structures and features. There is very little commercial activity in the Precinct, with the most such activity near the junction of NH Routes 10 and 25. Much of the remaining open or developable land in the Precinct is being farmed or managed under current use or has been protected by conservation easements. The Precinct is one of only two village districts in the Town that has a Zoning Ordinance.

The Master Plan of the Precinct of Haverhill Corner is meant to complement that of the Town and to address those features unique to the Precinct.

The recommendations of the Planning Board are based on the vision that prudent land use regulation should respect the inherent physical capabilities of the land, the pattern of existing use, the level of Precinct facilities and services, economic realities, private property rights, community needs, and the historic significance of the community. Orderly growth makes possible more economic public investments in roads, water, schools and other facilities and services. It helps to conserve the resources of the community and to reduce the costs of reversing environmental damage.

The purpose of the Master Plan of the Precinct is to guide decision-makers in developing and periodically revising land use ordinances that will promote coordinated and harmonious growth and protect the residents from the consequences of haphazard development. Such ordinances should promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the community.

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. Preserve and enhance the special qualities and atmosphere of Haverhill Corner as a historically significant, traditionally small and attractive rural agricultural community
2. Moderate rate of population growth and avoid surges of land development by adopting a controlled growth philosophy
3. Provide for the protection of the Precinct's environmentally sensitive areas such as the river, streams, ponds, marshes, floodplains, and slopes
4. Preserve important scenic views

B. SURVEY RESULTS

The Planning Board, in October 1987, conducted an extensive survey of the Precinct to gain knowledge of how the residents felt about growth and development. Two hundred twenty-five (225) questionnaires were distributed with 106 returned for final tabulation.

A second and similar survey was conducted in September, 2007. On this second occasion three hundred sixty-one (361) questionnaires were distributed with 106 returned for final tabulation (Appendix B).

The results of these surveys indicate that future development and its impact on the Precinct are very important to the residents of Haverhill Corner. The preservation of open space was and remains strongly supported with large majorities of those responding supporting the preservation of open space including fields, pastures, forests, wetlands and scenic areas. It also remains important to the residents of the Precinct to maintain the uncrowded living conditions and rural village character of

Haverhill Corner. In 2007 the historic character of the village, sense of community and peace and quiet were considered important in planning the Precinct's future. When residents described the kind of population change they would like to see in Haverhill Corner, the large majority indicated "stay the same" or "slight" growth.

When the future land use impacts of residential growth are considered, the respondents continue to feel that growth should only happen in designated areas and along existing roads. Residents strongly feel that growth should not occur in farmlands, historic district, and wooded lands.

In 1987 village residents were asked to project how population growth would affect the Precinct. By far, the largest perceived impact was the increased demand for town (i.e., village) services, followed by increased town expenditures and school enrollment. These impacts were followed by loss of open space (agricultural land and forest areas) increased jobs and damage to the quality of water.

In both surveys, residents were asked to respond to several questions having to do with housing development and type. There remained a strong preference for single-family homes and senior housing. Owner-occupied apartment housing was seen less positively with only 35% indicating that they should be allowed. There was a similar response to assisted living facilities. Multi-unit complexes, manufactured housing and low-income housing elicited the largest number of negative responses. In 2007, there was modest support for additional manufactured housing as long as it occurs in existing parks.

In the 2007 survey a number of responders volunteered that the 1897 Academy building would be an appropriate location for apartments and condominiums.

In 1987, when there was no minimal lot size, the issue of lot size development did not show a clear preference among lots of less than 40,000 sq. ft., 1 acre or 2 acres. In 2007, there was a clear preference for Haverhill Corner's current minimal lot size of one acre. An issue which did not show a strong preference in any way is cluster development. It would appear from the uncertainty of responses that this issue needs to be better explained.

When residents were asked to consider future development and expansion of the Precinct, along with property taxes and school quality, the issue of quality of water and future water needs of the Precinct remained of paramount importance. In 2007 the majority of responders felt that water quality and pressure is good or excellent, but 53% felt the Precinct should explore replacing the reservoir system. There was less support for a community sewer system. Only 48% would support this kind of public facility development.

In 1987, when the issue of whether a developer should help pay for the upgrading of Precinct services brought about by new development, a clear and strong preference was for the developer to pay for those costs. Then 77% responded that costs brought about by development should not be the Precinct's financial responsibility. In 2007 the preference was even stronger. 86% of responders feel that developers should be required to pay for the upgrading of municipal services brought about by their new developments.

Of note and despite Haverhill Corner being somewhat geographically isolated at a time of escalating costs of transportation and travel, availability of public transportation and shopping facilities were considered "not important" by half of 2007 responders.

On the issues of commercial and business development, there remained a clear preference for control of location and density. In 2007, Over 90% were in favor of some degree of control of commercial location in the Precinct and only 6% said development should occur anywhere in the district. These are almost the same percentages as reported in 1987.

On each occasion, when residents were asked to indicate a preference for added commercial enterprises, both tourist lodging and home based businesses were clearly the strongest choices, as was farming. In 2007, home-style restaurants, convenience stores, auto repair and professional offices were generally accepted, but in designated areas. There is a general aversion to fast-food restaurants, retail stores, manufacturing, lumber industry and liquid fuel storage.

Survey responses to junk and trash collections indicate junkyards were very much on the minds of the residents of Haverhill Corner. There are notable situations where collections of trash and junk may be having a negative effect on the health, general well being and property values of the Precinct community. A 2007 addition to the Precinct Zoning Ordinance was a junkyard regulation.

NH Route 10 is an important primary and alternate north-south highway in the upper Connecticut River valley. There are population, housing and other social pressures from communities to the south, which with new commercial enterprise in Woodsville, have resulted in an increase in traffic volume on this highway. In 2007, residents of our community had great concern about the existing and projected increase in traffic volume and its effect on quality of life in Haverhill Corner. Specific concerns were child and pedestrian safety, noise and disregard of existing traffic laws.

Since 2000 a number of properties in Haverhill Corner have been sold. It appears that the majority of new owners has come from outside Haverhill and earns wages in communities outside the immediate area, particularly to the south. In 1987 the demographics of those responding to the survey found 75% had been living in the Precinct for over 5 years and that

93% were over 30 years of age. In 2007 88% had been living in the precinct over 5 years and 48% over 20 years. 97% were over 30 years of age, 49% over 60 and 37% over 70. The responses to these two surveys have been remarkably consistent. There could be a number of interpretations for these figures, including that one age group may be more inclined to respond to such a questionnaire, that we do have a regional and national aging of our population, and that the same individuals who responded to the survey in 1987 responded to it in 2007.

In preparing and revising the Master Plan, the Planning Board established objectives to guide future development in the Precinct.

C. DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES:

Guide new residential development so as to provide a variety of housing types for different economic and family-size needs, and to the maximum extent feasible, maintain open space and retain natural settings. **D. FISCAL OBJECTIVES:**

Minimize the cost of providing local tax-supported services and facilities to the extent consistent with the development objectives.

In 1988 and within the framework of these objectives, a set of planning policies, including Subdivision Regulations and Zoning Ordinances was proposed by the Precinct Planning Board and accepted by the residents. These policies, with subsequent revisions, are the guides for future land use and other principal elements of development that are described in the following pages. The Master Plan that comprises these policies is an attempt to apply them to the existing conditions in Haverhill Corner in such a way as to fulfill the objectives identified above and to realize the community vision of the Precinct.

E. GENERAL PLANNING POLICIES:

1. Encourage the concentration of new residential development in areas most economically served by extensions to existing Precinct services.
2. Discourage new residential construction in scattered and inaccessible locations involving excessive costs for road maintenance, snow removal, and school transportation.
3. Concentrate retail and business development in the present junction of NH Routes 10 and 25 area with such expansion only as is necessary to provide maximum customer convenience and profitable operation.
4. Protect and enhance the natural resources of the Precinct for best agricultural, forestry, and recreational use.

5. Preserve the historic character of Haverhill Corner through land use regulations that provide for compatible development, architectural integrity and open space buffering necessary for such preservation.

The Master Plan itself is based on a study of conditions and trends today and must be regarded as a flexible proposal, due to be modified as inevitable, unforeseen and unpredictable changes occur. The objectives and the policies are conceived as more permanent, serving as checks and guides to any future changes in the plan and to whatever measures may be adopted to put the plan into effect.

This Master Plan as presented by the Planning Board represents the Board's best view of the decisions and judgments of Haverhill Corner concerning its desirable physical form and character. A large percentage of the population was polled in two surveys almost twenty years apart regarding desires for Haverhill Corner's future. The responses to these two surveys have been remarkably consistent. The Planning Board continues to study alternatives and make recommendations relative to implementation of these planning policies

As the need arises, but at intervals no greater than five years, the Master Plan will be reviewed and revised as necessary.

II. Land Use

A. RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

While some community growth is likely and even desirable, the overall amount of population growth and land development should remain consistent with the goal of preserving Haverhill Corner's rural, village character.

1. Land zoned to accommodate new residential growth should be located adjacent to existing population areas such as the compact center of the Precinct. Residential development outside this center should be located on the largest possible lots consistent with applicable law and permitting reasonable use to the landowner. Such provisions would eliminate such scattered or premature subdivisions of land as would involve danger or injury to health, safety, or prosperity of the Precinct by reason of the lack of water supply, drainage, transportation, schools, or other public services, or necessitate an excessive expenditure of public funds for the supply of services.
2. Where residential development is allowed, cluster development and multipledwelling units may be considered in order to preserve open space and to avoid the checkerboard of a grid pattern of development. Cluster development should only be considered where municipal services can reasonably be made available.

3. Land use regulations should be employed to discourage development on prominent hills and especially in those areas where the slope renders development and maintenance of municipal services expensive and seepage and erosion damage more severe.
4. Unique natural areas and scenic views, especially those that are highly susceptible to permanent damage in the event of development, should be reserved for limited uses such as forestry, agriculture and recreation.
5. All proposals for residential and non-residential development, save a detached single-family residence on an existing lot, should include an impact statement indicating the need for the development, the impact on municipal services including schools, and the impact on the environment, and should be consistent with the objectives of the Master Plan.
6. Roads in any new developments should be constructed and maintained in such a manner as to preserve the rural character and be consistent with town road standards.
7. In planning for the future, the Precinct should recognize the value of its distinctive character. Development decisions should be structured to minimize any potentially traumatic effect on the Precinct's rural village character.
8. The Precinct should support appropriate uses and preservation of historic public buildings.

B. INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. The Precinct land use regulations shall not permit any use of land for industrial development.
2. Commercial development should be considered only in existing areas along the NH Routes 10 and 25 business corridor.
3. When reviewing any business development in the Precinct, appropriate land use should be considered.
4. Business development in the Precinct must be compatible with existing character, architecture and surrounding land uses.

C. CIRCULATION

1. It is recommended that roads and highways in the Precinct not be widened, with the resulting destruction of trees and other scenic features which give Haverhill Corner its particular attraction, without careful consideration of all practical alternatives.
2. It is recommended that road shoulders be made safe for bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

3. Future access points to highways should be controlled through the subdivision process, in order to promote safe and easy traffic flow.
4. Precinct officials should work with Town and State governments to assure the safety and well being of resident and traveling populations by enforcement of existing speed and other traffic laws. Changes in these laws should occur as needs arise.

D. PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

As pressure on land in Haverhill Corner increases, the potential threat to the environment becomes greater each year. It is possible by careful regulation to accommodate controlled growth and protect the environment. The following recommendations are made for that purpose.

1. An official Town and Precinct map showing the location of environmentally sensitive areas including water bodies (ponds, marshes, wetlands, rivers and streams), floodplains, steep slopes, prime agricultural land, hill tops and prime recreational land should be prepared. Land use ordinances should provide safeguards to the environmentally sensitive areas shown on that map.
2. A Precinct ordinance requiring a minimum setback from streams and bodies of water should be developed.
3. The Precinct's frontage on the Connecticut River is certainly one of its prime assets and there should be a high priority to protect that asset for future generations. Precinct officials should work with private, town, state and federal agencies for the best possible uses of the Connecticut River.
4. It is recommended that land comprising the watershed supplying water to the Precinct be zoned or otherwise protected to exclude any development on that land.
5. Land particularly well suited for agricultural use should be identified and protected by means which encourage such use, such as current-use assessments, zoning and protection by conservation easements. Owners of such land should be encouraged to follow best practices of agricultural management in order to protect the community and ensure sustainability of the land.
6. Landowners should be encouraged to protect and maintain open space, agricultural lands, significant natural resource areas, fragile lands and scenic views through participation in land trust programs.
7. The Precinct should participate with State and Town agencies in enforcing existing junkyard ordinances and in encouraging property owners to clean up collections of junk and trash.

Adoption History

Original adoption: May 1988

Revision: 6 February 2008

Revision: 8 January 2014

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