

# A Vision for Antrim

## The Visioning Process

RSA 674:2, which sets forth the purpose and description of a master plan, says that every master plan is required to have *“a vision section that serves to direct the other sections of the plan. This section shall contain a set of statements which articulate the desires of the citizens affected by the master plan, not only for their locality but for the region and the whole state. It shall contain a set of guiding principles and priorities to implement that vision.”*

The community visioning process is the first of eight steps in the master planning process. This step involved engaging Antrim’s citizens and getting their input to develop community supported vision statements, goals and objectives. To solicit input from the citizens, the master plan committee developed a comprehensive survey which was mailed to the residents, available for pick up at the town hall, and available on the town’s website. The surveys were collected over an 8 week period and resulted in 232 responses. The Master Plan committee also retained the firm of Jeffrey H. Taylor and Associates who conducted a visioning session at the town hall on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006. This session was well attended with approximately 75 residents providing input on their vision for the future of Antrim. A second visioning session was held in August of 2006. In addition to the above outreach programs, the Master Plan Subcommittee also conducted several visioning sessions with community groups to solicit their members’ views on Antrim’s future. All of the information gathering sessions were very widely advertised, and gave residents ample opportunity to voice their opinion on what kind of town they want Antrim to be in the future.

## Visioning Process Highlights

From the data received in the various visioning sessions and the community surveys, a few trends emerged that had strong support from the vast majority of the respondents.

1. When asked “What do you like about Antrim?” or “What community characteristics are important to you?” the top responses included the following:
  - a. Small town atmosphere – i.e. knowing your neighbors
  - b. Safety – i.e. low crime rate; good emergency services
  - c. People/community spirit – i.e. volunteerism/strong social capital
  - d. Rural character – i.e., open space; natural beauty; distinct villages/housing clusters.
  - e. Affordability – i.e. modest housing prices; low property taxes.
2. When asked for their top concerns, the residents’ responses tended to mirror what they like and want to protect about the quality of life in Antrim. The following are the concerns that were most frequently expressed:

- a. Concern about the loss of rural character and hope that the Open Space Committee recommendations be implemented.
- b. Worry that Antrim may lose its small town atmosphere, with the concomitant desire that “sprawl” be limited and planning and zoning controls and regulations be used to manage growth.
- c. The desire that the town codes be enforced for reasons of safety and to protect property values. For example, the issue of unregistered “junk” vehicles on property was cited by a number of residents.
- d. Increasing Main Street traffic and the lack of public transit was a concern for many, indicating both transportation and safety issues.
- e. High taxes and unaffordable housing was another concern expressed by the respondents.

## Overall Community Vision

The following points are intended to reflect the vision of the citizens of Antrim regarding the overall growth and development of the town. They are the overarching characteristics that define the quality of life, citizenry and social fabric of the community. The citizens of Antrim want a town with the following characteristics:

**Safe** – A place where all people are reasonably free of fear of injury or loss of property. A place where help, when needed, is readily accessible.

**Rural** – A community that preserves its small town character through open landscapes and preservation of its historical and cultural resources.

**Affordable**– A community where the cost of living allows people of modest means to enjoy a reasonable quality of life.

**Community spirit** – A place where neighbors know and care for each other. A place with strong social institutions, citizen participation, and volunteerism.

**A diverse economy** – A town with a broad economic base that is not tied to any particular industry or business and with opportunities for earning a living within a supportive, modern infrastructure.

**Pride in ownership** – Home and business owners are vested in the long term success of the community. Local ownership of property creates a stable and committed citizenry that is invested in the town’s future.

**Effective local government** – A town government that listens and is responsive to its citizens and efficiently delivers services.

**Sustainable** – Effective planning and wise use of resources will ensure the long term viability of the community. A town whose future is secure.