

VISION SECTION CORNISH MASTER PLAN

Core Principles

Land Use

Cornish will be a place where development is concentrated around village centers so that undeveloped and agricultural areas will be preserved. Our identity is tied to our landscape: our wealth of natural, agricultural, and historic resources. However, Cornish's greatest resource is its residents. Land use policies will encourage the modest growth necessary to maintain the viability of Cornish as a living, social, working community while simultaneously protecting and preserving the physical landscape which is so inextricably tied to the character of Cornish.

Economic Development

Businesses that support local resources and people will be promoted. Cornish will support and develop its agrarian economy. Home-based and cottage industries shall predominate the economic landscape in Cornish. Businesses on a scale larger than home-based will be concentrated in village zones. Cornish shall strive to identify appropriate new village zones and to expand the existing Village Zones in a manner which preserves open space and in avoidance of costly public investments or additional services.

Natural Resources

Open space is one of Cornish's greatest assets. Our agricultural lands, forests, groundwater, shorelines, watercourses, and wetlands will be preserved and protected. Their appreciation of and appropriate use by the public shall be promoted.

Historic Resources

Cornish is perhaps unique in that its history is to a large degree a living and tangible one. These resources shall be preserved and celebrated for the generations to come.

Community Facilities

Existing community facilities shall be used to their fullest potential. Cornish will strive to meet the health and safety needs of all its citizens, in particular its elderly and its children. Cornish will provide a quality education for its children through twelfth grade. The school will be supported by and will support the greater Cornish community.

Transportation/Communications

Cornish's network of roads and bridges will be maintained in an efficient and organized manner. The safety needs of drivers, cyclists, equestrians, and pedestrians will be met. Cornish's communication and transportation infrastructure will be able to support the needs of its citizens and businesses. Cornish will explore practical public transportation solutions and other alternatives to single-occupancy automobiles.

Recommendations

Land Use

- Consider appropriate new village zones and consider expanding the current village zones to direct new development toward those zones in order to protect and preserve open space.
- Evaluate the impact of an increase in the minimum lot size in the rural zone.
- Insure that the physical character of land can support a proposed use without necessitating the excessive expenditure (for the construction of municipal water or sewer systems, for example) of public funds to support the development.
- Consider the incorporation of a soils-based model in zoning.

Economic Development

- Support businesses, in accordance with allowable uses in the Zoning Ordinance, which use and protect local resources and people and which are in harmony with Cornish's natural, rural, and historic qualities.
- Assist business owners through the zoning/permitting process to facilitate the ability of people to live and work in Cornish.
- Consider appropriate new village zones and consider expanding the current village zones to accommodate economic growth.
- Explore ways to support an agrarian economy.

Natural Resources

- Identify and map areas of particular natural and aesthetic importance. Use various tools available, from Conservation Zoning to Conservation Easements, to protect these areas.
- Encourage the funding and use of the Conservation Capital Reserve fund in order to obtain lands or easements on lands of particular natural or agrarian importance.
- Update the Natural Resources Inventory.
- Support the New Hampshire Current Use Program
- Protect the quality of groundwater, and protect groundwater from commercial extraction.
- Encourage the use of public spaces such as the Connecticut River boat landing, the Town Forest, and the CREA land.

Historic Resources

- Generate and periodically update a map and inventory of historical and archeological sites in Cornish.
- Continue to protect and use our historic buildings.
- Evaluate the desirability of designating additional scenic roads.
- Continue to protect Town Records.
- Keep Cornish's history alive through tours of historic sites, through the continued integration of local history into school curricula, and by supporting oral history projects, the Cornish Historical Society, and other historical/preservation groups.

Community Facilities

- Encourage multiple uses of existing facilities: more community use of the school, CREA land and barn, and the meeting house, for example.
- Improve handicapped accessibility at the George H. Stowell Library.
- Expand current recycling hours/day and days/week.
- Periodically assess the Town's emergency preparedness.
- Continue to review the possibilities for senior housing and/or a senior center.
- Address the use of the elementary school facility in light of declining school enrollment.
- Support the Town website.

Transportation/Communication

- Create a 'Road Book' for Cornish which lists layout information of all Class V roads and which verifies the status of unused roads as closed or Class VI.
- Generate a Road Plan outlining maintenance and upgrades of Cornish's roads, bridges, culverts, and other relevant structures.
- Accommodate non-automotive traffic by considering options which may include widening shoulders along selected roads and ensuring that safe speed limits are posted and enforced.
- Consider a park & ride on Route 120 and Route 12-A.
- Provide an organized list of existing high-speed internet options and encourage the expansion of cable and Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) service throughout the Town. Continue to aggressively monitor cable franchise compliance.