



An Economic Policy Plan for Peterborough

Adopted by the Peterborough Planning Board
September 11, 2000

General Principals

Peterborough should remain a major economic center of the region.

Economic activity must respect Peterborough's natural, cultural, and historic heritage.

A financially healthy, pedestrian friendly, core commercial center is essential.

Sustained economic prosperity for Peterborough requires a balance between residential, industrial/commercial, and open space.

Investing in infrastructure is necessary to maintain and expand the existing tax and job base.

The Plan

1. *The Town of Peterborough should work with regional development corporations, the State of New Hampshire, and private developers to retain and ensure the economic vitality of businesses that already exist in Peterborough.*

The Board observed that this program was most appropriately the task of such groups as the Economic Development Authority, the Office of Community Development, Monadnock Business Ventures, and the Chamber of Commerce.

2. *High-speed broad band Internet access and other emerging telecommunication services will be essential to maintaining a strong local economy. The Town should foster and encourage advanced telecommunication services that are consistent with the visual quality and safety of the Town. The private sector is responding to the growing demand for such services, but Community leadership is essential to make sure we get the services we want while minimizing potentially disruptive impacts. Towards that goal, a Telecommunications Master Plan should be prepared and adopted as part of the overall Master Plan as an effective means of addressing the land use and sometimes complex technical issues involved. This Plan should address not only basic telecommunication services, but also consider how to assist local businesses effectively participate in E-commerce. The future role of telecommunications in Town government should also be addressed, to assure a coherent, efficient approach.*

The Planning Board will work with the Town Administrator, the Board of Selectmen, the Office of Community Development, EDA, and others to determine how best to prepare this plan. A Telecommunications Master Plan should be reviewed and adopted by the Planning Board; but the preliminary task of assembling a draft plan is beyond the available time of the Board.

3. *The historic Downtown area is a key component in the Town's economy, providing a significant number of jobs and tax base, as well as functioning as the 'heart' of the community. A Downtown Master Plan should be prepared which will encourage continued public/private cooperation in downtown revitalization and which will address such issues as parking, circulation, infrastructure, visual appearance, and the desired mix of uses. The results of the on-going parking study, the underground Canal study, the floodplain study, and the retaining wall study should all be considered in that Plan.*

The Planning Board will give further consideration as to how this section of the Master Plan will be prepared and when it will be prepared, as part of a Master Plan Strategy Session to be held in the first half of 2000.

4. *Adequate Water and Sewer services are essential for the retention and continued vitality of local businesses, as well as for the overall welfare of the community. The Planning Board supports the on-going efforts to prepare Sewer and Water Master Plan sections, and believes that these sections of the Master Plan should be given priority, since they will determine the capacity of the Town for additional economic growth and represent substantial future public costs. Other components of the public infrastructure, including drainage systems, roads, buildings, cemeteries, parks, and bridges all need to be addressed in future Master Plan efforts and in future Capital Improvement Plans.*

The Planning Board understands that Town staff and consultants are preparing these sections of the Master Plan and anticipates that a preliminary Water Supply Master Plan will be presented to the Board during 2000. A Recreation Master Plan is proposed in the 2000 Town budget. The Planning Board will consider additional infrastructure planning at its Master Plan Strategy Session.

5. *The region continues to experience very low unemployment rates, making it increasingly difficult for local businesses to find and retain adequate staff. This appears to be of particular importance in the lower paying retail and service jobs, but is a growing problem throughout the Town. The Town, through the Economic Development Authority, should investigate what if any assistance can be provided to local businesses in finding and retaining adequate staff. The Town will also prepare a Housing Master Plan, which should include consideration of whether adequate workforce housing is available within the town and the region.*

The Planning Board will establish a schedule for this section of the Master Plan as part of its Master Plan Strategy Session.

6. *A safe and reliable road network is essential for the sustained vitality of our Town's economy. A Transportation Master Plan must be prepared, which would incorporate the findings of Southwest Region Planning Commission's recent Route 101 corridor study. The Town should also continue its support for the efforts of Southwest Region Planning Commission to undertake a Route 202 corridor study, as well as the proposal by the Office of Community Development to prepare a transportation model for Peterborough. The Transportation Master Plan should also incorporate the proposed bicycle path and explore transportation alternatives. The Planning Board will also continue its work on possible Gateway zones for Routes 101, 202, 136, and 123.*

The Planning Board will establish a schedule for this section of the Master Plan as part of its upcoming Master Plan workshop

7. *Peterborough's economy is tied to the Town's visual beauty and rural character. Preserving significant open space will assure that Peterborough remains an attractive place to live and to locate a business. A strong open space program will also assure that our 'natural infrastructure' that recharges groundwater supplies, stores floodwaters, and provides other desirable public functions at little or no cost, is also protected.*

The Planning Board has committed to start work on an Open Space Master Plan in the spring of 2000 and will coordinate with the Conservation Commission, the Economic Development Authority, and the community at large in preparing this plan.

8. *The historic and cultural heritage of Peterborough is not only a reminder of our past but a key to future economic prosperity. The downtown business district has experienced an economic renaissance in large part because of the historic buildings and cultural events located there. A Cultural and Historic Preservation Master Plan should be prepared to identify what resources need to be protected and to establish an on-going program to promote and enhance our cultural and historic resources throughout the Town.*

The Planning Board will establish a schedule for this section of the Master Plan as part of its upcoming Master Plan workshop.

9. *The visual appearance of the Town is another key element in our present and future economic vitality. The Town should review existing development standards, and seek community consensus on policies and programs to upgrade and protect the visual appearance of our community.*
10. *Non-residential economic activity (commercial, office, and industrial) will continue to be an important part of the town. When the Land Use section of the Master Plan is prepared, the Planning Board and the community must consider whether additional land should be designated through zoning for non-residential development. The Planning Board will also evaluate existing non-residential zones to consider if they should be adjusted to make them more responsive to the changing economy and to present community concerns.*

The Town should undertake a process to identify and designate those parcels of land that should be set aside for open space, business, and municipal needs.