

## INTRODUCTION THE ALBANY MASTER PLAN 2001

At the 1979 Town Meeting the Town of Albany voted to establish a Planning Board. Members were to be appointed by the Selectmen and their duties were to be in compliance with RSA (Revised Statutes Annotated) 673:1-2. By virtue of this action, the Planning Board was authorized to develop a Master Plan.

A Master Plan provides information and makes recommendations. It is a guideline for the development of the Town; it is not intended to be a rigid directive for future planners. New Hampshire statutes advise, indeed instruct, the Planning Board to review and modify it "from time to time" (recommended that it be done every ten [10] years at a minimum). By statute, the Conservation Protection section must be updated every five years

In March 1980, after an in-depth analysis of the responses to a Town-wide survey, the first Master Plan was presented to, and accepted by, the people of Albany. The 1980 Master Plan was adopted by the Albany Planning Board on June 6, 1980 and subsequently filed with the Carroll County Registry of Deeds.

On June 8, 1981 the Town voted and approved Subdivision Regulations and on March 9, 1982, adopted the Zoning Ordinance. The Ordinance has since been amended 10 times. At the same time, the Official Zoning Map was established. Originally, only segments of property along the White Mountain Highway (Route 16), the main artery through town, were designated for commercial use. In March 1995, the Commercial Zone was amended making all properties that had a minimum of fifty (50) feet of frontage along Route 16. In March of 1994, the Town established a Light Industrial Zone, beginning at Drake Hill Road and running north to the Coleman property along the easterly side of Route 16. Excluding those parcels set aside for natural preserves, the remainder of the town is for residential and agricultural use. The Zoning Board of Adjustment was established October 20, 1981. The Board of Selectmen appointed five (5) members and one (1) Planning Board member to the ZBA. Their duties are to be in compliance with RSA 672-677.

In 1982 Road Specs were adopted by the Selectmen and are known as the Albany Street Standards. They were amended on July 18, 1989, and are currently in effect. Site Plan Review regulations became effective October 13, 1987. There is no building code but building permits are required to erect or modify any structure.

Enclosed is the 2001 Master Plan which includes a History of Albany and a Summary of Land Use Planning for the Unique Town of Albany, New Hampshire as well as the Goals and Objectives for future planning. The Planning Board has made every effort to encourage public participation in the review of the 1990 Mster Plan and in the development of modifications to that Plan. As in the original 1980 presentation, the 2001 Plan attempts to be comprehensive.

MASTER PLAN 2001  
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

**GOAL I. PRESERVE THE CHARACTER OF ALBANY AND THE LIFESTYLE FAVORED BY THE TOWNSPEOPLE**

1. Objective: MAINTAIN THE SMALL TOWN CHARACTER OF ALBANY BY ENCOURAGING CLUSTERED, COMMUNITY-TYPE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS ACCOMPANIED BY OPEN SPACE, RECREATIONAL AND/OR CONSERVATION LANDS.

Rationale: Over the years, it has been made clear that the small town character of Albany is appreciated by most of its citizens. Although the townspeople recognize that a fence cannot be built around the Town, controlling the rate of development while, at the same time, building affordable housing for our growing population should be an on-going concern.

Albany's Zoning Ordinance and other Land Use Regulations should encourage the community-type (nodal) development concept in proposed new housing developments. This concept follows the historic New England practice of clustering dwellings and contributes to sound land use practices and economic development while preserving the town's small town character, open space and scenic vistas. Clustering allows for road and septic designs which are economical.

Albany needs to continue to manage growth, through careful planning, in such a manner that the status quo of the environment, and current lifestyles of the Townspeople will be maintained.

2. Objective: CONTINUE TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR HOUSING FOR ALL AGES, INTERESTS AND ECONOMIC LEVELS BY MONITORING ZONING AND LAND USE REGULATIONS TO ASSURE THEY ARE NOT EXCLUSIVE.

Rationale: Albany can challenge most other towns in regard to its support of the less fortunate, both with its humanitarian aid and with its portion of housing for the economically less fortunate.

Zoning and Land Use Regulations that may be developed in the future must continue to provide for adequate housing for all ages, interests and economic levels. However, the health, safety and welfare of all residents of Albany must continue to be of primary concern. Housing which is substandard should not be permitted as it could result in harm, hardship and misfortune to both the residents and the community.

3. Objective: CONTINUE TO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE TOWN'S CHILDREN.

Rationale: Albany's school-age children receive their education, primarily, through an AREA agreement with the Conway Educational System (School Administrative Unit [SAU] 9). Wonalancet children go to schools in adjacent towns. As of 1999, the State Supreme Court ruled that the State of New Hampshire will provide educational funding to towns. The impact that this will have on the town's tax rate is not known at this time.

Although there is no pattern of growth apparent which would allow for an independent school system, Albany should continue to seek to provide a better educational system for its students. The Town should continue to study options for other educational opportunities.

4. Objective: CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FOR CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE TOWNSPEOPLE OF ALBANY

Rationale: Many cultural and recreational facilities and programs are provided for all residents of Albany throughout the Mt. Washington Valley region.

Albany, chartered on November 6, 1766, is steeped with history. There are many historical sites and scenic vistas located throughout the town. The Albany Historical Society has established a museum in the historic Chapel located on Route 16 in front of the Albany Town Hall. Preservation of Albany's heritage should be an on-going concern and the Town should continue to support the Albany Historical Society in their efforts to preserve the history of the town.

Albany maintains a contractual agreement with the Conway Public Library for Albany families to use their facility. Albany should continue to maintain and fund this agreement. At the same time, Albany should study options for establishing its own town library if and when the need arises.

Because over 90% of Albany is part of the popular and heavily utilized White Mountain National Forest, all Albany residents have an abundance of opportunities for a wide range of year-round recreational activities right in their own back yard. Albany should continue to work with the staff of the White Mountain National Forest to maintain the forest as a "Land of Many Uses" for the enjoyment of all.

Options to develop a town park and/or a town beach for the use of Albany residents should continue to be explored.

5. Objective: CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN AND PROVIDE FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES AS NEEDED

Rationale: The Town/Selectmen's Office and the office of the Town Clerk/Tax Collector are located in the Town Hall located on Route 16 behind the Chapel. There are no other municipal buildings (schools, post office, community building or church) in the Town of Albany. The Town should continue to study options for these facilities as needs develop. A Town Building Inspector may be needed in the future.

An elected Road Agent maintains the 18 miles of Town-owned roads. Proposals to approve/disapprove major road improvement projects, as well as to raise and appropriate funds for the projects, are placed on the annual Warrant so that the Townspeople can vote on them at Town Meeting. The Town needs to continue to provide for the most cost-effective road maintenance services. It is possible that building a highway storage facility for town-owned equipment located on town owned property might be needed in the future.

6. Objective: TO PERMIT, BUT CONTROL, THE ERECTION OF WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES IN THE TOWN OF ALBANY.

Rationale: The Telecommunications Act of 1996 dictates that all towns must permit Wireless Telecommunications Facilities to be erected in the town. However, the health, safety and welfare of all residents of Albany must be of primary concern. Albany's Zoning Ordinance and other Land Use Regulations must continually be monitored and assessed to assure that they preserve the town's character as well as control the adverse impacts on environmentally sensitive areas, historically significant locations, health and safety by injurious accidents to persons and property, and prosperity through protection of property values.

## **GOAL II. ENCOURAGE SAFE AND EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROUTE 16 CORRIDOR**

1. Objective: EFFICIENTLY MOVE TRAFFIC (PEOPLE AND GOODS) THROUGH ALBANY AND TO PROVIDE SAFE ACCESS TO OTHER TOWNS

Rationale: The primary function of Route 16 is to provide egress to neighboring towns to the north, south and west and to Maine in the east as well as to major state highways and interstates.

Albany should continue to work closely with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation on all state highway issues. Opportunities to develop interconnections of town roads to ease traffic within the town should be continuously explored. The Zoning Ordinance and other Land Use Regulations should apply Route 16 Access Management techniques to control access and travel flow problems: the number and spacing of driveways (curb cuts).

**GOAL III. MAINTAIN A ROADWAY SYSTEM THAT WILL PRESERVE ALBANY'S SMALL TOWN CHARACTER**

1. Objective: MONITOR FOR UNSAFE ROADWAY CONDITIONS

Rationale: There are several points along Route 16 that are of safety concern. The Town must monitor all intersections, sharp curves and access points to protect the safety and welfare of its residents and people traveling through Albany. The Zoning Ordinance and other Land Use Regulations should provide direction for improvements along existing roadways as well as regulations for new roads in areas of traffic and safety concerns.

2. Objective: GUARD AGAINST UNSIGHTLY STRIP DEVELOPMENT ALONG ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Rationale: The nodal (cluster) development concept follows the historic rural New England practice of clustering buildings. This technique contributes to economic development as well as to management and control of strip development while preserving the town's small town character and scenic vistas.

Albany's Zoning Ordinance and other Land Use Regulations should encourage proposed commercial/light industrial and new business developments in park-like settings. These developments should be located in areas set back from major roads and highways. A good internal roadway system will provide good access to the major roads and highways and keep them from being cluttered with buildings and driveways.

The intent and limitations of the Zoning Ordinance and other Land Use Regulations should be reviewed and reassessed regularly to assure that they encourage economic development in the town.

3. Objective: GUARD AGAINST THE ERECTION OF UNSAFE AND UNSIGHTLY SIGNS.

Rationale: It is important that signs do not encroach on the safety, health and welfare of the people. Large signs should be monitored and engineered to meet wind load capacity. Brightly lit signs can distract drivers and pedestrians causing great safety concerns. The location of a sign can block a person's line of sight making intersections and other crossings dangerous. Albany's Zoning Ordinance and other Land Use Regulations should have provisions for the erection of signs so that they do not infringe on a person's safety.

Also, unsightly signs can detract from the character and image of the town. The Planning Board should review the sign ordinance regularly to assure that advertisers consider sign appearance as well as safety issues concerning the erection of a sign and the lighting of signs.

**GOAL IV: MONITOR COMMERCIAL GROWTH IN ALBANY SO THAT THE SMALL TOWN CHARACTER OF THE TOWN IS PRESERVED.**

1. Objective: ENCOURAGE SMALL BUSINESS AND LIGHT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN TOWN.

Rationale: As long as the State of New Hampshire continues to rely on local communities to support required services, development of new, small businesses and light industry offers the primary avenue of relief from excessive property taxes for home owners.

Albany does not have a lot of land that would attract large scale business and industrial complexes. Opportunities to develop the light industrial zone on Route 16 should be continuously explored.

Home businesses require little in the way of service such as roads, water and sewers. Promotion of home businesses can provide a source of supplementary income to residents and thus make the town more affordable. Computer-based home businesses benefit from an up-to-date telecommunication infrastructure. Albany should continue to study options for offering high technology infrastructure.

The possibility of a small senior retirement community should be considered at some future date. There is a great need for retirement facilities that are affordable for persons of moderate income. These facilities generate tax revenue without greatly impacting municipal services or schools; they also provide local employment. Provision of transportation to Conway/North Conway for shopping and doctor's and hospital appointments would need to be considered.

2. Objective: ENCOURAGE NEW COMMERCIAL VENUES TO LOCATE IN BUSINESS PARKS

Rationale: The sense of the townspeople appears to favor industrial/business parks located off the highway with one access. Zoning and Land Use Regulations should specify suitable locations, setbacks and buffers.

3. Objective: COOPERATE WITH NEIGHBORING TOWNS TO ATTRACT INDUSTRY ON A REGIONAL BASIS

Rationale: Albany should explore every opportunity to cooperate with neighboring towns to form consortiums to share both the costs and the benefits of attracting business and industry to the area on a regional basis.

4. Objective: CONTINUE TO MONITOR LAND WITH ACTIVE GRAVEL PITS.

Rationale: Albany is fortunate in having within its borders an abundant supply of sand and gravel which are valuable natural resources that are not renewable. The removal and sale of sand, gravel and rock can be a profitable commercial enterprise. However, improper removal of these materials can cause serious environmental problems.

The Planning Board should continue to regulate and monitor gravel pits and excavations in accordance with RSA 155-E, the state regulation that governs the opening, operation, and closing of gravel pits. Land used for excavating sand and gravel should be reassessed on a regular basis and assessed at a rate commensurate with its value.

**GOAL V: CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND PROPERTY PROTECTION.**

1. Objective: CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY RESCUE SERVICES AND MONITOR THE NEED FOR FUTURE POLICE PROTECTION.

Rationale: Albany contracts with the Conway Village Fire District to provide fire protection and emergency rescue services. They are centrally located to the major sections of Albany. This fire protection arrangement is most economical. There probably is no location in Albany itself which would be more central to the town than the Conway Village location. Geography dictates that, due to the distance separating the five (5) sections of town, Albany would probably need two or more small fire stations rather than one central one. The town affirmed in July, 1989, its dependency on the Conway Village Fire Department for these services, particularly along the Kancamagus Highway through the White Mountain National Forest.

Currently, the Carroll County Sheriff's Department and the New Hampshire State Police Department provide Albany with police protection. However, as Albany grows, the services of a full-time or part-time policeman may have to be considered for Albany.

While only a handful of Albany taxpayers reside in the remote section of

Wonalancet, it is important that relations with the Tamworth and Sandwich communities be maintained so that they will continue to provide fire protection and emergency rescue services in that area.

Albany should continue to study options for other police, fire and rescue services.

**GOAL VI: CONTINUE TO PRESERVE CONSERVATION LANDS THROUGHOUT ALBANY**

1. Objective: ENCOURAGE SOUND FOREST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LANDS

Rationale: Although it is important to preserve habitat for wildlife populations and land that has value for agriculture and forestry, it is felt that, because more than 90% of the Town of Albany lies within the White Mountain National Forest, it is not economically feasible to encourage the conservation/preservation of additional open land within the Town. The state's Current Use Law provides tax incentives to landowners who manage their woodlands according to sound forestry practices and helps to preserve open space for wild-life habitats, recreation, agriculture and forestry.

While on the one hand, landscapes can be devastated by unrestricted and environmentally unsound logging practices, logging that adheres to established forestry practices can enhance the land and be profitable.

2. Objective: IDENTIFY AND MONITOR LAND THAT IS BEING USED FOR CONSERVATION PURPOSES.

Rationale: Because land that is currently being used for conservation purposes should be identified, there is an urgent need for the Conservation Commission to be re-established. The Commission needs to inventory the land that is in Current Use as well as the land that is protected by Conservation Easements, etc., and develop techniques to monitor that land. The Selectmen must continue to provide the enforcement necessary for the Commission to make on-site inspections and see that abuses are prevented.

**GOAL VII. PROTECT THE INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS OF THE CITIZENS OF ALBANY**

1. Objective DISCOURAGE REGULATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS THAT CAUSE AN UNDUE BURDEN ON THE TOWNSPEOPLE

Rationale: Although it is important to have standards to regulate such issues that may be detrimental to the safety, health, and general welfare of the people, it is just as important not to overburden the citizens with too many regulations. The Town of Albany has a small town character that people enjoy. Creating regulations that do not allow citizens flexibility is not the intent of the Master Plan.