

Town of Londonderry, New Hampshire



Version 1.0 | January 4, 2013

Comprehensive Master Plan

Town Planning & Urban Design Collaborative, LLC

VISION STATEMENT

Londonderry is a close-knit, vibrant community, set in a landscape of protected forests and farms, that provides its residents, families and businesses with efficient services, inviting public spaces, a top-tier school system, and diverse options for housing, recreation, and transportation. These qualities attract knowledge-oriented businesses drawn to Londonderry's educated work force, access to commercial transport, and superior quality of life.

Acknowledgements

Planning Board

ARTHUR RUGG, CHAIR
MARY WING SOARES, VICE CHAIR
LYNN WILES, SECRETARY
LAURA EL-AZEM ASSISTANT SECRETARY
CHRIS DAVIES
DANA COONS
RICK BRIDEAU, EX-OFFICIO ADMIN. EMPLOYEE
JOHN LAFERRIERE, SCHOOL BOARD LIASON
TOM FRED A, TOWN COUNCIL LIASON
SCOTT BENSON, ALTERNATE
LEITHA REILLY, ALTERNATE
MARIA NEWMAN, ALTERNATE

Town Council

JOHN FARRELL, CHAIR
TOM DOLAN, VICE CHAIR
JOE GREEN
JIM BUTLER
TOM FRED A

Acting Town Manager

WILLIAM R. HART, JR., POLICE CHIEF, ACTING TOWN MANAGER

Former Town Manager

DAVID CARON

Planapalooza Acknowledgements

BLACKBERRY BAKERY
CONTINENTAL PAVING
JACK FALVEY
LEACH LIBRARY
LET'S PLAY MUSIC
LONDONDERRY ATHLETIC FIELD ASSOCIATION (Lafa)
LONDONDERRY COMMERCE & VISITORS CENTER
LONDONDERRY FIRE DEPARTMENT
LONDONDERRY HIGH SCHOOL CUSTODIAL SERVICES
LONDONDERRY LIONS CLUB
LONDONDERRY MIDDLE SCHOOL LIBRARY
LONDONDERRY PLANNING BOARD
LONDONDERRY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
LONDONDERRY SCHOOL DISTRICT FOOD SERVICES
LONDONDERRY SCHOOL DISTRICT, ADMINISTRATION & TEACHERS
LONDONDERRY YMCA
LONDONDERRY YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION (LYSA)
LONDONDERRYNH.NET
MACK'S APPLES
NUTFIELD PUBLISHING/LONDONDERRY TIMES
STONYFIELD FARM
TOWNUPDATE.COM

2012 Master Plan Steering Committee

LEITHA REILLY, CHAIR, PLANNING BOARD
MARTIN SRUGIS, VICE-CHAIR, HERITAGE COMMISSION
MARY WING SOARES, PLANNING BOARD ALTERNATE
JOE GREEN, TOWN COUNCIL
JOHN LAFERRIERE, SCHOOL BOARD
LISA WHITTEMORE, BUDGET COMMITTEE
LARRY O'SULLIVAN, ZONING BOARD
MIKE SPELTZ, CONSERVATION COMMISSION
DEB LIEVENS, CONSERVATION COMMISSION ALTERNATE
JASON ALLEN, LONDONDERRY HOUSING & REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BOB SAUR, LONDONDERRY TRAILWAYS
DEB PAUL, BUSINESS COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE
MARY TETREAU, AT-LARGE REP. (NORTH)
BARBARA MEE, AT-LARGE REP. (CENTRAL)
RUSS LAGUEUX, AT-LARGE REP. (SOUTH)

Planning and Economic Development Department Staff

CYNTHIA MAY, ASLA, TOWN PLANNER
JOHN VOGL, GIS MANAGER/PLANNER
JAYE TROTTIER, LAND USE SECRETARY
LIBBY CANUEL, BUILDING SECRETARY
ANDRE GARRON, AICP, FORMER DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT

Town Staff

MARGO LAPIETRO, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE TOWN MANAGER
STEVE COTTON, ADMIN. SUPPORT COORDINATOR
RICHARD CANUEL, SENIOR BUILDING INSPECTOR/HEALTH/ZONING
OFFICER
THOMAS ROY, IT DIRECTOR
JANUSZ CZYZOWSKI, P.E., DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS AND
ENGINEERING
JOHN TROTTIER, P.E., ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS AND
ENGINEERING
ROBERT KERRY, ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER
DONNA LIMOLI, DPW&E ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
KAREN MARCHANT, ASSESSOR
RICK BRIDEAU, ASSISTANT ASSESSOR
DREW CARON, LONDONDERRY CABLE ACCESS DIRECTOR
KEVIN MACCAFFRIE, FIRE CHIEF
BRIAN JOHNSON, FIRE MARSHALL
KIMBERLY BEAN, SENIOR AFFAIRS COORDINATOR
BARBARA J. OSTERTAG-HOLTKAMP, LEACH LIBRARY DIRECTOR

School Department Staff

NATHAN S. GREENBERG, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
PETER CURRO, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR
CINDY ALLEY, BUSINESS OFFICE ASSISTANT
NANCY FAUCON, FOOD SERVICES COORDINATOR

Consultants

TOWN PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN COLLABORATIVE, LLC

What is a Form-Based Code?

In contrast with conventional zoning that emphasizes the separation of uses, a form-based code instead uses character — the look and feel of a place — as the primary organizing principle. Form-based codes take the approach that most uses, which fall into the broad categories of retail, residential, office, civic uses, even light industrial activities, are compatible, having traditionally co-existed happily in traditional communities for centuries. Given appropriate standards, all of these uses can be located close to each other, except for in unique cases where smells or extreme noise are an issue, in which case the conventional approach of separating uses is appropriate.

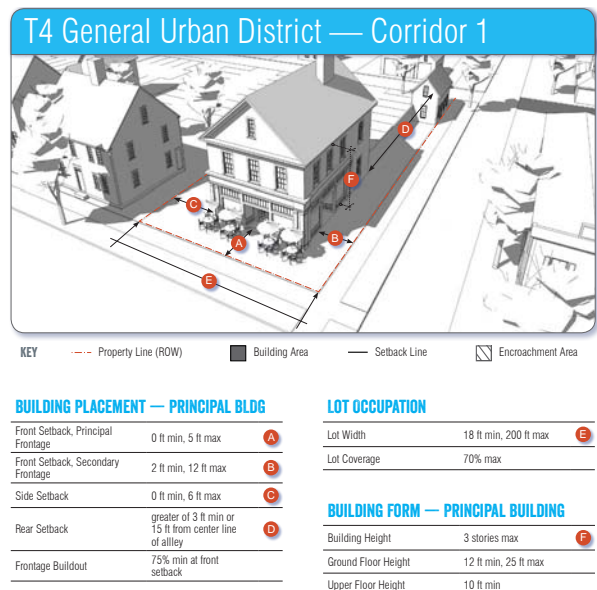
Form-based codes do the same job of setting the rules and expectations for development, but with an emphasis on character, and also a greater appreciation for the complexity and nuance involved in protecting and making great places. Form-based codes can be used to reenforce and protect existing land use patterns or promote new patterns depending on how a community wishes to grow and change. Having this kind of tool in place makes it easier to transform the built environment over time as the market calls for new development.

Most importantly, form-based codes focus on character and the feel of a place, allowing land owners and developers to build places that contribute to a more sustainable, healthy, and safe community. This includes: emphasizing sustainable stormwater systems; promoting a more interconnected street network when possible to alleviate traffic congestion; reducing traffic speeds in places that are appropriate for pedestrians and cyclists; allowing for more easy construction of traditional housing types including civilized apartment buildings and garage apartments; and enabling more intense infill development where there is a local interest in creating activity centers.

One of the many advantages of the form-based coding approach is the simplicity. The code language is written in plain English rather than in complicated legal speak and easy to understand diagrams are used to replace pages of text. The goal of a form-based code is to make it clear to the public and to land owners what is allowed.

A form-based code tells you what to do, instead of telling you what NOT to do. This is a subtle but important difference, both psychologically and practically. If a developer looking to invest in Londonderry knows what the community wants and submits plans that are in keeping with the intent of the Comprehensive Master Plan, they should more quickly move through the approval process, saving time and money.

Because form-based codes emphasize character, and the design and context of development, a number of elements are regulated, including the height and placement of buildings, the location of parking, the frontage, sidewalk, planting area,



drainage, and the street itself. Instead of building setbacks, form-based codes talk about where the front of a building should be placed. Instead of Floor Area Ratio, form-based codes talk about appropriate scale and massing of buildings. All of this information is conveyed through easy to understand diagrams of other graphic illustrations.

Structurally, a form-based code is organized according to intensity of development, or Character Zones (see following section for more information). A Regulating Plan is also generated that identifies the location of character zones. The code would also include standards for by-right, non-permitted, special and accessory uses, as well as Public Space Standards (street/sidewalk/parking), Site Development Standards, Architectural Standards, Signage Standards, the Administrative process and Definitions.

In Londonderry, a form-based code would establish character zones within the growth sectors and activity centers identified in the Plan Framework section of this document (page 150) and retain the existing character of residential areas in the remainder of Town. The character zones would be defined to represent the unique expression of the desires for development in Londonderry, representing the community's desires and goals. Within the growth sectors and activity centers, codes can be written to encourage a mix of uses, pedestrian comfort by making walkable streets, and a high quality public realm defined by buildings that have great architectural design. The process will likely involve a comprehensive rewrite of the zoning ordinance. If adoption is successful, Site Plan and Subdivision regulations would likely have to be amended to accommodate the new form-based code.

Character Zones

Every activity center is unique in its character and intensity of development. In order to help understand the elements that make up a complete neighborhood, activity centers can be organized by Character Zones, which are the building blocks of complete neighborhoods. Organizing a community based on character is in contrast to the existing protocol of regulating land primarily by use, which tends to produce the kind of auto-oriented development that is threatening the rural character that so many people love about Londonderry. By looking at character first, rules can be established in the future that honor and support the kind of walkable, mixed-use activity centers anticipated within the growth sectors.

During Planapalooza, the community described the parts of Londonderry that are most loved. This input helped to inform the customized Character Zones shown on the opposite page.

The Character Zones identified for Londonderry are the CZ1 Natural Character Zone, the CZ2 Rural Character Zone, the CZ3 Sub-urban Character Zone, the CZ4 General Urban Character Zone and the CZ5 Urban Center Character Zone, which are described to the right.

Should Londonderry decide to move forward with a form-based code, these Character Zones would be assigned on a Regulating Plan to land within each growth sector or activity center. In addition, standards would be written to describe and regulate each zone, including land use, density, height, frontage, and other elements of the intended built environment.