

Town of Southampton Document & Policy Review

December 2009

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Purpose

This review examined past planning documents for the Town of Southampton, as well as relevant regional plans. The purpose was to identify action items that have been recommended by more than one town plan over the years, and to identify which recommended action items have been implemented.

For some of the recommended action items, the town has already worked to draft bylaws. However, in many cases, these bylaws have not been adopted. The Summary Table attached to this document indicates which bylaws have already been drafted. In addition, the Summary Table indicates which of these recommended actions are also listed in the 2007 Regional Land Use Plan for the Pioneer Valley.

Plans Reviewed

- Rural Lands Management Plan (1993)
- Community Development Plan (2004)
- Water Conservation Plan (2005)
- Open Space & Recreation Plan (2008)
- Valley Vision 2 Regional Land Use Plan (2007)
- Pioneer Valley Clean Energy Plan (2008)

Results

Southampton's past planning efforts have largely focused on environmental and resource protection goals. The earliest plan reviewed, the Rural Lands Management Plan (1993), focuses heavily on regulatory measures that could be used to achieve these goals, while later plans suggest a mix of regulations, new programs, and specific actions that could be pursued. In addition to resource protection and land conservation, the Community Development Plan (2004) also recommends actions to promote smart growth development patterns that concentrate new development in existing neighborhoods and the village center while also enhancing livability (i.e. through pedestrian amenities, parks, etc.).

Past plans have relied heavily on two main regulatory strategies for protecting environmental resources: overlay districts and development performance standards with site plan approval. Overlay districts that protect water supply, rivers, scenic uplands, sensitive natural areas, floodplains, and farmland are all recommended in two or more local plans. Of these, only a Water Supply Protection District has been adopted. Meanwhile, site plan approval and development performance standards are endorsed in three of Southampton's four plans. Stormwater regulations are recommended in several plans as well, and the town adopted an Erosion and Sediment Control for Stormwater Management Bylaw in 2007. Although there is a regional Pioneer Valley Clean Energy Plan (2008), energy issues have not been addressed in any local plans.

One key open space protection strategy repeatedly recommended in past plans is to allow and encourage cluster residential developments with open space preservation. To accomplish this, an Open Space Residential Development Bylaw was recently drafted, but to date, this bylaw has not been adopted.

Non-regulatory approaches that have been mentioned numerous times in Southampton's planning documents include promoting landowner participation in farmland and forest preservation tax programs; using conservation areas as educational opportunities to increase conservation awareness; and acquiring open space to protect key properties, preserve public waterfront access, create neighborhood parks, and build greenway, blueway, and trail networks. To help accomplish these land acquisition goals, the town adopted the Community Preservation Act, establishing a dedicated fund for open space, affordable housing, and historic preservation projects. The town has preserved a significant amount of open space through direct acquisition and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs) on private land.

Finally, past plans also address housing, economic development, public services, infrastructure and transportation. Recommendations repeated in more than one plan include addressing multifamily housing for the elderly and disabled; adopting a planned business or industrial development bylaw, and providing sewer and water services in targeted areas.

Summary Table: Town of Southampton Document & Policy Review

Action Step	Implemented	Drafted Bylaw Exists	Rural Lands Management Plan (1993)	Community Development Plan (2004)	Water Conservation Plan (2005)	Open Space & Recreation Plan (2008)	Valley Vision 2 Regional Land Use Plan (2007)	Notes
Environmental & Resource Protection								
Resource Protection Overlay Zoning Districts								
Create a Water Supply Protection Overlay Zone	X	X	X	X			X	
Create a River Protection Overlay Zone			X	X		X	X	
Adopt Scenic Upland Overlay Zoning				X		X	X	
Adopt overlay districts that protect sensitive natural areas		X		X		X		Agricultural and Forest Preservation District drafted
Amend the Floodplain District and Floodplain Bylaw to increase protections			X	X				
Establish / entroll parcels in an Agricultural Overlay District		X	X			X		Agricultural and Forest Preservation District drafted
Site Plan Approval & Development Performance Standards								
Establish/Use Site Plan Approval		X	X	X	X			site plan approval for special permits drafted
Establish Development Performance Standards		X	X	X		X	X	commercial development standards drafted
Adopt a Stormwater Runoff/Erosion & Sediment Control Bylaw	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Establish an Underground Storage Tank Bylaw		X	X	X				
Create a Sign Bylaw that minimizes visual impacts		X	X			X		
Open Space & Farmland Preservation								
Promote landowner participation in farmland and forest preservation tax programs			X	X		X	X	
Establish a dedicated fund for open space acquisition	X		X				X	Community Preservation Act adopted
Allow/encourage clustered residential developments with open space preservation		X	X	X		X	X	Later plans say clustering should be allowed by-right, The town has Farmland Preservation zoning that allows clustering
Acquire open space: protect key land, preserve public waterfronts, create neighborhood parks, and build greenway, blueway and trail networks				X		X	X	
Use conservation areas as educational opportunities to increase conservation awareness/develop signage for water supply areas					X	X		
Housing, Economic Development, Public Services, Infrastructure & Transportation								
Adopt an Accessory Apartment Bylaw	X	X	X	X			X	
Allow multi-family housing for the elderly and disabled		X	X	X			X	i.e. senior apartments, congregate care, assisted living
Establish a Planned Business or Industrial Development Bylaw		X	X	X		X	X	
Plan for and provide sewer and water services in targeted areas (and limit service outside these areas)			X	X			X	
Adopt municipal combined sewer overflow policies		X		X				Illicit Connections Bylaw drafted
Identify and remediate nonpoint source pollution sources to improve water quality						X		Town allows common driveways by special permit

Methodology: This table shows action items that have been listed multiple times in Southampton's local planning documents, as well as whether these actions have been listed in the Valley Vision 2 Regional Land Use Plan. The table also indicates whether the action has been implemented and whether a relevant local bylaw has already been drafted during previous planning efforts.