

PREFACE

MASTER PLAN IN BRIEF

Lyme's Master Plan was designed to serve two primary purposes. First, it is a summary of the Town's history, community attitudes, natural resources, population, housing, economics, community services, finances, goals, and future plans. A chapter on each of these topics reminds Lyme residents and informs outsiders of precisely what Lyme was, is, and hopes to be in the future. Secondly, the Master Plan is a yardstick by which planning and development proposals can be measured. Although the Master Plan is not a law, the Planning Board is required by statute to produce one by January 1, 1986. It is a source of reference to be used as a planning tool. It is also a legally required cornerstone of any zoning regulations the Town may want to adopt in the future.

Once adopted, the Master Plan is subject to review and revision as the attitudes and needs of the Town require.

The following is a brief summary of the main points:

- Lyme residents like Lyme as it is. They perceive it as a small, safe, friendly, rural town with valuable historic and scenic resources. Lyme residents are primarily single-family house dwellers and are generally not in favor of large-scale residential or commercial development. Town services are perceived as adequate. Preservation of the Town's rural character is regarded as an important issue by most residents. Its heritage, rural character and modest growth rate are preferred qualities. Growth should be planned for wisely.
- Lyme's wide variety of soils, slopes and watersheds must be identified so that inappropriate development does not occur. Farmlands, wetlands, wildlife habitats, aquifers, scenic vistas and areas with poor road access, steep slopes, and poor soil percolation should be left undeveloped.
- Lyme's population growth is expected to grow at an increasing rate. The growth rate between 1970 and 1980 was 15.9%.
- There are close to 100 businesses in Lyme, ranging from farming to computer software. Hanover, Lyme and Lebanon, respectively, are the three areas where most of Lyme's residents work. Seventy-three (73) percent of Lyme's residents commute out of Lyme to work. About 50% go to Hanover. Lyme's median family income, in 1979, was \$19,352. This compares with \$30,482 for Hanover, \$19,231 for Lebanon and \$14,613 for Thetford, Vermont.

Lyme's economy is tied to small businesses, many of which are attracted by and dependent upon the regions' natural resources. The community does not favor large scale commercial development or strip development. Nor does it favor heavy manufacturing or discount shopping malls.

- Lyme's school enrollment (K-12) 1967 through 1984 went from a high of 273 in 1967 to 223 in 1984, with a low of 209 in 1981. Projected figures through 1988 show only a slight increase in enrollment.

- The community's roads and bridges are generally in good repair. A source of gravel for future use must be located. Areas with poor road access should not be developed. New subdivision roads must be built according to Town specifications. Traffic flow and safety must remain a priority. Solid waste disposal plans should be made with the Upper Valley Solid Waste District. A Town water system should be anticipated.
- Lyme's tax expenditure in 1983 was \$457,013; per capita tax was approximately \$300 — relatively low for the Upper Valley. A capital improvement program (CIP) should be developed, reserve funds should continue to be used for capital expenditures and future developments should be regulated so as not to encumber the Town with unanticipated expenses.

This is a brief summary of the Master Plan. The following ten chapters articulate the particulars, with a comprehensive goals, policies and recommendations section in Chapter I.

ROLE AND SCOPE OF THE MASTER PLAN

STATUTORY BASIS

The Town of Lyme Master Plan is authorized by New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSA) 674:1-4. The Statutes command a local planning board "to prepare and amend from time to time a master plan to guide the development of the municipality". Following a duly notified public hearing on the proposed plan or its amendments, the Lyme Planning Board may adopt the entire plan or portions thereof or its amendments, as the case may be, by an affirmative vote of a majority of its members as set forth in RSA 675:6 I and II. Town Meeting action is not needed for the adoption of a master plan or amendments to one.

LOCAL ROLE

According to RSA 674:3 "the master plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing coordinated and harmonious development which will, in accordance with existing and probable future needs, promote health, safety, order, convenience, prosperity, or the general welfare as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development. It shall include, among other things, adequate provision for traffic, the promotion of safety from fire and other dangers, adequate provision for light and air, the promotion of good civic design and arrangement, wise and efficient expenditure of public funds, and the adequate provision of public utilities and other public requirements." Further, RSA 674:2 states that "the master plan shall be a public record..., the sole purpose and effect of which shall be to aid the planning board in the performance of its duties."

A master plan (the term used in New Hampshire) or comprehensive plan (as it is generally called in the United States) is not a law. It is, however, a tool for the Town to use in plotting its future. A master plan is a formal, public statement of the Town's desires and policies, derived from and based upon a systematic process of considering the Town's history, condition, problems, assets, alternatives and goals. The plan should become the yardstick against which all development proposals in the Town will be measured, whether private or public lands are involved.

SCOPE

RSA 674:2 states that "the master plan shall generally be comprised of a report or set of statements and land use and development proposals with accompanying maps, diagrams, charts and descriptive matter designed to show as fully as is possible and practical the Planning Board's recommendations for the desirable development of the territory legally and logically within its planning jurisdiction." It "shall include, if it is appropriate or...specifically required...the following specific sections...: a general statement, a land use section, a housing section, a transportation section, a utility and public service section, a community facilities section, a recreation section, a conservation and preservation section," and such appendices or special reports as are deemed necessary. This master plan considers Lyme's natural and human resources and community facilities both specifically and in the context of the Upper Valley's natural, social and economic environment.

Some comprehensive plans are prepared with a specific time span in mind, such as the end of the century. Current planning practice, though, recognizes that most projections, assumptions, and planners do not predict well enough to do this properly. This master plan projects those characteristics which are measurable only to such lengths as are realistic. The plan identifies problems and recommends a strategy for rectifying existing problems and avoiding future ones. More specifically, this plan introduces the Town with an historic sketch and summary of community attitudes. Important features of Lyme's natural character are described. Recent trends in Lyme's population, housing and economy are analyzed to establish a basis for planning for and accommodating future growth and development. Community and regional facilities and services are also evaluated with an eye to the future. The first chapter presents goals for the Town. Ways to achieve those goals are suggested based on the community attitude survey and ideas generated during the master plan development. These suggestions as a group are this plan's strategy for addressing existing problems and avoiding future ones.

To keep current and useful, the plan must be reviewed periodically. It should be altered as things change or as the perceptions and desires of the people of Lyme change.

NEED

It was with the firm belief in the local need and desire for a master plan that the Lyme Planning Board undertook the job of preparing this master plan. The 1981 community attitude survey identified the lack of a comprehensive set of land use controls, loss of farmland and high taxes as the three most serious problems in Lyme. Since a master plan is the basis for land use controls and since during the planning process the problems of loss of farmland and high taxes can be explored, there appeared to be a well-defined local need for a master plan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Interest in a master plan for Lyme dates from the early 1970s. This early interest produced an excellent plan in 1975 which was never adopted, but has been incorporated into sections of this plan.