

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Newton's most basic resource is its land. The use of such land determines to a large extent the character and the quality of life within our community. The State Legislature has granted to the local planning board under RSA 674:1, 674:2 and 674:3 the responsibility of the preparation and administration of the Master Plan to help guide our community in the rate, location and type of growth; protection of unique features and its need for public services and facilities. New Hampshire law also mandates that in all municipalities which have zoning ordinances, a Master Plan must be in place and be updated. Increasingly, both the courts and the legislature in the state are stressing the key role that the Master Plan plays in building the foundation on which all local land use regulations are based. If a town's Master Plan is not up-to-date, according to the State's planning enabling statutes, all zoning regulations are ineffective and are not legally enforceable.

Newton's first comprehensive Master Plan was adopted in 1968 and prepared by Thomas Associates. In 1986, the Master Plan Committee revised the Master Plan with the assistance of Rockingham Planning Commission, town department heads, selectmen, and town boards. In 1998, a group of citizens came together forming a new master plan committee, with the goal of presenting a revised Master Plan to the Planning Board.

Newton's Master Plan is a compilation of data and information relative to the existing conditions and probable future growth of the municipality and its environs. It contains appropriate maps, charts, and supporting text and offers guidelines for community decision making in leading Newton into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If done and implemented properly, this Master Plan will help our community meet change responsibly, guiding its growth in an orderly, constructive manner and will promote health, safety, order convenience, prosperity, and the general welfare as well as efficiency and economy in the process of development. Traffic, promotion of safety from fire and other dangers, adequate provisions 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 are additional considerations.

As Newton continues to grow, zoning and other land use regulations will become more and more critical in directing and guiding growth. These controls will determine the character of the town in the future. We can only guide our development by looking critically at our General Statement of Objective, land use, housing, transportation, utility and public services, community facilities, recreation, conservation and preservation as our conditions and values change. This is not a static document and shall be reviewed and updated as a minimum not to exceed every five years for the Water Resources Management section.

