

VII

Prospects / Goals and Objectives

The following Goals and Objectives are intended to suggest the purposes and approaches of this Plan. These are based on a draft set Goals and Objectives reviewed with the Planning Board earlier in this study and on consideration of hypothetical Alternative Futures for Halifax.

With an estimated 6,250 acres of vacant privately-owned land offering the potential for about 2330 new houses, and up to 1,310,000 square feet of new commercial-business space and up to 7,160,000 square feet of industrial space (depending on the effects of industrially-zoned wetlands and flood plains) Halifax faces considerable change.

A. Alternate Futures

These town's future change could go in several different directions leading to the to the different alternate futures discussed in Chapter IV. These alternatives included:

- A Suburban Residential Community
- An Agricultural Residential Community
- A Regional Commercial Center
- An Industrial Town
- An Open Space-Oriented Community, and
- A Combination of Elements

Clearly, each option is limited by realistic considerations such as market response, probable population ceilings, and political / financial feasibility. For example, despite the new Wal*Mart store, the town may have little potential as major commercial center due to limited accessibility and stronger centers elsewhere.

While the hypothetical futures may reflect no local consensus or be fully feasible, they suggest elements to be considered in planning Halifax's future.

B. Prospects for Choice

Halifax may be able to combine aspects of several alternate futures; the Suburban Residential Community, a moderate Commercial Center and the Open Space – Oriented town. Choosing a given path requires an awareness of their costs and implications, a clear preference among the possibilities, i.e. ,a clear vision for the town, and a willingness to express and implement a clear choice. The last requires actions on fronts including:

- Revising the development regulations to implement the chosen policies

- Continuing to improve, expand and protect the water system
- Pursuing an active open space program
- Developing a means to respond when Ch. 61,61A and 61B land comes on the market,
- Using package treatment plants to allow well-located development at land-saving village densities combined with preservation of open space and farm land.
- Identifying feasible, environmentally compatible industrial areas
- Selective road improvements including consideration of any circumferential road needed to ease circulation constraints on desired development.

C. Proposed Goals

1. To guide the Town's evolution to meet the needs of diverse population groups, and protect attractive neighborhoods, landscapes, and natural resources. This could take the form of a balanced combination of elements reviewed above.
2. To accommodate a reasonable amount of residential and commercial growth while preserving the town's man-made amenities, townscape, landscape and rural character, and meeting needs for town facilities.

Objectives:

- Revision of zoning map to shape./ guide desired growth
 - Adoption of Town Hall/Plymouth Street Historic District to lessen incompatible development in this key area
 - Identifying and acquiring land needed for major facilities, e.g., a possible new Junior High School and/or an added fire station.
 - Protecting/acquiring key open spaces
3. To provide opportunities for a range of housing types and tenure alternatives to accommodate a more diverse populations in more varied traditional neighborhoods

Objectives:

- Exploitation of any opportunities offered by commuter rail service to minimize driving and to concentrate growth in villages
- Use any prospective town sewer system or privately –owned treatment works to allow higher densities in areas of high amenity / accessibility
- Review/revision of Halifax's development controls in order to respond to growth pressures and to exploit opportunities to direct growth presented by the commuter rail service and by any potential sewer system.

- Protection of established neighborhoods from ill-located commercial expansion
 - Influencing, guiding and supporting appropriate affordable housing proposals while retaining local control through “friendly” local comprehensive permits or town support via the Local Initiative Program (LIP) Program, town land donations, or by cooperating with a non-profit housing developer when deficient public funds preclude possibilities such as the Housing Authority’s proposals for town land on upper Thompson St.
4. To continue to provide high quality local services, especially education, public safety, water supply and environmental protection

Objectives:

- Protection of public health and water resources in neighborhoods with small lots and potentially failing disposal systems by resolving sewage disposal issues in lakeside neighborhoods, preferably in connection with the Town of Hanson
 - Continued/expanded protection of the Town’s water supplies by strengthening the Aquifer and Well Protection zoning bylaw, adding any omitted hazardous uses, and expanding the mapped area as needed, and by removing / modifying any hazardous uses
 - Locating any added fire stations to lessen response time considering growth trends and the location of any present or prospective stations in adjacent communities
 - Locating any new junior high school to be central to the long-term participating communities and to offer playfields and other facilities to benefit both communities
 - Expanding elementary school capacity at the present site to take advantage of existing school, library, and recreation facilities.
 - Locating any new elementary school – perhaps in the Thompson St. / Summit St., Walnut St. area or in the Northeastern corner of the town - to allow a maximum access by foot and relation to existing recreation facilities.
5. To meet Halifax’s need for retail services while preserving /strengthening a maximum of its present character especially along Plymouth St.

Objectives

- Attracting a range of needed retail activities, particularly a full-size supermarket

- Controlling strip commercial development especially along Plymouth St.
 - Guiding commercial development in order to create a compact, varied “park-
once”, intensified commercial center at Rtes. 58 and 106.
 - Providing small-scale limited convenience shopping opportunities near outlying
neighborhoods
 - Revising the zoning to support the two previous objectives of intensifying the Rte.
58/106 area and providing local shopping areas in outlying neighborhoods
6. To accommodate a moderate amount of industrial space to provide some local
employment and add tax revenues while protecting the town’s amenities and its
rural/residential character

Objectives

- Provision of 100 acres of reasonably accessible, viable industrial/heavy
commercial space which is compatible with present, proposed or potential
adjacent land uses.
 - Rezoning inappropriate industrially-zoned land to uses which fit the location and
terrain
 - Resolving access to the industrially- zoned land south of the closed BFI landfill
7. To identify and preserve/provide open space and natural settings every part of town
and near all neighborhoods

Objectives

- Preserving a range of open and closed landscapes, particularly around extensive
wetlands and meadows, and cranberry bogs
- Providing visually strong and useful amounts of public or semi-public open space
near or adjacent to all neighborhoods, existing and new.
- Linking open spaces with usable corridors along streams or other features such as
power line easements.
- Completion of the Open Space and Recreation Plan to guide further acquisitions
and increase chances of further funding
- Adopt the Community Preservation Act and establish the committee required to
recommend expenditures to Town Meeting

8. To identify/preserve/ provide a range of standard and one-of-a-kind outdoor recreation opportunities in every part of town

Objectives

- Exploiting the town's range of present and potential outdoor recreation opportunities ranging from the ponds to the capped BFI landfill
- Provision of playgrounds with some adult facilities, and of multi-generational, multi-use facilities in every part of town
- Expansion of water based recreation opportunities e.g. sailing, kayaking, canoeing, scuba diving and/or windsurfing lessons with access to club or town-owned equipment
- Creation/retention of facilities for use by persons with physical limits
- Develop low impact camping opportunities on compatible sites such as the YMCA Camp land, the Audubon land or an expanded Land Trust holding at the edge of the Cranberry Reservoir west of Elm St.
- Develop a multi-use (hiking, horseback and trail bike riding...) trail system linking major open spaces and giving access to scenic natural areas.
- Develop policies for use and management of the town's Monponsett St./Turkey Swamp land in conjunction with DEM/DFW's Peterson's Swamp.

9. To improve the town's circulation system to meet a range of needs

Objectives

- Examining the town-wide circulation needs noted in 1964; e.g., the semi-circumferential Northwest-Southeast Arterial, for continued relevance
- Developing sidewalks where needed
- Revising the Subdivision Rules and Regulations and other provisions and practices to encourage/require pedestrian / bicycle ways between cul de sac subdivisions and nearby neighborhoods, public facilities, stores and other attractions
- Clarify the hierarchy of local roads to allow appropriate-scale roads for local trips, while providing higher capacity collectors and arterials to connect major destinations.

- Consider realigning Pine St./ Elm Street for a smoother north-south flow.
- Explore a potential access road to the Industrial land south of the Landfill - possibly along the power line corridor east of the landfill with an emergency access through Highland Woods or along the powerline to Thompson St.

