

CHAPTER VIII EXISTING AND FUTURE LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

Land use in Salisbury is strongly influenced by the Town's location, topography, soils, and water resources. Geographically, Salisbury is well removed from major cities. Thus, a pattern of extensive, rural land uses has developed from the Town's earliest years. Land use along Salisbury's Eastern border with Franklin has been affected by its proximity to that industrial community. Salisbury is 16 miles from Concord, and 89 miles from Boston, Massachusetts with a total land area of 39.3 square miles. The total square miles of water bodies in Salisbury is .3, with a total square mileage of 39.6.

Expansion of suburban areas around Concord, and even Manchester, has shortened the distances that accounted for Salisbury's previous isolation. We can expect major intensification of land use in Salisbury to occur, especially if improvements in transportation keep up with growing population and industrial trends.

Increased population growth, evolving housing needs and changing social and economic trends discussed throughout this Master Plan have had - and will continue to have - a direct impact on the landscape of our community. Because land is a finite resource, the Planning Board realizes that thoughtful use of Salisbury's land represents one of the most important challenges it faces. Land use has the potential to drastically affect the town's visually beauty, historic sense of place and overall quality of life. How Salisbury utilizes its land has a direct impact on aesthetics, community character, transportation infrastructure, housing affordability and the tax base.

With this in mind, the Planning Board developed this Chapter to assist it in identifying and exploring Salisbury's land use trends, to see how these trends may be affected by local regulations and other factors, and to assist it in deciding what future steps should be taken to meet the perceived land use needs of the community. To guide its examination of these matters, the Planning Board reviewed and analyzed the town's existing land use regulations and ordinances, considered information which was included on a variety of useful land use maps, examined the results of a town-wide community attitude survey and reflected on visioning session results.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CHAPTER

- Preserving the rural character and beauty of Salisbury
 - Adopt aesthetics-based land use policies to regulate the visual look, feel and placement of new buildings and roadways, the design consequence of lot fragmentation that takes place during the subdivision process, judge the design and placement of signage and lighting, and regulate design changes which are proposed for historic residential and commercial structures.
 - Provide the Planning Board with greater flexibility in the application of land use and design regulations in order to assist in the positive design and building of a new development project. Flexible zoning regulations could be explored to encourage mixed use development where appropriate in the Town.
 - Require commercial development to be visually attractive and in keeping with Salisbury's colonial history and landscape character
 - Establish historic overlays in areas of town with concentrations of historic buildings
 - Preserve existing recreational trail systems and develop others when opportunities occur
 - Adopt a noise ordinance to restrict activities which produce high noise levels
- Preserving agricultural and forestry uses
 - Develop open space conservation subdivision design and conceptual requirements
 - Use overlay zoning districts to encourage agricultural and forestry uses throughout town with concentration on the west side of Town in the vicinity of the Blackwater River and Mount Kearsarge
- Protecting the environment
 - Establish protective buffers around wetlands, streams and water bodies

- Establish wetlands conservation overlays for areas of poorly drained soils.
 - Use current use funds to purchase environmentally sensitive areas
 - Rather than filling all available space with similar-sized houses centered on uniformly sized lots, Salisbury should adopt an open space development strategy focusing construction in a smaller portion of the total land being developed, and providing for permanent protection of the open space not used for construction. The land selected for permanent open space protection should be designed to fulfill the open space and environmental interests of the entire community.
- Restricting and managing growth in certain areas of Town
- In order to help conserve open space in the short-term Salisbury established a maximum number of new building permits allowed in any given year. The number of permits allowed annually is based upon 3% of the number of dwellings in town. The Town of Salisbury adopted a controlled growth ordinance in 2003.
 - Incorporate provisions for phased growth for approved subdivisions in the Subdivision Regulations for the purpose of controlling the rate at which a development project is constructed (for example, by spacing the construction of a large project over a multi-year period) in order to provide the time needed for the town to adequately cope with the impact which that development would have on the town.
 - Insure that developments cover the costs of necessary road upgrades and other infrastructure improvements caused by those developments
 - Allow for continued commercial development along the Route 4 corridor on the southern end of town in ways that discourage strip commercial development
 - Encourage more diverse residential housing and carefully located commercial and light manufacturing

- Update Zoning Ordinance land use regulations consistent with Master Plan findings and recommendations

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

In 2005, the Planning Board distributed community surveys to 411 Salisbury households. Of the 411 surveys distributed, 102 were returned, indicating a total response rate of 25%. The results of the survey can be found in the **APPENDIX CHAPTER**. Some of the answers to the questions pertaining to land use issues are summarized below.

The community survey questioned residents on where future residential development should be directed. While responses were split, a slightly higher percentage of residents felt that development should occur in the region labeled as Area 3, the North-East corner of Town (Table VIII-1).

Table VIII-1
If growth continues to occur, to what one area should future residential development be directed?

Area	Number of Respondents	Percent
Area 1	25	14.29%
Area 2	29	16.57%
Area 3	40	22.86%
Area 4	31	17.71%
Area 5	24	13.71%
Area 6	26	14.86%
Total	175	

Responses were also split regarding whether lot and frontage sizes should be increased from their current requirements. Forty-two (42) percent of respondents felt that minimum lot size and frontage should be increased, while fifty-two (52) percent do not favor increasing the minimum lot size (Table VIII-2).

Table VIII-2
In Salisbury the buildable lot size is currently 2 acres, and the frontage length is 200 feet. Are you in favor of increasing the lot and frontage sizes in Salisbury?

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent
Yes	43	42.16%
No	54	52.94%
No Opinion	5	4.90%
Total	102	

Over 55% of respondents feel that growth in Salisbury should be restricted (Table VIII-3). Most respondents favor restricting growth in the areas West of Route 4 (Table VIII-3a). Curiously, a large number of respondents would also like to restrict growth in Area 3, which was also selected in Table VIII-1 as an area where future residential growth should occur. It appears that residents may be divided on this issue.

Table VIII-3

**Are there any areas where you feel growth should be restricted?
If so, please use the map on the front of this questionnaire to indicate where.**

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent
Yes	54	56.84%
No	24	25.26%
No Opinion	17	17.89%
Total	95	

Table VIII-3a

Area	Number of Respondents	Percent
Area 1	18	12.95%
Area 2	18	12.95%
Area 3	26	18.71%
Area 4	17	12.23%
Area 5	30	21.58%
Area 6	30	21.58%
Total	139	

An overwhelming majority (83%) of respondents feel that maintaining agriculture and forestry lands are important objectives of the Master Plan (Table VIII-4).

Table VIII-4
Are maintaining agriculture and forestry as economically viable land uses in Salisbury important objectives of the Master Plan?

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent
Yes	80	83.33%
No	3	3.13%
No Opinion	13	13.54%
Total	96	

Many respondents favor the Town implementing regulatory standards to preserve the environmental quality of Salisbury (Table VIII-5). Groundwater protection standards received the most support from survey respondents.

Table VIII-5
Should the Town create or maintain regulatory standards for the following?

Regulation	Yes	No	No Opinion	Not Sure
Groundwater protection	81	11	5	5
Landscape guidelines for businesses	54	33	8	7
Noise ordinance	65	23	6	8
Lighting requirements for businesses	54	30	13	5
Setbacks from water bodies/wetlands	76	12	8	6

EXISTING LAND USES

It is only proper that the Planning Board first examine the current land use patterns of the Town of Salisbury in order to make educated decision regarding how the Town should accommodate future land uses. The following is a summary of current land use in Salisbury, Zoning Districts, Overlay Districts and other Town Ordinances which govern land use within Salisbury.

2007 Land Use in Salisbury

Zoning Districts

The Town of Salisbury is divided into three Zoning Districts; Residential District, Retail Village District and Agricultural District. The minimum lot size for all districts is 2 buildable acres. Each buildable lot must have a minimum frontage of 200 feet on a Class V or better road, or an internal subdivision road approved by the Planning Board. Zoning Districts can be seen on the *Zoning Map* at the end of this Chapter.

Residential District (1591 acres)

The Residential District is generally the first 300 feet from the centerline of Town and State roads and allows residential, agricultural and recreational uses with limited home occupations and other accessory uses.

Retail Village District (71 acres)

The Retail Village District covers 300 feet from the centerline of Route 4, Route 127 and Old Coach Road in the area just east of the intersection of Routes 4 and 127. In addition to residential uses this district allows retail, lodging, garages and business uses.

Agricultural District (23,696 acres)

The Agricultural District includes all areas not in the Residential and Retail Village Districts which includes most the Town of Salisbury. Residential and Agricultural uses are permitted in this district.

Other Town Ordinances

Telecommunications Ordinance

This ordinance regulates telecommunications towers and infrastructure to minimize impacts on community character aesthetics, and environment.

Land Use Regulations

Subdivision Regulations

The Subdivision Regulations provide for standard procedures for the Planning Board's consideration of subdivision. The regulations also provide for uniform design standards and required improvements relating to fire, police and utilities.

Site Plan Review Regulations

The Site Plan Review Regulations provide for a uniform procedure, required plan data and exhibits and design standards for Site Plans submitted to the Planning Board.

Current Use

Many landowners in Salisbury have placed their properties in current use. Salisbury currently has 17,323 acres in current use. This tax category allows more owners to maintain open space in Salisbury and supports the important goals of maintaining Salisbury's rural character. At the 2006 Town Meeting the voters approved taking a portion (25%) of the funds collected when property is taken out of current use to place in a fund to be used to acquire and protect property in Town.

Development Constraints

The Zoning Ordinance at Article XVI provides for controlled growth and a managed expansion of services in the Town of Salisbury by restricting building permits to 3% of the number of existing dwellings per year.

Excavation Operations

Salisbury's current zoning ordinance does not provide any areas for excavation operations. By vote at Town Meeting the citizens of Salisbury have provided that the Board of Selectman shall regulate excavation as provided in RSA 155-E. All such operations require special exceptions from the Zoning Board and then application to the Town Selectmen.

Timber Harvesting

For a discussion of timber harvesting in Salisbury, see Natural Resources chapter VII, sections on town forests, forest management and tree farms.

FUTURE LAND USE

Techniques to Shape Future Land Use

- Adopt aesthetics-based land use policies to regulate the visual look, feel and placement of new buildings and roadways, the design consequence of lot fragmentation that takes place during the subdivision process, judge the design and placement of signage and lighting, and regulate design changes which are proposed for historic residential and commercial structures.
- Provide the Planning Board with greater flexibility in the application of land use and design regulations in order to assist in the positive design and building of a new development project. Flexible zoning regulations could be explored to encourage mixed use development where appropriate in the Town.
- Require commercial development to be visually attractive and in keeping with Salisbury's colonial history and landscape character
- Establish protective buffers around wetlands, streams and ponds to protect groundwater quality and natural appearance of the landscape
- Preserve existing recreational trail systems and develop others when opportunities occur
- Adopt a noise ordinance to restrict activities which produce high noise levels
- Develop open space conservation subdivision design and conceptual requirements
- Use current use funds to purchase environmentally sensitive areas
- Rather than filling all available space with similar-sized houses centered on uniformly sized lots, Salisbury should adopt an open space development strategy focusing construction in a smaller portion of the total land being developed, and providing for permanent protection of the open space not used for construction. The land selected for permanent open space protection should be designed to fulfill the open space and environmental interests of the entire community.
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Potential Changes to Zoning Districts

- Establish historic overlays in areas of town with concentrations of historic buildings
- Establish wetlands and conservation overlays to preserve and protect wetland areas.
- Allow for continued commercial development along the Route 4 corridor on the southern end of town in ways that discourage strip commercial development
- Use overlay zoning districts to encourage agricultural and forestry uses throughout town with concentration on the west side of Town in the vicinity of the Blackwater River and Mount Kearsarge
- Establish protective buffers around wetlands, streams and water bodies

SUMMARY

Salisbury citizens identified several important land use goals for Salisbury:

- Preserving the rural character and beauty of Salisbury
- Preserving agricultural and forestry uses in Salisbury
- Protecting the environment
- Restricting and managing growth in certain areas of Town

In this Chapter we have discussed and recommended a number of land use tools and regulations to achieve these important goals. The Planning Board should make every effort to regulate land use in Salisbury so as to promote these goals.

MAPS

Existing Zoning Map
Zoning and Future Land use Map