

C O N S I S T E N C Y

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Among other requirements for local comprehensive plans mandated by the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, is the requirement that local communities must demonstrate to the State that their plans are in compliance with The State Guide Plan and in conformity with State agency goals and policies.

It is not appropriate to provide in this document specific responses to each of the many state goals and policies, however. Such a response would require more words than the entire Plan itself. This Section does provide a summary of how the 2003 Foster Comprehensive Plan is generally in accord with the consistency requirement.

This Section is intended to be a quick reference for State reviewers. Among the multitude of State Guide Plan Elements which were reviewed in the development of the Plan, the following principal references were used to provide guidance:

- *State Guide Plan Overview, Report # 101 , June 2001 Update.*
- *State Land Use Policy and Plan, State Guide Plan Element 121, State Guide Plan Overview, Report # 101 , June 2001 Update.*
- *Scituate Reservoir Watershed Management Plan, State Guide Plan Element 125, Report # 101 June 2001 Update.*
- *A Greener Path... Greenspace and Greenways for Rhode Island's Future, State Guide Plan Element 155, Report # 101 June 2001 Update.*
- *Urban and Community Forest Plan, State Guide Plan Element 155, Report # 101 June 2001 Update.*
- *Forest Resources Management Plan, State Guide Plan Element 156, Report # 101 June 2001 Update.*
- *Economic Development Policies and Plans, State Guide Plan Element 211, Report # 101 June 2001 Update.*
- *State Housing Plan, State Guide Plan Element 421, Report # 101 June 2001 Update.*
- *Water Supply Policies for Rhode Island, State Guide Plan Element 721, Report # 101 June 2001 Update.*
- *Water Supply Plan for Rhode Island, State Guide Plan Element 722, Report # 101 June 2001 Update.*

- *Water Emergency Response Plan, State Guide Plan Element 723, Report # 101 June 2001 Update.*
- *Non-point Source Pollution Management Plan, State Guide Plan Element 731, Report # 101 June 2001 Update.*
- *Rhode Island Energy Plan, State Guide Plan Element 781, Report # 101 June 2001 Update.*
- Handbook on the Local Comprehensive Plan - Update, Handbook Number 16, December 1995.
- An Amendments to the Handbook on the Local Comprehensive Plan, Part VII: Local Maintenance of the Comprehensive Plan, May 11, 2000.

The State's Scituate Reservoir Watershed Management Plan was used as a principal reference for State environmental goals regarding this valuable asset covering nearly two thirds of the town.

7.2 POPULATION GROWTH AND LAND USE

One of the principal State land use goals regarding population growth is to relate policies to anticipated population growth in a manner that maintains or enhances the distinction between urban, and rural, inland and shore environments.

The 2003 Foster Comprehensive Plan seeks to layout the groundwork for managing future growth - the rate at which it occurs and where it occurs - such that the rural character of the town is retained over time, the appropriate community services are provided and growth continues at a manageable rate. State land development policies are reinforced in the Plan including, among others, conserving natural resources and areas, preserving the distinctiveness of the rural landscape and the village centers, using open space to control and shape growth, relating land use to the capacity of the land to support development and to the ability of the Town to provide required services, preserving historic buildings, districts and archaeological sites.

In the fall of 2002, The Town of Foster issued a request for proposals to hire a planning consultant to complete a Growth Management Study. The Providence based law/planning consulting firm of Ursillo, Teitz & Ritch and Shamoon, was hired to conduct the analysis. The study, included as an appendix, establishes the amount and rate of growth projected for the Town. It determines the impact of this growth on local resources particularly schools, and provides a model to assess impact on police, fire, municipal services, infrastructure and recreational amenities. The Study will make recommendations as to the need for growth control tools (i.e. building permit caps) and additional building related assessments to fund necessary services.

7.3 WATER RESOURCES

State policies regarding water resources include identifying and protecting potential high-quality ground and surface drinking water supplies, as well as protecting wetlands to preserve their natural storage and purification functions.

The *Scituate Reservoir Watershed Management Plan* provides primary guidance for the town on ways to protect critical water resources, not only within the Scituate Reservoir Watershed, but throughout the town as a whole.

The 2003 Foster Comprehensive Plan seeks to implement the recommendations of the Scituate Reservoir Watershed Management Plan in a phased process based upon the Town's ability to perform and consistent with the goals and policies for growth management, economic development, natural, scenic and historic resources protection. While not specifically designating a watershed protection zoning overlay, the Plan calls for the adoption of a Farmland - Rural Conservation Overlay zoning District which includes protection measures for most of the watershed.

7.4 ENERGY

Primary among the State's energy goals is promoting land use development that contributes to energy conservation. Land preservation and managed development is equated to energy conservation. The 2003 Foster Comprehensive Plan seeks to discourage the scattering and sprawl of development patterns now encouraged by the Town's 4.59 acre standard lot size zoning by promoting Creative Land Development and flexible zoning standards.

Local employment opportunities will aid in providing alternatives to a commuting - suburban life style for current and future Foster residents.

Foster recognizes the energy efficiency that results from the use of recycled materials. Foster was an early adopter of the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Program and maintains a high rate of recycling throughout the Town. The Town's rural setting lends itself to backyard recycling of leaf and yard waste. Town offices purchase products made from recycled materials and encourages Town residents to do the same.

7.5 HOUSING

State goals and policies regarding housing concern preserving the identity and character of each of the State's towns and places by fostering a sense of identity and individuality in new housing development:

- promoting high energy - efficiency and aesthetically pleasing design,
- encouraging rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings for

housing,

- integrating new housing into neighborhood and historic districts,
- stimulating a variety of housing types to be built,
- developing innovative land development techniques and building technologies for affordable housing, and
- Utilize tax incentives and grant programs to provide affordable housing to low-income citizens and persons with special needs.
- Incorporate land-use controls that accommodate the provision of affordable housing throughout the community.

The 2003 Foster Comprehensive Plan seeks to implement similar objectives which will help retain the community's sense of place while providing innovative usage of existing housing, development standards for new housing and meeting local needs for affordable housing.

7.6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

State goals for economic development which are applicable to Foster include:

- Conserving and enhancing desirable existing industrial and commercial areas.
- Providing development controls and standards that mitigate conflicts between other land uses and those which relate to economic development.
- Encouraging natural resources based industry including forestry, fisheries and agriculture - dairy farming, livestock, field crops, pomology, viniculture consistent with environmental safeguards.
- Recognizing the importance of recreation, open space, historic resources to tourism development.
- Work with State, regional and local organizations to protect and maximize the value of the Scituate watershed area and the Foster land that contributes to the State water supply.
- Stimulating a variety of facility development in terms of size, location and needs of both owners and employees.

Foster seeks to promote economic development which is in keeping with the town's special rural environmental character. The Plan proposes a multi-pronged economic development strategy built on linkages with the town's

historic and environmental assets. This strategy encourages Town Officials to take a proactive approach through the existing Economic Development Commission whose purpose is to attract compatible development to the town. The focus on small-scale opportunities which utilize the town's inherent assets and labor force reinforces the cottage craft, manufacturing and office industries in town. It also provides for the development of small-scaled tourism based upon recreational and historic features. It provides for alternative development which is linked to the rural character of the town such as alternative agriculture, and commercial recreation.

7.7 CIRCULATION AND TRANSPORTATION

State goals and policies in providing transportation include developing and maintaining a balanced, integrated, safe and cost efficient transportation system. Development should be located in such a way so as to minimize transportation needs. Design and location of facilities should positively reinforce the natural and cultural landscape. Roads and parking should be designed for attractiveness and beautification as well as safe and efficient circulation. The circulation plan should recognize needs for non-mechanized forms of transportation.

Foster's circulation goals and policies have two focal points. The first directed to the utility of the State Roads traversing the Town. The second addresses the scenic nature and recreational benefits of the Town's local roads. Circulation and Goals include:

- Continue the repair and maintenance of the Town's State highways to maximize highway safety.
- Minimize highway hazards particularly as they relate to access and egress from businesses and residences.
- Continue to plan and implement road and highway upgrades and needed replacements, and develop a system to document these activities.
- Continue to develop and promote the Town's scenic road program and the recreation and historic benefits that these roads provide.
- Document and promote Foster's trail systems and the related recreational facilities.

The 2003 Foster Comprehensive Plan recognizes the consequences of a rural circulation system and an existing policy to scatter development throughout the town as counter-productive to retaining rural character. The Plan projects a change to improvements of the circulation system in a planned phasing as well as protection of scenic roads. Site Plan Review and other regulatory controls are projected for parking areas.

7.8 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Relevant State goals and policies include:

- Creating open space systems and corridors to protect complete ecological units and provide structure and character to the built environment.
- Preserve and enhance wildlife, fish and plant species diversity and stability through habitat protection.
- Protect rare and unique geological or other natural features.
- Retain large open spaces as wildlife habitats, buffers, flood storage and water pollution control.
- Recognize the State's rural landscapes and roads as important cultural landscapes and economic resources. Identify and protect State and National Register properties and Historic Districts as an integral part of preserving Rhode Island's cultural landscapes.
- Continue efforts to preserve the best farmland in the State for active agricultural use.
- Protect and manage forest resources.
- Coordinate with and maintain conformance with the goals of the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

The 2003 Foster Comprehensive Plan addresses these concerns and promotes proactive management of the town's open space, agricultural lands, wildlife habitats, and other areas of conservation concern, historic and scenic resources and cultural landscapes through an innovative Farmland - Rural Conservation Overlay zoning District.

These assets are now recognized as vital to the overall well-being of the town, its residents, their way of life, the local economy and the stability of the tax base. The Foster Plan actively embraces protection of these resources while accommodating new growth and development such that these resources are not unwittingly jeopardized.

Recreational opportunities are close to home in Foster because of the wealth of these resources. In keeping with a rural community's perspective, Foster will continue to supplement its wealth of natural recreational opportunities with facilities for active sports developed in a cost-effective way for local needs, supported, in part, by local user groups and organizations.