

CHAPTER 1: VISION



1.1 VISION STATEMENT

The purpose of this section is to describe the community's vision for Center Harbor, determined by responses to the community survey circulated to full-time and seasonal residents during the summer of 2008. The vision statement provides the foundation on which the rest of the Master Plan is built. The overwhelming majority of respondents want Center Harbor to remain the picturesque, close-knit community it is. While some change is inevitable, achieving a balance between quality of life and growth is a goal of the Master Plan. Although maintaining the status quo is a widely held sentiment, it is not the function of a zoning ordinance to prevent all change and development, but rather to exert a measure of control over what change can take place in the orderly development of a town's landscape. This vision statement will attempt to define the townspeople's needs and desires in general terms and suggest strategies to achieve them.

1.2 CENTER HARBOR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. **Maintain Center Harbor's small town, rural atmosphere** – this concept includes many of the same components of scenic beauty: open space, clean air and water and natural looking views and vistas; but, also includes somewhat less tangible things, such as quietness, a small town government run largely by volunteers from a community of people well acquainted with each other, small and medium size businesses acquainted with and friendly to their patrons, and an abundance of natural flora and fauna. The friendliness of residents and visitors, a somewhat slower pace of life, and a minimum of commercial development also contribute to the rural feel.
2. **Maintain Center Harbor's volunteerism** – nearly all town departments and organizations are comprised solely of volunteers which are a critical component in preserving the town character.
3. **Preserve scenic views, especially along highways and from the lakes** – although the idea of scenic beauty is in the eye of the beholder, most would agree that views of lakes, mountains and hills, hayfields, stone walls and forested lands are components of scenic beauty.
4. **Protect quality of natural resources** – clear air, undeveloped land, and clean water are critical components of scenic beauty, quality of life, and healthy ecosystems.
5. **Preserve and promote working landscapes (farming and forestry)** – encourage traditional land stewardship through small-scale agriculture and responsibly managed forests.
6. **Encourage small business development that builds on regional recreation and tourism** – promote small and medium sized businesses that enhance Center Harbor's rural character and quality of life.
7. **Preserve historic places and structures** – buildings and places in town contribute to Center Harbor's unique history.

1.3 STRATEGIES

The following strategies were identified as high priorities in the community survey and provide guidance in achieving the vision for Center Harbor.

- Minimize development on steep slopes and ridgelines.
- Preserve wetlands.
- Preserve architecturally significant structures.
- Protect large tracts of land through zoning changes or conservation efforts.
- Contribute a higher percentage (currently 25%) of land use change tax to a conservation fund (50% is supported by a majority of survey respondents).
- Encourage development of smaller housing units for young families and older persons and for conservation purposes.
- Allow conservation (cluster) housing to maintain open space.
- Concentrate commercial development around the village center and in currently developed commercial zones.
- Make accommodations on roads for pedestrians and bicyclists.

1.4 GOALS

Most of the goals set forth in the last update of the Master Plan continue to be goals toward which the townspeople wish to strive. Some have been achieved and some have not. Those successfully achieved include:

- Maintaining a five acre average minimum lot size in the Agricultural Rural Zone.
- The designation of several roads in West Center Harbor as Scenic Roads.
- Progress in the road improvement schedule set forth in the Transportation Improvements Program.
- The discontinuance of the plowing of private roads.
- Improvements to Center Harbor Neck Road, Anthon Road, and Squam Lake Road.
- Repair and extension of the concrete boat launch near the Town Beach on Lake Winnepesaukee.
- Improvements to and enlargement of the public docks in Lake Winnepesaukee.

Goals that should be carried forward from the last update of the Master Plan or added as new goals are identified in each chapter and consolidated into an action plan which is outlined in the Implementation Chapter.