

The Economy

Goals

Business activities that promote the sustainable use of natural, historical, and cultural resources and do not create substantial negative impacts on the environment, public safety, public health, and the rural character of the Town should be encouraged. In particular, agricultural uses should be preserved and new opportunities for specialized or niche agricultural uses encouraged.

Managed use of forest and woodlands and other natural resources should also be encouraged, using contemporary best management practices where appropriate.

Four-season tourism should also be promoted, recognizing that both residents and tourists come to this region because of its unique environmental setting and historic and cultural resources.

Small-scale business and service uses should be encouraged which can be accommodated in the existing hamlets or as home based occupations, particularly crafts, services, and Internet uses. Large commercial developments or businesses that negatively impact the rural and undeveloped character of the Town will be prevented.

Development Patterns

The natural resource base must be considered, along with scenic resources, in evaluating proposed development, since these resources are the limiting factors in every aspect of our lives. The Town's historic development pattern of concentrated hamlets separated by low-density open areas will be perpetuated. Existing commercial hamlets should be strengthened and the distinct character of each enhanced. The Route 390 corridor must be maintained as a series of separate but coordinated experiences: mountain views, bustling hamlets, open fields, unique shops and tourist stops, educational and historic sites, all with quality of design and maintenance worthy of our regional resource. Areas of significant open space should be preserved between the hamlets, particularly wetlands, bedrock outcrops, fields and farmland, and undeveloped stream and creek corridors, to maintain the functional and visual separation of developed areas and the rural and natural character of the Town.

Agricultural Lands, Forest Lands, and other Open Space

All residents benefit from our local farms and farmers, not only because of their contribution to our scenic resources, but also because our farms are evidence of the persistence of a cherished town tradition. Prime agricultural soils lend themselves to sustainable agricultural practices, while local and regional markets allow for conservation of non-renewable energy resources and limit air pollution. It may be beneficial to increase the space available for farmers' markets, given the level of interest farmers have expressed.

Forests and woodlands also define the Town by creating vegetative expanses between hamlets and residences; contribute notably to the open, rural, and mountainous character of the Town; and are an important economic resource. Maintenance of contiguous, unfragmented forests and woodlands should be encouraged. Management of forests to maintain long-term forest health, resilience, productivity, and scenic and ecological value should be promoted. Sustainable extractive uses of forests using responsible techniques and recognized best management practices should be supported.

Other types of open space such as woodlands and wetlands are also important and should continue to be protected by existing legislation. The impact of development on these areas should be mitigated by design guidelines and restrictions on poor practices.

Critical Environmental Areas should be identified, a designation based on specific criteria. This allows for the delineation of especially rare and unique areas. Areas so designated by the state or the town will receive greater protection at State or Town levels.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Among the most valuable manmade resources are those structures or areas that are of historic, archaeological, or cultural significance. These include old stone walls, early and native dwellings, and burial grounds. The protection of these structures and areas must involve recognition of their importance and the ability to identify and describe them. The resources can be found in the hamlets, in isolated structures, and in unique sites or facilities. All practicable means to protect these resources should be taken, and these should likewise be addressed in development planning.

The Town should conduct and maintain an inventory of cultural resources to identify priority historical and cultural resources for conservation. This data will be used as a basis to protect these resources and may include, for example, landowner incentives for conservation and state preservation easements. This should also be used to inform ordinances, guidelines, and site-specific proposals.

All proposed actions within proximity of the boundary of an historic, architectural, cultural, or archaeological resource that would be incompatible with the objective of preserving the quality and integrity of the resource and its surroundings should be carefully considered and rejected when necessary. Compatibility between the proposed action and the resource means that the general appearance of the resource should be reflected in the architectural style, design material, scale, proportion, composition, mass, line, color, texture, detail, setback, landscaping, and related items of the proposed action to the maximum extent possible.

Alteration of or addition to one or more of the architectural, structural, ornamental, or functional features of a building, structure, or site that is a recognized historic, cultural, or archaeological resource should be compatible with the resource.

Demolition or removal in full or part of a building, structure, or earthworks that is a recognized historic, cultural, or archaeological resource should only be undertaken if restoration or preservation is determined to be impractical.

Features that are integral to the historic landscape, such as stone walls, barns, and outbuildings, should be maintained and integrated with new development to the maximum extent practical.

Archaeological resources are non-renewable resources that should be preserved for continued use and enjoyment by future generations. Landowners should be encouraged to minimize activities that disturb sites and protect them from looters.

Housing

Housing opportunities for the full economic range of the Town's population should be provided in a form that is compatible with the scale and pattern of existing development.

The special housing needs of senior citizens, lower-income, and young families should receive particular attention.

Guidelines for environmentally sensitive and visually sound multi-family dwellings in hamlets, such as town homes and apartments, should be developed to accommodate future population growth in a compatible manner and provide for affordable housing opportunities and socio-economic equity in our community.

Low density, multi-family housing may also be appropriate for certain demographic groups, such as senior citizens and others with special needs. Such housing should be located in or adjacent to existing hamlets and designed to be compatible with the scale, design, and architectural character of single family home development. Rehabilitation of the Town's existing housing stock is the most effective means to provide housing opportunities that are compatible with existing development patterns and to foster hamlet revitalization. Renovation and revitalization should be promoted through incentive plans.

Infrastructure and Community Facilities

Necessary infrastructure, including sewage disposal and water supply and system augmentation, may eventually be necessary to allow concentration and expansion of the hamlets.

The quantity and quality of existing surface water and groundwater supplies must be protected and monitored to ensure that safe and adequate supply is preserved for existing uses and available for future users.

State-of-the-art communications services must be provided to facilitate economic growth dependent on high-speed access to outside markets and to enhance emergency service response.

Enhanced, affordable public service should be provided to support the quality of life of residents and the experience of tourists.

Repair or construction of underground utilities (electric, phone, and cable) in the hamlets should be coordinated with sidewalk development and development of off-street parking areas and underground relocation of overhead lines.

Techniques to regulate development in accord with the capacity and quality of groundwater supplies should be developed and measures to facilitate development of central water supply systems investigated.

An appropriate site or sites for cell tower placement should be identified. Sites should be selected according to amount of available setback, low impact on viewsheds, health concerns, if applicable, and suitability of a site's physical properties.

Tourist information services, visitor centers, lodging referral networks, and similar services should be coordinated with all involved public, non-profit, and business agencies to provide "one-stop shopping" for tourists.