

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 26, 2012

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Master Plan Public Opinion Survey to Commence

As part of the development of Londonderry's upcoming Master Plan, residents are being urged to 'pick up the phone'. Londonderry GIS Manager/Planner John Vogl presented a public opinion survey that the Master Plan Steering Committee is carrying out to gauge the attitudes and opinions of Londonderry residents regarding development styles and capital projects in town. He said that the Steering Committee is working with UNH Survey Center to carry out a 15-minute phone survey of 500 randomly selected residents.

"A community's master plan is the guiding document for town activities and priorities. It defines the community vision and the ways residents want to see it develop", Vogl explained. "From the planning board perspective, this is where things begin; zoning changes originate in the master plan, as well as special studies and actions, such as establishing the Gateway Business District around the airport to allow flexible industrial development to occur, and initiating the Historic Properties Task Force to look at ways to preserve historic character and even with spending decisions on capital items: we look for a tie back to the master plan".

The public survey is structured to provide guidance and direction on identifying community goals and priorities. According to Committee Chairperson Leitha Reilly, public input is critical. "As residents, this is where we get the most input to influence decisions and steer the town the way we want it. It should be representative of everyone and we need them to participate". Further, she explained that the survey is intended to reach out and be inclusive of not only a scientific sample, but also those people who are reluctant to participate in public meetings and whose voices might not otherwise be expressed. "We want people to pick up the phone and give us their ideas. Trust me - you'll want to answer our questions."

The Master Plan Steering committee chose UNH Survey Center to complete the survey after carrying out a public bidding process. A subcommittee including residents Joe Green, Deb Paul, Lisa Whittemore and Leitha Reilly worked with town staff and UNH to identify salient points and draft valid questions. "We tried to hit on all the aspects of community that the master plan will be examining; transportation systems, natural resources, energy usage, recreation, etc" Vogl explained. "We also left room for open questions too about likes and dislikes."

All calls will be made from New Hampshire and will likely contain an '862' prefix on the caller ID. In addition to the survey, the Steering Committee has contracted with Town Planning and Urban Design Collaborative to manage the master plan process. Public workshops will take place in late May, following a kick-off meeting on April 12th. The public is invited to all events. Reilly commented "This is for the entire town; young and old. We need your input."