

# Vision Chapter

Ervedyn Shore  
1970's - Original Master Plan  
Chair

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### Atkinson Vision Statement

*Atkinson enjoys a high quality of life represented by distinct community character, and outstanding natural and recreational resources. This has been achieved through careful planning, stewardship of natural resources, infrastructure investment, dependable municipal services and volunteerism.*

*Atkinson's vision is to preserve our rural character, and our natural, historical and cultural resources, while providing municipal and commercial services, recreational facilities and housing options which support the needs of the community in a fiscally, socially and environmentally responsible manner.*

*Atkinson is primarily a residential community that would like to encourage land uses such as agriculture, single-family homes, local businesses, and the conservation and protection of natural resources. The Town seeks to preserve our rural character, our natural, historical and cultural resources, while providing municipal and commercial services, recreational facilities and housing options that support the needs of the community in a fiscally, socially and environmentally sustainable manner.*

*Atkinson desires to maintain a well planned community with a rural residential and agricultural character, housing options, diversified but limited commercial and economic development, quality education and municipal services, and protected natural and historic resources.*

### A. Introduction

Presented below are the goals, objectives and policies prepared by the Planning Board to assist the town in implementing an overall vision for the Master Plan. It is important that these goals, objectives and policies be supported by the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen, so that subsequent planning recommendations can be set forth affording the voters the opportunity to guide the development of the Town of Atkinson. The goals, objectives and policies are part of

thereby accepts a continued dependence on outlying communities to provide employment and services. The majority of land in Atkinson is zoned residential with limited commercial and industrial zoning districts not located or established for retail and service oriented development.

Objective: The Town seeks to maintain a primarily desirable residential development pattern and environment through zoning and land uses standards (e.g. lot size, cluster subdivisions) that preserve open space and minimize demand on municipal services.

Policy: The policy must be one that continues an attractive residential community.

**Goal 3. Retain and protect property values and control property taxes.**

The Town must recognize the importance of the protection of existing property values within Atkinson, the maintenance of open spaces, fostering of community pride and protection of natural resources.

Objective: The objective is to provide for balanced growth and change while maintaining the existing rural character of the community. The objective must reflect the densities and specific uses permitted within certain areas of the community. The careful identification of land uses and their interrelationship and coordination with soil and subsoil is imperative.

Policy: The adoption of subdivision regulations and zoning ordinances that are designed to be commensurate with the community's capacity to assume growth and change must be kept in mind.

**Goal 4. Provide adequate recreational facilities and programs.**

Atkinson should continue to expand recreational opportunities for the town. This goal is to provide for the continued opportunity for residents to enjoy physical activities.

Objective: The objective is the establishment of a long range open space and recreational improvement program that provides for strategic locations of publicly accessed land. Any recreational program must recognize the need for balanced year round recreational opportunities.

Policy: The policy necessary for the continued progress towards acquiring open space and developing recreational opportunities in the town is to adopt a long term plan, and to seek all possible sources of funds to make appropriate purchases and improvements. Sources of funding are the Capital Improvement Plan, Land Use Change Tax, and General Fund.

**Goal 5. Maintain a safe and efficient network of roads and highways.**



## Summary of HIGH Priority Action Items from the 2012 Atkinson Community Survey

1 = Environmental or Natural Resources 2 = Municipal Services or Facilities 3 = Land Use and Zoning (growth and population) 4 = Regulatory

Type	Action Item	#	#	Low	#	Neutral	#	High	Total #
3	a) <u>Preserve open spaces</u> -- fields, forests, and farms	12	25	7%	107	20%	159	72%	226
2 or 3	g) <u>Preserve historical sites/ buildings</u>	30	74	19%	150	28%	164	52%	114
2 or 3	j) <u>Control property taxes</u>	2	15	3%	42	8%	129	88%	339
3 or 4	k) <u>Maintain Atkinson's rural character</u>	10	7	3%	45	8%	131	88%	338
1, 4	l) <u>Protect lakes, rivers, wetlands</u>	8	14	4%	80	15%	152	80%	279
1, 4	m) <u>Establish streamside buffers to preserve water quality and wildlife habitat</u>	17	33	9%	105	20%	137	69%	232
3	n) <u>Minimize pollution</u>	7	15	4%	74	14%	128	81%	302
4	o) <u>Strengthen enforcement of environmental regulations</u>	26	47	14%	116	22%	141	65%	193
1 or 4	p) <u>Protect groundwater/drinking water supplies</u>	9	14	4%	35	7%	95	88%	371
2	u) <u>Increase participation in recycling, composting, yard waste disposal.</u>	33	51	16%	165	31%	136	52%	143
3	a) <u>Single Family Homes</u>	33	34	13%	146	28%	137	59%	174
3, 4	b) <u>New zoning incentives to encourage conservation</u>	23	35	11%	159	30%	179	58%	128
3, 4	c) <u>Zoning that encourages wind, solar and water as energy sources</u>	52	35	16%	123	23%	176	59%	136
1 or 4	g) <u>Wetlands setback should stay at 100 feet</u>	34	35	13%	135	26%	115	54%	166
1 or 2	b) <u>Acquire properties for additional conservation land</u>	62	56	22%	122	23%	170	54%	115
2	d) <u>Support use of more ecologically friendly treatments for icy roads</u>	14	25	7%	161	30%	200	61%	126
2	e) <u>Create and support programs that will allow elderly citizens to remain independently in their homes</u>	17	25	8%	61	11%	146	80%	278
2	j) <u>Provide senior transport services</u>	32	27	11%	80	15%	158	72%	224
2	b) <u>Handling winter road conditions</u>	29	67	18%	60	11%	197	69%	170
2	e) <u>Recycling programs</u>	13	32	8%	68	13%	205	78%	209
2	f) <u>Volunteer fire department</u>	15	18	6%	44	8%	111	82%	326
2	g) <u>Police department</u>	29	26	10%	49	9%	107	79%	317
2	i) <u>Town website</u>	20	32	10%	148	28%	141	54%	144
2	j) <u>Recreation facilities</u>	17	30	9%	167	32%	146	52%	129



Summary of LOW Priority Action Items from the 2012 Atkinson Community Survey

1 = Environmental or Natural Resources 2 = Municipal Services or Facilities 3 = Land Use and Zoning (growth and population) 4 = Regulatory

Type	Action Item	#	#	Low	#	Neutral	#	High	Total #
3 or 4	e) Encourage residential development	214	168	73%	100	19%	31	7%	525
3 or 4	f) Encourage limited commercial development	166	109	52%	126	24%	81	24%	530
2	g) Construct public sewer system	182	116	56%	95	18%	65	23%	529
2	r) Consider a Town owned and operated water utility	169	113	53%	101	19%	60	23%	530
3	c. Low and Moderate Income Housing	189	117	58%	122	23%	69	18%	527
3	d. Apartments	240	140	72%	101	19%	36	9%	529
3	f. Retail Stores	192	125	60%	118	22%	65	18%	531
3	h. Heavy Manufacturing	362	87	85%	49	9%	20	6%	530
3	j. Chain Stores	350	96	84%	53	10%	20	5%	528
3	k. Corporate Chain Stores / Shopping Centers	372	84	86%	42	8%	27	7%	533
3	n. Cluster residential development	181	114	56%	156	29%	56	13%	530
3	a) Allow more commercial zones	265	124	74%	74	14%	54	12%	529
3 or 4	d) Zoning that would allow rental apartments in single-family dwellings.	213	115	51%	103	19%	72	19%	534
1 or 4	f) Wetlands setback should be less than 100 feet	237	79	62%	88	17%	40	14%	510
1 or 2	c) Allow motorized vehicles on some conservation lands	239	110	66%	101	19%	52	14%	525
2	a) Construct a skateboard park	251	82	62%	115	22%	67	15%	533
2	c) Build a public swimming pool	268	68	64%	80	15%	60	20%	525
3 or 4	d) Allow cell towers in residential districts	207	93	56%	97	18%	81	24%	531
2	e) Build a new community center	178	102	53%	126	24%	80	22%	526

## From Planning Board's Vision Session

### Recreation and Trails

- ✓ Need bike trails, improvements to popular areas
- ✓ Complete a needs assessment for 2030
- ✓ Better communication to public about resources and access
- ✓ Coordinate with educators to encourage use by students
- ✓ Evaluate location to create a dog park, rifle/shooting range, skateboard park, indoor swimming pool and indoor skating rink
- ✓ Improve planning, frequency and methods for trail maintenance
- ✓ Work to extend existing trails
- ✓ Acquire better maintenance equipment
- ✓ Improve access and parking to trail system (need land/easements)
- ✓ Establish a trust to fund maintenance activities; seek additional funds/financing options
- ✓ Post requirements and rules for use of trails, parks and other recreation areas
- ✓ Expand opportunities for horseback riding, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing
- ✓ Evaluate need for separate trails for motorized recreation
- ✓ Town Beach – currently used mostly for fishing; with some improvements, space available to create parking and beach recreation area

### Conservation and Open Space

- ✓ Publicize availability of conservation lands, access and uses
- ✓/x Evaluate availability, cost and potential uses of the Brown property (community garden, museum, active farming)
- ✓ Use of existing Open Space Cluster Development zoning improves scenic roads, provides trail easements and linkages between open space areas; does zoning conserve enough land?
- ✓/x Need for bathroom facilities and parking at open space conservation areas
- ✓ Town relies heavily on the land use change tax to support conservation
- ✓ Need to establish a dedicated account to save for future land purchases *Conservation Fund*
- ✓ Village District zone – conserved through restricted use and development requirements
- ✓ Establish committee to execute land purchases, advise capital reserve funds *Cons. Commission*
- ✓ Establish garden/farming/agriculture program with schools
- ✓ Need to integrate conservation in planning and regulation to enhance existing zoning provisions
- ✓ Develop a concept plan for a town-wide trail system
- ✓ Develop a 50-year concept plan to link conservation lands and plan for future conservation/open space
- ✓ Support purpose of conserving land – wetland protection, green space and habitat preservation, recreation, education/study, water quality

### Housing

- ✓ Need for housing and care options for 55+ residents that want to remain in the community



- ✓ Improve regulation of in-law apartments to provide housing choices for seniors, students and younger residents
- ✓ Need for affordable housing choices (smaller homes, smaller lots) for all, including affordable “transition” housing for seniors
- ✓ Evaluate zoning options to permit “multi-generational” housing for families and extended families
- ✓ Golf course/recreation zone 5-story buildings out of keeping with rural character
- ✓ Provide examples of “quality traditional development” in the region to guide future planning
- ✓ Limited retail in cluster developments would be beneficial

Other topics that came up in the small group discussions include the following.

- Municipal property acquisition (for municipal facilities and community services)
- Parking at Peter Williams and Wood properties
- Cooperative Farm/Community Gardens at Brown, Hightop Farm and Wood Farm
- Finance options include bonds, trust fund, capital improvement fund
- Need inventory of available and beneficial lands
- Community Center needs improved accommodations and programming for seniors and disabled