

Acknowledgements

The Londonderry Planning Board, Master Plan Update Steering Committee, and the Town of Londonderry would like to thank the numerous groups, organizations, individuals, volunteers, and staff who helped with the various aspects of this plan. Specifically, the town would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the Best Town's Process Committee whose town-wide public outreach and participation efforts during the summer of 2003 helped form the foundation of this plan.

Londonderry Master Plan Update Steering Committee, 2002 - 2004

In the fall of 2002, the Town of Londonderry established a steering committee for the purposes of guiding town staff and consultants in development of this Master Plan. The committee included representatives from several town committees, commissions, boards, volunteer organizations, the business community, and the diverse geographic regions of Londonderry.

Committee Members:

- Ed David, Chair: Londonderry Housing and Redevelopment Authority
- Dana Coons, Vice Chair: Planning Board
- Tom Dolan: Town Council
- Nate Greenberg: School Board
- Ken Hajjar: Budget Committee
- Harry Hegg/Brian Blais: Zoning Board
- Nancy Hobbs: Conservation Commission
- Bill Manning: Parks & Recreation
- Jim Marcotte: At Large (South)
- Donald Moskowitz: Business Community
- Art Rugg: Heritage Commission
- Dani-Jean Stuart: Londonderry Trailways
- Jane Vickery/Barbara Dilorenzo: At Large (North)
- Steve Young: At Large (Central)

Staff Support:

- Andre Garron, AICP: Director, Town of Londonderry, Department of Planning and Economic Development
- Tim Thompson, AICP: Town Planner, Town of Londonderry, Department of Planning and Economic Development

- Barbara Camm: Secretary, Town of Londonderry, Department of Planning and Economic Development

Londonderry Planning Board, 2004

- Mark Cohen, Chair
- Art Rugg, Vice Chair
- Dana Coons, Secretary
- John Farrell, Asst. Secretary
- Paul DiMarco
- Dani-Jean Stuart
- Charles Tilgner, Ex-Officio
- Rick Brideau, Ex-Officio
- Brian Farmer, Council Ex-Officio
- Mary Wing-Soares, Alternate
- Gary Ciccone, Alternate

Guide to the Plan

Purpose

This plan is an update to the town's 1997 Master Plan. Its purpose is to guide the town in land use, development and planning decisions for the next 5, 10, and 20 years. The plan does not supplant the town's previous work – much of the information and concepts outlined in that plan are still relevant and do not need updating. Furthermore, the recommendations and actions outlined in the 1997 plan are still applicable and should continue to be revisited.

The 2003-2004 Master Plan Update Steering Committee strove to set this work apart from previous planning efforts and used the process as an opportunity to reflect on changes of the past decade and establish a vision and path for the town's future. This plan identifies a series of strategic initiatives, based on the input from the public, committees, staff and consultants, to address the primary needs and concerns of the community. In general, this plan should be considered prior to the alteration of town land use regulations, provision or improvement of infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, roads), and other decisions related to development of the town.

Layout

The layout of this plan reflects the primary issues the steering committee identified over the past year. Following this introductory section, the second chapter Vision and Primary Recommendations serves as an executive summary and contains the town's vision statements, future vision map, and a short summary of major concepts outlined in subsequent sections of the document. Chapter 3: Land Use discusses historical development patterns, Londonderry's contemporary land pattern, and provides a summary of the major land use recommendations from the master plan. The plan's two main sections – Chapter 3: Livability and Chapter 4: Managing Growth and Change – contain the majority of supportive data, analysis, and recommendations and strategies related to each topic. The final section, Chapter 5: Conclusion and Implementation provides a short plan summary and outlines a suggested implementation process. Finally, supporting data and statistics as well as summaries of public participation events are provided in the appendix.

Public Process

Public involvement was an integral component of development of this plan. The steering committee utilized a variety of outreach methods and techniques to keep the public updated and involved, as well as to gain input and understand the needs and concerns of Londonderry's residents, businesspeople, and organizations. The following is a short summary of that process.

Community Updates

Throughout the development of this plan, the town's web site was used to provide the public with general updates and announcements, meeting minutes and summaries, and draft materials for review. In addition, town staff consistently met with and promoted the project to the area's news organizations – specifically the Derry News, Union Leader, and Londonderry Times. Regular press releases were generated to announce upcoming participation events and the release of draft materials for public review, as well as to provide general progress reports.

Londonderry's planning staff also presented master plan updates to the community at town events including Old Home Days (August 2003), Best Towns Meetings (June and October 2003), and town meeting (March 2004), developed newsletter updates, and conducted interviews on the town's cable television station. Meetings held by the Master Plan Update Steering Committee were open to the public and presented live and replayed on public access television.

Direct Public Participation

In addition to general updates, the steering committee solicited a significant amount of direct involvement from the Londonderry community. This participation was divided into two categories – broad-based public input and targeted “workshop level” discussions.

Broad community needs were identified through the Best Town's Process – a public participation effort facilitated by University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. This process focused on the wide range of issues facing Londonderry such as housing, recreation, economic development, social capital and encouraged participants to generate strategies to achieve an ideal future for Londonderry. A summary of this effort is provided in the appendix of this plan.

Based on the needs and concerns identified through the Best Town's Process and initial data analysis, the steering committee held a series of focus group sessions targeting issues of Livability, Growth, and Youth. At each meeting, participants held informal discussions identifying priorities and brainstorming strategies for dealing with the major issues facing Londonderry. Again, a summary of these sessions is provided in the appendix.

Finally, based on subsequent analysis and discussion, the steering committee held two community workshops to generate ideas on two primary issues facing the town – Londonderry's Town Center and Thoroughfare Planning for Routes 102 and 28. At both meetings, participants worked in small groups to identify strengths and weaknesses and generate recommendations for enhancement and improvement of these areas. Specific recommendations generated from these discussions are dispersed throughout this plan and short summaries of the meetings are provided in the appendix of this document.



Public workshop participants looking at Londonderry's main two thoroughfares – Route 28 and Route 102

A Brief History of Londonderry

SOURCE: MARILYN HAM, LONDONDERRY TOWN HISTORIAN

The town of Londonderry is located in Rockingham County, New Hampshire. It is ten miles long: bounded on the North by Manchester, the South by Windham; and five miles wide: bounded on the East by Derry, and on the West by Hudson and Litchfield.

The land was formed billions of years ago by rocks eroded, squeezed, melted by volcanoes and then folded and buckled by earthquakes. A portion of Londonderry may even have been a sea. During the ice age, it is probable that Londonderry could have been covered by one to two miles of ice. As the glacier retreated, it left ponds, sand dunes, huge rocks in strange places and scattered sediment. This is the basis of the geology prior to growth which stabilized the vegetation.

The visual past, in many ways, still reveals what is New England. One can observe in the countryside the town's agricultural beginnings: there are cellar holes of farm buildings, stonewalls that run through woods, across open fields and wetlands. Some new homeowners, who look carefully, can see where their house lot was once part of a working farm's pasture, woodlot or field. Barns of all sizes and shapes still dot the landscape. Some majestic maples, pines and knarled oaks still grace Londonderry. One can still hear the sounds of crowing roosters, neighing horses, gurgling brooks, splashing ducks, the trill of songbirds, musical spring peepers, the crunch of early apples; and the smells of sweet grass, new mown hay, fertilizer for fields, fresh turned earth, steam from bubbling maple syrup, the fragrance of the lilac and apple blossom, fresh picked strawberries, the cooling aroma of a homemade apple pie.

The first inland settlers to come to Londonderry were the Scots-Irish Presbyterians who emigrated from Londonderry, Ireland in 1718 seeking religious freedom. They built their first meeting house on a hill in what we now know as East Derry. The area was known as Nutfield due to the profusion of butternuts, black walnuts, acorns, hickory and chestnut. All still remain except the chestnut which was killed by a blight in the 1920s. In 1722, Nutfield was incorporated as the Town of Londonderry.



Part of the Ela dairy farm on present day Route 102 near the Derry border (1906).

These rugged, hardworking, educated newcomers built log homes, a meeting house, a school, saw mills, and grist mills. They planted potatoes, hunted deer and wild turkey, and fished the ponds, streams and the Merrimack River. Flax growing and processing became a cottage industry with the women spinning and the men weaving the flax into fine Londonderry linen. It is said that both President George Washington and President Thomas Jefferson wore shirts made from the Londonderry linen.

Roads in Londonderry at this time were dirt and sometimes followed Indian trails to places like the Amoskeag Falls where Indians taught these settlers fishing skills. Transportation in the southern part of Londonderry used the winding Dunstable Path for horse and buggy trips to Derry or Nashua. In the late 1800s, Lithia Springs was discovered along this road. The lithium cured all sorts of ailments – so the advertisements said! A thriving business of shipping this water in barrels by wagon and teams of horses developed. When this route

became Route 102, life changed. What one knows as Buttrick Road and Old Nashua Road were once part of the main road between Derry and Nashua.



*Annis Grain and Lumber Company,
North Londonderry, Circa 1920.*

Mammoth Road, the main north and south stagecoach road, was improved in 1831. It would carry people and items from Lowell to Concord for two dollars. In 1849 the Manchester to Lawrence Railroad came through the North Village. During this time, the Village was the place for business and community gatherings in Londonderry. The large Annis Grain and Lumber Company thrived and

the train increased the marketing of milk and cream from the dairy herds, the chicken and eggs from the numerous chicken farms, extra vegetables and fruits from the gardens, and lumber and grain. In 1860 Abraham Lincoln, not yet president of the United States, traveled through the village on this line on his way to a speech in Concord.



*Trolley crossing the Little Cohas on the way to the
Cohas Spring health spa, Circa 1926.*

In 1907, electricity came to town. In the following years, an electric car line traveling from Derry to Manchester was established and went through the North Village. On a portion of this line, the Cohas Spring Water, founded by Roswell Annis in the early 1900s, was a thriving business and tourist attraction along the Little Cohas Brook. It was nestled in a thousand

acres of beautiful woods west of the North Village. The tall Annis brick chimney and a pathway along the railroad and electric car bed is all that remains of its surging business past.

Along the mid-point of Mammoth Road the town common developed as a place for community gathering in the early 1800s. The sugar maple trees were planted and marked by a small plaque in memory of the early Grange #44 members. Monuments were installed and dedicated at the town common for the Civil War, World War I, the Revolutionary War, World War II, the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and the tragedy of 9/11/2001. Celebrations on the common include Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Old Home Days,



*Civil War Veterans at Town Common.
Wesley B. Knight Post No. 41, (1890).*

the 250th Anniversary Celebration in 1969 and another in 1972, religious services, Leach Library programs, graduations, weddings, antique fairs, picnics, 4th grade school history tours, Boys and Girls Scout activities, conservation programs and Concerts on the Common. The Common and the trees around it are a Historic District surrounded by the 1837 Presbyterian Church, the old Town Hall (the Lions' Hall) with the 1845 front addition and the Presbyterian Morrison Meeting House (1769) in the rear, the United Methodist Church (1856), and lastly, the Grange #44 built in 1909. The former United Methodist Parsonage and the former Presbyterian Parsonage sit side by side on West Pillsbury Road (Church Street). This area around the common is included in the Apple Way pamphlet (Apple way is a New Hampshire designated scenic byway).

Additional notable dates in Londonderry's history:

- In 1722, Nutfield was incorporated as the Town of Londonderry.
- The original area of Londonderry also included Windham, which in 1740 became its own town.
- In 1827 Londonderry was divided into two towns: the eastern section became the present Derry and the western section held the name Londonderry
- In 1875, a “police officer” was appointed by the selectmen.
- In 1947, Central School, now Matthew Thornton School, was built – doing away with one and two room school houses.
- In 1952, the Londonderry Volunteer Fire Department was formed. Before this time, the Town was protected by twenty-nine fire extinguishers in various places.
- The coming of Interstate 93 in 1963, or The Alan Shephard Highway, opened this sleepy, rural town into a Boston bedroom community.

To find out more about Londonderry, here are some Guides located at the Leach Library:

- The three volumes “History of Londonderry”
- Five green booklets “Early Londonderry” - Londonderry Historical Society
- Annual copies of the Town and School Reports
- “Images of America - Londonderry” is a soft cover pictorial of Londonderry, published by the Londonderry Historical Society
- Annis Book of “Vital Statistics”
- Cemetery Records
- “Houses and Buildings before 1940” - Heritage Commission
- Deeds recorded at the Rockingham Court House in Brentwood
- Town Website: www.londonderry.org