

Dublin's Vision Statement 2016

The Town of Dublin has been constantly evolving over the many years of its existence. From a highland wilderness of old-growth forest to an open landscape of neat fields bounded by stone walls and hardly a tree to be seen, to the tangled second growth forest that now covers most of our town. From a farming village, to a sheep raising town, to an artist and writer's retreat and summer vacation spot, to a small New Hampshire town where folks still gather for town meetings, Memorial Day Parades, fireworks on the Fourth of July.

There are still traces here of the Dublin of years past: a few old trees, plenty of stone walls, a few farmers, some sheep, and a good number of artists and writers. The Lake and the mountain are relatively unchanged. Still here are plenty of old houses and buildings like the Library, the Town Hall, the original Yankee Building, the four churches, the old General Store; most changed but still functioning and still lending a sense of historic charm to the town.

Today only a few Dubliners try to wrest a livelihood from the soil, and our current population probably has more in common with the "summer people" who started coming here in the 1800s than with the farmers of yesteryear: we live here because of the quiet beauty of the area, the rural character of the town, and an appreciation of the sense of community shared by the townspeople. Most of us work elsewhere, others telecommute, other run small businesses, often out of their homes.

When our Master Plan was updated in 2007, the Town anticipated a wave of growth and development approaching from the east that could have a profound effect on Dublin. The trend at that time was for increased commercial development, especially along state highways, and increased residential development of rural areas, with more families and more children in the schools. After surveys and public meetings, the Planning Board felt that a majority of the townspeople wanted prevent major changes to the town, and accordingly the Master Plan, and subsequent amendments to our land use ordinances addressed this desire by making residential development more difficult and more expensive by doubling the minimum lot size in most of the town, and limiting where business development could take place.

Those regulatory changes, in conjunction with economic factors that discouraged development, have resulted in a Dublin that has changed little over the past ten years. In addition, Dublin has a limited amount of undeveloped land that doesn't contain steep slopes, wetlands, or restrictions against development. Few new homes have been built, and only a few businesses have started or expanded, while several have closed their doors. And the demographic trends have changed: according to the U.S. Census, the population has actually fallen, rather than increasing as had been expected. And, as in other New Hampshire towns, the population has aged, and we now have fewer residents per home, fewer young families, and fewer children in our schools.

The people of Dublin want to preserve the Town's natural resources and scenic beauty, its small town charm, rural character, and its community spirit. Given current regulations and current economic and demographic trends it is unlikely that major changes or stricter regulations are appropriate to accomplishing this goal. Rather the Town should consider minor adjustments that would protect what we already have while enhancing the vitality of Dublin by allowing some residential and business growth in a way that will not adversely impact the natural resources, scenic beauty, and small town charm that we so value.

Consistent with this vision of Dublin, the town should consider the following objectives:

- Continue to make protection of Dublin's natural resources and scenic beauty a top priority.
- To reverse the slight declining trend in the Town's vitality since the last Master Plan was approved, proactively encourage a measure of managed growth by:
 - Promoting residential growth in the Village District.
- Revisit our current Retirement Community Overlay District ordinance to ascertain if there is a better way to encourage appropriate senior housing in Dublin.
- Review Dublin's municipal facilities to determine what upgrades, relocations, replacements and other changes that might be necessary in the coming decade and consider the options available, including the purchase of land for future expansion, and sources of funding for the required improvements.
- Increase citizen participation in town government.
- Work with state officials to minimize, to the greatest extent possible, the adverse effects of the Town's two state highways with respect to such factors as noise, traffic, and pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- Seek avenues to provide high-speed internet and improved cellular coverage to the entire town at the earliest possible date.
- Establish and/or maintain a regulatory scheme that encourages agriculture and alternative energy sources, and investigate the possibility of converting some or all town facilities to renewable energy.
- Review the inventory prepared by the Open Space Committee and determine what actions should be taken to conserve properties identified as valuable for environmental and recreational purposes.