

PLAN SUMMARY

2.1 Stewardship

In this Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Exeter has accepted the role of *stewardship* for the wealth and resources, which lay within the boundaries of the Town, and the town's rural character, which provide a quality of life different from what is experienced in the city or suburbs. *Stewardship* means providing management for the continued enjoyment and appreciation of the town's resources for today's residents and *future generations*.

2.2 Vision

The Comprehensive Plan provides the Town of Exeter with a vision that allows the community to continue to be a rural community with a unique identity and sense of place, retain its historic hamlets, scenic centers, agriculture and business, while simultaneously absorbing new growth and development in the future. To hold on to the values, quality of life and visual identity of the community, Exeter must manage growth and accommodate change pro-actively. This entails actively pursuing economic development opportunities that will enhance the natural and built assets of the town, build upon the rural resources that set Exeter apart, and use Exeter's rural character to the town's advantage.

2.3 Growth

In terms of economics, growth is usually viewed as good but in terms of community character and environment; growth is at times viewed as negative. These opposite views symbolize attitudes and values about land use and the real consequences of unmanaged growth, where change is not anticipated and, as an outcome may not be as beneficial to the community as first thought or suggested. Growth can be good for a community but without cohesive management approaches growth can adversely affect the character of a community, not only visually, but also socially and physically.

To achieve the vision of the Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Exeter will have to use growth management as a major tool to guide the rate and timing of change in the community. By actively addressing implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, Exeter will be able to accommodate growth during the next decade while preserving much of the town's character.

2.4 Plan Organization

Exeter's Comprehensive Plan is intended to be the primary guide to growth and development in the town. Encompassing eight functional areas, the Comprehensive Plan is a blueprint for the future, for:

- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Housing
- Facilities and Services
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Circulation
- Open Space and Recreation
- Policy Implementation

This Comprehensive Plan shows the interconnection between issues and problems facing the Town of Exeter and addresses these issues and concerns. The plan is divided into the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Plan Summary
3. Plan Development Process
4. Goals and Policies
5. Plan Elements
6. Implementation Program
7. Consistency

This organization allows users to focus on particular areas of interest or concerns, while at the same time provides an interrelated document in which planning policies are consistent from one functional area to another.

2.5 Major Goals and Policies

2.5.1 Economic Development

Economic development is a key consideration for Exeter. It must be viewed within the context of national, regional, and state conditions. Consideration must be given to how the community can influence its own economy through action. In addressing Economic Development the town will:

- Promote economic diversification that contributes to the tax base and creates jobs in areas that are accessible.
- Focus attention on small-scaled, clustered, architecturally sensitive, landscaped shopping areas consistent with the rural town character.

- Analyze the existing economic development in Exeter to determine potential expansion of the economic base.
- Consider sites and structures for new economic development.
- Protect, promote and support the Town's agricultural and recreational base.
- Promote and coordinate economic development opportunities at the state, regional and local level, utilizing the Exeter Economic Development Commission and other related Town bodies and commissions in a cooperative manner actively seeking desirable businesses to locate in Exeter.

2.5.2 Land Use

The Land Use Plan is the centerpiece of the Comprehensive Plan. It portrays in written and graphic form how a community envisions how it will look in the future, based upon the goals and objectives of its residents. It defines what types of activities should be allowed, where they will occur, and at what densities. By addressing land use in the Comprehensive Plan the Town will:

- Focus on development that is consistent with the natural constraints of the land, without placing an undue burden on the residential taxpayer, and; ensures the development of planned rural village centers and industrial uses that are consistent with rural development, while contributing to positive tax base diversification.
- Strive to establish future residential development at a scale and density that is consistent with the character of western Exeter and relates to the constraints presented to such development in eastern Exeter.
- Support the development of planned “Village Centers” that cluster services and other ancillary uses in locations convenient to the general population of the town.
- Diminish the potential for new strip commercial development by redirecting business growth to the proposed village centers.
- Promote “Limited Business” where strip development has taken away the potential or attraction for residential uses to be located adjacent to existing retail development.

- Promote the development of environmentally appropriate industrial uses along the I-95 corridor area where access to the interstate and other major roadway systems is convenient and available.
- Promote the use of conservation subdivision design techniques to preserve open space and other natural features.

2.5.3 Housing

This element of the Comprehensive Plan presents the policies of the Town with respect to the future development of housing in the community and the maintenance of its existing housing stock. With this element the Town will:

- Determine balanced housing that blends with Exeter’s rural and agricultural character.
- Promote conservation subdivision design techniques to more closely relate housing development to environmental constraints, preservation of open spaces, land use management, circulation improvements, reduce service costs to the town and provide a range of housing types in the community.
- Actively promote the maintenance of existing housing stock through rehabilitation programs available.
- Support efforts by the State, regional and local agencies to create special needs and senior citizen housing alternatives.
- Consider zoning alternatives to expand affordable housing stock.
- Recognize mobile homes as an affordable housing alternative and work to provide rehabilitation assistance where required.

2.5.4 Facilities and Services

This element of the Comprehensive Plan covers local government and other public facilities and services. With this element in place the Town will:

- Analyze the inventory of existing public facilities and services, including all publicly operated facilities plus quasi-public and private facilities that provide services to the general public.

- Analyze the effectiveness of each facility and service, noting any deficiencies in quality of services provided.
- Forecast future needs for facilities and services, based upon projections of land usage and population changes.
- Ensure that the town will have the best public safety services possible.
- Address future demands for educational space in the most cost effective way possible by planning for the future needs of the school population on a regular and ongoing basis.
- Support the improvement of library services and facilities.

2.5.5 Natural and Cultural Resources

This element forms the environmental base for the Comprehensive Plan and is closely related to the Open Space and Recreation and the Land Use Plan Elements. The Natural and Cultural Resources element includes resource areas that are considered to have significance to both the natural and human environment. With this element the Town will:

- Identify, inventory, and protect the sensitive natural resources within the Town.
- Address the need to protect and preserve surface and groundwater resources to insure continued high quality waters.
- Support the enactment of development standards for the protection of natural and cultural resources.
- Support initiatives that work to minimize development impacts to natural and cultural resources.
- Identify and support protection of cultural resources within the Town, including agricultural lands, historic structures, and scenic ways.
- Preserve the historic heritage of the community through the protection of historic structures and sites.

2.5.6 Circulation

This element addresses all circulation modes within Exeter and those external modes that influence local development. By addressing circulation within the Comprehensive Plan the Town will be able to analyze roadways, public and special needs transit, pedestrian circulation, non-vehicular transportation, parking and other facilities providing or supporting the transportation of people and goods within the town. With this element the Town will:

- Support improved traffic circulation within the community that integrates new development into the existing circulation patterns, coordinates all road design, construction, maintenance, and drainage in a systematic, environmentally appropriate and cost effective manner.
- Encourage the regular evaluation of all locally maintained bridges to determine physical condition and carrying capacity.
- Prioritize specific roads, bridges, and intersections for improvement and consider the establishment of a bicycle path system in Exeter.
- Support the development of a master plan for a bikeway/nature trail system for the Town connecting local and regional recreational facilities parks, and unique natural areas

2.5.7 Open Space and Recreation

The Open Space and Recreation element evaluates the condition of existing facilities, the need for new facilities, the development of policies for the provision, management and protection of open space and recreation areas while presenting an implementation program designed to achieve the Town's objectives. When addressing recreation and open space the Town will:

- Encourage imaginative use of the various land preservation techniques to supplement the supply of outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Support the use of easements where full rights to land are not necessary to realize the desired recreation or conservation goal.
- Encourage desirable gifts of land and money from private individuals and organizations for recreation and conservation purposes.
- Support the formation of "Greenbelts," and continue to assess the need for additional recreation areas.

- Support the continuance of privately owned recreation facilities - skiing, golfing, camping, etc.
- Support outright acquisition of land by the Town for preserved open space and recreational use.