

# **Baldwin, Callen & Ransom, PLLC**

## **Articles**

### **Preparing a Master Plan**

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Most towns and cities in New Hampshire have developed a “Master Plan”. The purpose of a master plan is for the Planning Board to determine the best and most appropriate future development of the town or city. The Master Plan is a guide to aid the planning board in its design of ordinances that will preserve and enhance the “unique quality of life and culture of New Hampshire.” It is also implemented to guide the planning board in the performance of its other duties to achieve smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection. RSA 674:2(I).

The Master Plan contains a “vision” section which is a set of statements that articulate the desires of the citizens affected by the master plan. The vision section may also include subsections related to transportation, economic development, natural resources, recreation, cultural and historic resources, regional concerns, community design, etc. RSA674:2(II-a) and (III).

RSA 674:3 allows the planning board to prepare, revise or amend the master plan. The board may make surveys and studies, review data, look at growth demands, and design methods to prevent sprawl growth. It is recommended that revisions to the plan are made every 5 to 10 years. The board should solicit public comments and involve citizens in the process. The board shall inform the public, the office of energy and planning, and regional planning commissions during the preparation of the plan.

If the planning board has adopted a master plan, the local legislative body may authorize the planning board to prepare a capital improvements program, or to appoint a committee to prepare the program. The capital improvements program may encompass current projects or future projects to be undertaken with federal, state, county and other public funds. The purpose of the capital improvements program is to aid the mayor or selectmen and the budget committee in the consideration of the annual budget. RSA 674:5.

In summary, the Master Plan allows towns to plan ahead for growth, and allows the citizens a chance to articulate the vision of what they want their town to be.