

## Part II: Vision and Goals



***Rowley Master Plan  
Final Report***

***June 2003***

## **9. MASTER PLAN VISION AND GOALS**

---

The vision statement and goals reflect the type of community that Rowley hopes to be in the future, and provide the framework within which specific planning proposals and implementation strategies are developed. The Master Plan Committee developed Rowley's vision statement and goals with public input provided to the Committee through public workshops and other community input. In addition, a community questionnaire, prepared and distributed in January 2002, provided an opportunity for every Rowley citizen to comment on issues of residential and commercial growth, rural character, open space, town facilities, education, services, and other topics.

### **9.1 Public Workshops**

The Town conducted two workshops (January 2001 and January 2002) to identify Rowley's assets as well as the major issues confronting the community. The following themes emerged from those meetings:

#### **Positive themes:**

- Rowley is a small, rural, coastal community with great scenic and natural beauty.
- Rowley's rural character is due in part to undeveloped land and farmland.
- The town center has the potential to be an attractive and friendly gathering place.
- The Town is a safe place to live and work.
- Rowley's residents benefit from easy access to many New England destinations.
- Rowley provides quality educational opportunities for its children.

#### **Themes of concern:**

- Unchecked development will strain natural resources for current and future generations.
- The Town does not have an adequate water supply to meet the long-term needs of the community.
- Rapid growth may result in the loss of Rowley's small town character.
- How and where development occurs will affect the future identity of the community.
- Vacant and poorly-maintained buildings negatively impact the town center.
- Retail development should serve the local market, not the regional market.
- Pedestrian access throughout the community needs to be improved.
- Rowley must balance the need to minimize taxes with the need to provide quality education and services.

### **9.2 Community Questionnaire**

A community questionnaire was distributed to all 1,958 of Rowley's households in January 2002. In addition, the committee distributed copies through the school and made them available at various

businesses and public locations throughout Town. The questionnaire's response rate was excellent with more than 20% of Rowley's households (400 households) choosing to participate.

The survey questionnaire consisted of 22 questions focusing on a variety of topics. The results revealed several areas of consensus among the Town's residents, as well as a few controversial issues. The survey is included as **Appendix D**. Some of the results are highlighted below:

Important services for which residents would support additional funding:

- Public water supply 21%
- Fire protection 14%
- Police protection 11%
- Trash removal 10%

Services for which residents show little support for additional funding:

- Swimming facilities 2%
- Senior center 2%
- Boating facilities 1%
- Arts facility 0%
- Snow removal 0%

Services that residents think need improvement:

- Schools 27%
- Retail services 27%
- Fire protection 15%
- Water supply 10%

Aspects of Town life residents think will be a problem in the future:

- Not enough open space 15%
- Rapid commercial growth 15%
- High property taxes 15%

Aspects of Town life that residents are not as concerned about:

- Not enough single-family housing 2%
- Inadequate public safety 2%
- Insufficient public transportation 1%
- Inadequate elementary school facilities 1%

Based on this public guidance as well as additional comments provided to the committee members throughout the planning process, the committee created Rowley's Vision for the Future. This statement establishes the framework for the goals and recommendations of the Master Plan.

### **Rowley's Vision for the Future**

In the future, Rowley remains a small, semi-rural, coastal community with great natural and scenic beauty:

- *The Town has protected important undeveloped land for future generations, and continues actively to protect its open space and its natural resources.*
- *Local farms still exist and are supported by the community.*
- *The town center is a friendly gathering place for residents and visitors alike – a diverse mix of small-scale businesses, civic institutions, and residences.*
- *Historic buildings and sites have been protected and creatively re-used.*
- *Residential development is environmentally-sensitive and blends naturally into the landscape.*
- *New commercial development is environmentally-sensitive, blends naturally into the Town's landscape, and contributes to the tax base.*
- *Residents and visitors benefit from easy access to local, regional, and New England destinations.*
- *Rowley provides its residents with cost-effective municipal services and superior educational opportunities.*
- *A variety of housing types provides opportunities for Rowley's children to stay and raise their families in the Town, and for the older generations to stay and retire in the Town.*
- *Local businesses provides job opportunities for employees with a range of skill levels.*

## **9.3 Rowley's Goals**

Building off the Town's Vision for the Future, the Town identified the following long-term community planning goals. The goals statement forms the basis for the recommendations and implementation strategies included in the Master Plan.

### **9.3.1 Land Use & Growth Management**

- Focus new development in sections of the Town that have the infrastructure and environmental conditions to accommodate growth and limit development in rural and environmentally-sensitive areas of Town.
- Encourage new development to be designed in a manner that is environmentally- and aesthetically- compatible with its surroundings.
- Encourage an appropriate mix of well-designed residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
- Limit the future expansion of commercial zoning districts.
- Maintain Rowley's rural appearance by siting new commercial and industrial development in compact areas that are buffered from major public ways.

### **9.3.2 *Open Space, Recreation, and Resources Protection***

- Protect the Town's scenic quality and rural character.
- Protect the Town's surface water, ground water, and wetland resources.
- Protect the Town's distinctive natural resources such as ridgelines, salt marshes, and forest lands.
- Provide diverse recreation opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.
- Protect the remaining farmland in the Town from future development, and assist farmers in maintaining economically-viable businesses.
- Establish mechanisms for the protection and long-term management of open space and conservation lands.
- Improve public access to the Town's open space and conservation lands.
- Educate residents about the availability, use, and protection of the Town's open space and recreation resources.

### **9.3.3 *Historic Resources***

- Encourage new development to be designed in traditional styles that blend with the Town's historical fabric and setting.
- Encourage small-scale uses such as antique stores, bed and breakfast establishments, and arts and specialty stores in the Center Historic District.
- Preserve and creatively re-use historic structures.
- Capitalize on Rowley's historic assets to draw visitors to the community.
- Preserve historic landscapes.

### **9.3.4 *Economic Development***

- Encourage low-impact, moderately-scaled commercial, retail, service, and industrial uses in environmentally-appropriate locations.
- Encourage new retail uses that service the local, not regional, market.
- Encourage limited and appropriate development such as specialty shops and service-oriented businesses in the town center.
- Discourage large scale or high traffic impact businesses.
- Broaden the tax base by encouraging a mix of commercial, retail, and industrial uses.
- Encourage the re-use of vacant or underutilized buildings.

### **9.3.5 *Housing***

- Encourage a diverse mix of residential housing opportunities that meet the needs of Rowley's demographic and socio-economic mix.

- Direct housing to environmentally-appropriate locations.
- Promote appropriate design and site development standards for new residential development so as to preserve the Town's character and protect its natural resources.

### **9.3.6 Public Services and Infrastructure**

- Maintain Rowley's commitment to providing superior educational opportunities for its residents.
- Maintain Rowley's "safe" living environment through efficient police, fire, and emergency medical services.
- Review and improve Rowley's governmental structure.
- Protect Rowley's water supply for current and future generations.
- Promote the town center as a focal point for community activities and events.
- Encourage additional community events on the Town Common.

### **9.3.7 Transportation**

- Promote pedestrian access in the town center as well as in outlying residential neighborhoods.
- Protect the rural and historic character of Rowley's streets.
- Encourage the establishment of pedestrian walkways in conjunction with private development and public construction projects.
- Design new streets in a manner compatible with existing town ways.
- Locate residential, commercial, and retail uses in a manner that minimizes the number of vehicle trips generated on Rowley's streets.
- Encourage the creation of bike paths throughout the community.