

Town of Pelham
Reports and Studies Related to Growth, Zoning,
and Land Use in the Town

Joseph S. Larson

. February 13, 2005

April 1971 -Natural Resources Inventory. (By federal/state team at request of Conservation Commission)

Identified key natural resource elements in the town that should be taken into consideration for future town planning especially:

Preservation of the rural character of the town	Providing for
passive and active outdoor recreation	The need for a soil
map	

September 1972 -Soil Map (By U.S. Soil Conservation Service)

Identified the drainage and bedrock limitations for dense development in Pelham. Interpretation of the mapping indicated that over one-half of the privately owned land in town is not suitable for dense development based on the results of the mapping and on recommendations by state health and planning officials. Remaining areas should require 60,000 sq. ft. zoning. Commercial development is limited to about 7% of the town unless new sewers are provided and additional water service is expanded

1976 -Conservation Master Plan (Conservation Commission, includes map)

Made specific recommendations for conservation of areas in town for the purpose of:

Preservation of the characteristic natural qualities of Pelham	
Preservation of the water resources of Pelham	Assisting
in controlling the impact of land development	Promotion of
conservation education	

Recommended (among others) land acquisition in specific areas, strict enforcement of zoning, subdivision and health regulations and adoption of:

Scenic Road By-law	A town Master
Plan	An outdoor recreation plan
Reduction of taxes on land under conservation restrictions	

January 28, 1976 -Pelham Master Plan (Adopted by Planning Board, includes map, see February 4, 1977 below for revision and details)

July 1976 - Growth Policy Committee Report (Appointed by Selectmen)

Expresses concern about the adverse fiscal impacts of rapid growth then occurring in Pelham and the region. Calls for maintaining the character of the town though a limited growth policy.

February 4, 1977 -Pelham Master Plan Revised (by Planning Board) Includes areas recommended for zoning as residential, cluster development, historical, business, civic, recreation/park, greenbelt/wetland.

1985 -Conservation and Recreation Master Plan (Conservation and Recreation Commissions, includes 2 maps) Identified conservation and recreation goals of the town. Discussed current needs, including a town center, areas for specific types of outdoor recreation, protected viewpoints, and a wetland protection by-law. Recommended that the town use Chapter 61 forest taxation, and Chapter 61 B recreational assessment programs, land acquisition, conservation restrictions, and leases. Also recommended that purchases of land by other governmental and non-governmental parties in certain instances.

1986 -Planning Board Growth Study Report Recommended: Adopting 2 acre lot zoning and 200' frontage Establishing a land bank Imposition of land bank and impact fees Commercial zoning Create a Master Plan to identify areas of the town where:
Growth could be encouraged Cluster zoning is feasible Large lot (5-10 acres) zoning is needed to protect against ground water contamination Businesses could be accommodated

1986 Annual Town Report -Progress Report of the Long-Range Planning Committee, pages 33-35.

Spring 1987 -Preliminary Strategic Master Plan for Pelham (Mullin Report)
Recommended changing from a single zoning district to three districts:
1. Residential R1 -The part of Pelham most densely developed. Restrict increased development by changing zoning by-laws.
2. Residential R2 -The remainder of the town. Change zoning requirements to 250' frontage, 125' setback, 2.5 acre lots. Preserve all trees within 75' of roadways except where driveways are needed.
3. Commercial District -Along Route 202. Encourage temporary lodging, restaurants (non drive-in, take-out), professional and administrative offices.

July 1987 -Long Range Planning Committee Report (with assistance from PVPC)
Called for formation of town committees to deal with a series of financial, growth, zoning and land use issues. Recommended obtaining a strategic planning grant through PVPC.

1987 Annual Town Report Long Range Planning Committee Report to the Selectmen, pages W10 -W12.

January 1988 -Proposed Town Growth Policy Statements
Recommended (among others) providing for: Medium income housing Cluster zoning Large lots where environmental constraints exist

Preservation of the character of the town
Establishment of a town center

June 1988 Growth Management Plan for Pelham (Under grant through PVPC)

Zoning recommendations: 2 acre
zoning is necessary to protect water supplies and the town's
environment Accessory
apartments should be allowed to provide more affordable housing Allow
erection of low-cost manufactured housing" but keep restrictions that
prevent trailers

1988 Annual Town Report – Growth Management Committee Report, Page 10

2003 Inventory of Properties with Multiple Dwelling Units in Pelham (Zoning Board)

Identified, from Pelham Street List, ZBA permit records, and Pelham Assessors records, 54 properties.

2009 “Bringing Focus to the Community – A Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Pelham” (UMass Dept. Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning)

Recommended:

- Create a Village Center at junction of N and S Valley and Amherst Roads
- Adopt a more flexible home occupation zoning by-law
- Establish commercial zoning on selected parcels
- Promote local markets and fairs
- Promote limited tourism through tours of historic areas and cemeteries
- Maintain single-family character of the town while promoting increased variety of housing types and prices
- Carefully consider development proposals in keeping with rural character of the town
- Investigate potential for a retirement community cluster
- Create a current land use map that is available for the public
- Revise zoning to create categories for open space, recreation, and conservation
- Study the long-term impacts of growth
- Map existing open space and natural resources
- Create an open space committee that would identify and prioritize lands for acquisition, expand wildlife habitat, connect with regional greenways
- Expand and diversify current recreation opportunities
- Created after-school recreational opportunities
- Provide space for community events and unstructured group and individual activities
- Create an inventory of Pelham’s cultural and historic resources
- Consider using historic structures for adaptive re-use

Evaluate proposed development for effects on cultural and historic resources

Protect existing open views and potential creation of future views

Develop a Capital Improvements Program

Evaluate need for municipal sewer system in West Pelham

Assess need and possibility of a PVTA bus stop in West Pelham

Amend town regulations to include rural road design standards