

## **Chapter I Introduction and Goals**

*“Change is everywhere and yet there is no change. The streams still flow, the rose-colored clouds still drift in the blue sky, white mists rise from the meadows. All is as it was. Old names of families who settled the town remain as if no generations had intervened.*

*New names are coming in, replenishing where the old have disappeared. Fresh streams of energy and purpose pour in. People from distant cities settle here for their own vigorous or tranquil work. New homes are started upon the old. The torch passes from one to another. And so is justified at the end of a century and a half the vision of Sutton’s fathers who amid hardships and all of Nature’s opposition, incorporated this town.”*

*A Narrative History of Sutton, 1934*

### **MASTER PLAN PURPOSE**

A Master Plan is a living document that articulates the vision, desires, and concerns of a community. The Plan provides recommendations on ways to maintain or improve the features of a community. This Plan is intended to serve as a blueprint for all future activities of Sutton. This includes future economic development efforts; amendments to land use regulations; environmental and historic preservation efforts; the expansion of community facilities and services for the next five to ten years.

This Master Plan is Sutton’s road map for the first quarter of the twenty-first century and beyond. It outlines what we are all about and where we want to go, as a community in central New Hampshire. The Plan describes us today, and forecasts where we would like to be heading. Most importantly, it defines what we will need to do over the next several years as we work together to shape the future of the Town of Sutton.

A Master Plan is intended to be the device that influences the making, interpretation, and implementation of laws and procedures that give shape and direction to the community. A Master Plan is required by law in the State of New Hampshire (RSA 674:2); but unlike other “master devices,” it has no force of law and no way to generate the resources that may be required for implementation. The Master Plan can be a powerful tool to help shape a community by giving suggested direction to appointed and elected officials. However, the true power of the document is derived from the citizenry, as they will ultimately be the voice that approves the staffing, funding, regulatory alternatives and strategies identified by this Plan.

As this Master Plan was being written, it became evident that Sutton is at a crossroads. As incremental growth creeps from southern portions of the State and the City of Concord continues to evolve and expand as a regional source of employment, Sutton will continue to grow and face new challenges and issues. Those who contributed to this plan did their best to plan for such

changes and to provide appropriate strategies that will accommodate reasonable growth while maintaining the rural atmosphere. The Planning Board should carefully consider the recommendations included in the Plan and take appropriate measures to implement them.

## **SUTTON MASTER PLAN PROCESS**

The Sutton Master Plan is a Planning Board document, which is where the process originated. In 1999, the Sutton Planning Board decided it was time to update their Master Plan, which had not been done since 1988. In June 1999, a Master Plan Community Survey was mailed out to approximately 600 property owners. 195 surveys were returned for a 32% response rate. See **Appendix A** for the Community Survey results.

Once the survey results were compiled and analyzed, the Planning Board embarked on three year data gathering, mapping, and research effort for the various Chapters in the Master Plan.

In 2003, the Planning Board contracted with the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) to assist them in completing the 2004 Sutton Master Plan. The Planning Board and CNHRPC drafted a schedule and a budget for the Master Plan creation, which was partially funded in 2003 with the majority of the project being approved at the March 2004 Town Meeting.

On July 27, 2004 the Sutton Planning Board hosted a public information session for residents and land owners to learn more about the Master Plan and provide feedback. The information session provided background on the Master Plan itself and the process, an update on what work had been done to date, and an opportunity for those attending to give suggestions on each of the Master Plan chapters and complete a survey. Over 140 people attended the session and 50% of those in attendance completed the survey, the results of which can be found in **Appendix B**.

Each Chapter of the Master Plan was created by a Subcommittee, meetings of which were open to any resident, landowner, or business owner in Sutton, with a Planning Board member serving as the Chair of the Subcommittee. Once the Subcommittees were finished with their Chapters, the Chapters were submitted to the Planning Board.

The Planning Board, once they received the Chapter, would hold a publicly noticed hearing on the Chapter and receive comments and feedback from those in attendance. Once the public hearing was closed, the Planning Board would then make their own comments, recommendations, and changes before preliminarily approving the Chapter.

Once all the Chapters were completed and preliminarily approved, the Planning Board held a final public hearing in February 2005 on the draft Master Plan in its entirety for any last input from the public before they adopted the entire Master Plan.

## **MASTER PLAN GOALS**

If the Master Plan is to be a useful tool for the community for the next ten years, it needs to integrate the three infrastructures that make up a community – conservation, community, and constructed.

**Conservation Infrastructure** encompasses the natural life support system of interconnected lands and waters upon which human life and economic activity, as well as all other forms of life depend. Conservation infrastructure includes conservation lands, recreation lands, water bodies, scenic areas, steep slopes, and forests.

**Community Infrastructure** encompasses the opportunities within a community for organized and informal social interaction. Community infrastructure includes cultural and civic organizations, community activities and events, methods of communication and outreach, and volunteerism in town.

**Constructed Infrastructure** includes the many built elements that transport and shelter people, goods, and information. Constructed infrastructure includes commercial and residential development, roads, and municipal facilities.

Every effort was made to integrating these infrastructures throughout the Master Plan, in the general text and in the recommendations. By doing so it greatly enhances the benefits of each system by reducing potential conflicts and minimizing competition for resources.

## **CHAPTER GOALS**

What follows is the collective list of goals for Sutton--what the residents of Sutton want to achieve in our growing and vital town. These ideas have been laid out for all to see and work towards. Just as those who have gone before us, we can seize this opportunity to move and shape our little bit of the world and to make it a better place for us, our children and grandchildren. Herein lies a living document, one which will help us focus on the important issues of our times.

Establishing a set of goals is an important task that requires considerable public input and debate. The goals listed below are discussed in each Chapter of the Master Plan, except for the Population and Economics Chapter, the Current Land Use Chapter, and the Implementation Chapter, which do not contain goals. Goals are general statements of ideal conditions and are intended to provide a policy framework and direction to the plan.

### **Historic and Cultural Resources Chapter**

### **Community Facilities Chapter**

**Natural Resources Chapter**

**Housing Chapter**

**Transportation Chapter**

**Future Land Use Chapter**

**CONCLUSION**

The Master Plan is a road map that outlines the kind of town Sutton is now and the kind of town the residents would like it to be, keeping in mind its importance as a community in central New Hampshire. It describes us today, forecasts where we hope to be heading, and defines what we need to do over the next several years.

Most importantly, we can see what we can achieve and, by committing it to paper for the world to see, what our plan is for the future. It is to be a living document helping us to focus on the important issues of our times. We need each and every community member's efforts to bring life to this document, to make this a reality!