

DUDLEY MASTER PLAN 2000:
A SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

As with every entity, from the largest governmental and private organizations, to the individual family unit, the need to plan for the effective use of available resources is paramount. Without planning and structure, the chances of optimizing the best and highest value of human, natural and capital resources is diminished.

The Master Plan for the Town of Dudley is intended primarily to provide direction on land use planning decisions, that is, the Master Plan gives citizens and town officials a blueprint from which to make decisions regarding how land should be used within Dudley. As such, the Plan will serve as the foundation of the Town's zoning scheme. The recommendations contained in the Plan are based on the assessment of existing resources and problems, and projections of future conditions and needs. In other words, this Plan describes where Dudley is today and where it wants to be in the future. This Plan defines the desired land use pattern for Dudley and lays out a series of recommendations designed to bring the Town closer to where it wants to be.

In an effort to develop a singular vision to guide the master planning process, the Dudley Master Plan Committee prepared the following Vision Statement:

"In the Year 2010, we want Dudley to be a cohesive community that provides quality education and municipal services, with a stable rural character and unique identity, where people can feel comfortable living and working."

All of the Plan's recommendations were reviewed for conformance to the above Vision Statement. The question asked of every recommendation was "Does this take us closer to where we want to be?" If a recommendation did not conform to the Vision Statement, it was either deleted or revised for conformance.

Although the Master Plan contains a number of good government recommendations, it is important to remember that the Plan deals primarily with land use issues. The Plan *does not* lay out a strategy for municipal staffing or operations, school programming or curricula, roadway engineering specifics, or detailed water/sewer system improvements. While these issues are touched upon in the Plan, they are only discussed in relation to land use and the Town's decision making process in regard to land use issues.

The single most important recommendation of the Master Plan is the Future Land Use Plan contained in the Existing and Future Land Use chapter. The intent of Dudley's Future Land Use Plan is to strengthen the existing land use pattern while limiting opportunities for sprawling residential development. Dudley's land use pattern has remained fairly consistent during the past century: densely developed (houses, businesses & industries) in the east, and rural (farms) in the north and west. The Plan strives to strike a balance between the two stated goals of maintaining the rural character of the north and west while increasing the Town's non-residential tax base. The Master Plan Committee developed the following goal for the Future Land Use Plan:

"Promote the most efficient use of Dudley's land resources. This includes the most effective placement of commercial/industrial ventures while complimenting the established pattern of residential development and Dudley's agricultural heritage."

The major land use-related findings of the Master Plan process include the following:

- The Town needs to stop the current trend of having its industrially-zoned land developed residentially. Residential development should not be allowed within the Town's industrial zoning districts.
- There are several industrial districts that have lost their potential to be developed industrially. These areas should be rezoned residentially.
- Those industrial districts with further development potential and available vacant land adjacent to them should be expanded in size and serviced by municipal water and sewer when feasible.
- The Town's zoning scheme needs to differentiate between light industry and heavy industry.
- The Town's zoning scheme needs to differentiate between large-scale, high-intensity commercial uses and small-scale, neighborhood commercial uses.
- The Town should create a zoning district for high-intensity, large-scale commercial ventures.
- The Town's zoning scheme should endeavor to re-establish the old Quinebaug Village along the Connecticut border by allowing a mixture of commercial and residential uses.
- The Town should ensure that every newly-created lot is a buildable lot.
- The Town should increase the minimum lot size for those residential zoning districts that have significant development potential. This will decrease the density of population in these areas while enabling the Town to better plan for providing services to these areas.
- The Town needs to increase the capacity of its water system in order to accommodate new economic development.
- The Town needs to streamline its procedures for making land use decisions and issuing building-related permits.
- The Town needs to institute site plan review (including technical review) for large-scale development projects so that it gains more control over how individual pieces of property get developed. A thorough and coordinated review of large-scale development plans will ensure that the Town's interests are protected while providing the developer with a one-stop review of the proposed project.

Other significant findings of the Master Plan process include:

- The Town needs to develop a prioritized town-wide roadway improvement program.
- The Town needs to create for opportunities for active recreation, both in terms of facilities and programs.
- The Town needs to develop a Capital Improvement Program in order to plan and prioritize its spending on large-scale capital items over the long-term.
- The Town should establish an entity whose sole purpose will be to develop and implement an economic development strategy for the Town.

The Master Plan you are about to read consists of seven subject chapters, each addressing a particular aspect of the Town's situation. After an introduction, a brief history of Dudley and a modern-day demographic profile, the following chapters are presented:

- Transportation;
- Community Facilities and Services;
- Natural Features;
- Open Space and Recreation;
- Housing;
- Economic Development; and
- Existing and Future Land Use

The seven chapters contain inventory data, analysis and recommendations designed to help town planners make informed decisions regarding the future development of Dudley. The final chapter of the Master Plan is the Implementation Plan, which outlines all of the Plan's recommendations and the municipal entity responsible for implementation.

The Master Plan Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the municipal departments, committees, boards and commissions within Dudley's town government for all of their help in preparing this plan. This project would never have been completed without their help. Dudley's Town government relies heavily on volunteers who give their time in the spirit of community service.

The Committee would also like to thank all of the citizens who participated in the Master Plan process; whether it was through last summer's citizen survey, participating in the two public forums, attending the twice-monthly Committee meetings, or calling and writing the Committee and its consultant with your input. This Plan is for you and your children and we hope that its implementation will result in..... "a cohesive community that provides quality education and municipal services, with a stable rural character and unique identity, where people can feel comfortable living and working."