

2011 DRAFT Vision Chapter

Introduction

The 2011 Master Plan will serve as a guide for the Town of Brookline to grow and prosper while maintaining the small town atmosphere and quality of life that is so important to its residents. It will also identify opportunities to create a safe and healthy future for residents.

What makes Brookline attractive now?

When residents were asked why they live in Brookline, a majority of respondents to the 2010 Brookline Master Plan Survey stated that it was their personal choice to do so. Other common responses included location and quality of life. Residents are attracted to Brookline's small town atmosphere, rural character, and uncrowded and quiet living. Additional factors that contribute to Brookline's quality of life include its natural landscapes, low crime rates, and strong public school system. It can be concluded that Brookline residents are invested in their community. A majority of respondents said they plan to live in Brookline for 20 or more years or beyond retirement.

What are areas of concern now and in the future?

Given that Brookline residents are committed to remaining in their community for the long term, it is important that their present and future concerns about Brookline are addressed. A primary concern among residents is high taxes for the school system and municipal operations. There are also concerns about Brookline's lack of commercial development and business. Finally, Brookline residents are worried about the Town maintaining its rural character, which contributes to the quality of life that residents value so highly.

What is the overall vision for Brookline?

The overall vision for Brookline is a community that supports and preserves its rural character while simultaneously embracing 21st century technology, environmentally progressive strategies, and local business opportunities.

Brookline residents are attracted to the Town's traditional New England look and feel. Therefore, any decisions about Brookline's future must be made in the context of maintaining and enhancing its quaint, rural community character. Big box stores and chains, for example, should not be encouraged, but rather, the Town should support a simple, walkable town center with local businesses and gathering places for residents. Brookline should also remain bicycle and pedestrian friendly, providing residents with safe walking and biking routes to the town center, schools, and recreation facilities.

Brookline must also become a sustainable and self-sustaining community, while preserving its rural character. Brookline should be a community for a lifetime and therefore, long term affordability is essential. Environmentally progressive policies with respect to energy, natural resources, building standards, and land use patterns are also critical to Brookline's long term sustainability. Finally, Brookline should encourage additional businesses to open in Town, such as a grocery store, cleaners, restaurant, carwash, laundry mat, hardware store, garden store, and toy shop. Providing these retail amenities will limit the number of trips Brookline residents must make out of Town and will help support the local economy.