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# I

## Introduction

*Comprehensive Plan 2000* (the Plan) is the second update of Brighton's Comprehensive Plan (formerly called Master Plan) since the town's adoption of a Master Plan in 1971. The first update, the 1990 *Master Plan*, was accepted by the Planning Board in 1990 and adopted by the Town Board in 1992, 21 years after the original plan.

The value of a comprehensive plan is that it provides a foundation from which town leaders can form policies and regulate land use to shape the future of a community. The function of a comprehensive plan is to ensure that this foundation is based on a vision for the future of a community, as well as goals to attain that vision, that are commonly shared by the community.

The reason for going through the complex and sometimes expensive process of updating a comprehensive plan is that the vision and goals of a community may change over time. Similarly, the social, political, economic and/or physical environment of the community may change over time.

Substantial changes occurred in Brighton in the 21 years following the 1971 adoption of the *Master Plan*. Brighton, as most towns in Monroe County, experienced explosive population growth in the 1950s and '60s: between 1960 and 1970, the population of Brighton increased by 25 percent. The 1971 *Master Plan* predicted a continuation of this growth, which has not occurred. In fact, between 1970 and 1990, the population of Brighton actually declined by almost percent, from 35,065 to 34,455. The 1971 plan also projected the completion of several road projects that were either changed or abandoned. The unrealized projections of the 1971 plan illustrate one reason for updating a comprehensive plan. Projections must be made to plan for the future, but as the future becomes the present, then the past, the plans that were based on those projections must be re-evaluated and modified in light of actual events that have taken place over the planning period.

Another reason for updating a comprehensive plan is to reaffirm and prioritize the goals of the original plan. For example, the 1971 *Master Plan* called for an increase in town recreational facilities and open space. Since these goals were not realized, they were reaffirmed and set as high priorities in the 1990 *Master Plan*, resulting in significant additions to open space owned or controlled by the town since that time.

The 1990 plan has served the Brighton community well, in part through its encouragement of a major revision of the Code of the Town of Brighton, completed in 1993. *Comprehensive Plan 2000* draws significantly from that plan. The intent of *Comprehensive Plan 2000* is to:

- ♦ state the present vision and goals of the community, based on new information and public comment;

- ♦ examine the changes that have occurred in Brighton since 1990, particularly development changes, as they relate to the current vision and goals, established land uses, and existing zoning;
- ♦ propose policies and strategies that will direct the town toward the attainment of its goals; and
- ♦ provide a structure to ensure that the steps necessary to implement strategies to attain community goals are taken.

As in 1970 and 1990, the future of Brighton's remaining open space is a major focus of *Comprehensive Plan 2000*. The Plan also examines already developed areas of town that have been and remain controversial regarding their zoning (i.e., what uses are most appropriate there).

Events and circumstances within and outside of Brighton since 1990 impact the policy and land use recommendations of the Plan. Events of significance include:

- ♦ Adoption of the *Monroe Avenue Comprehensive Plan* and the *Monroe Avenue Design Plan, Guidelines and Standards*. These two coordinated plans were adopted by the town to support a healthy business environment on Monroe Ave. while protecting the character of neighboring residential areas. Public review of these plans, along with controversy regarding the Rite Aid drugstore at Twelve Corners, highlighted the importance of defining, protecting and enhancing the character and identity of the center of Brighton.
- ♦ Recognition within the town and regionally of the importance of preserving open space. As development continues, the value of the remaining open space in Brighton and other towns has gained increasing attention and generated increasing debate. The central issues regarding open space are: how much open space can be preserved, how much open space should be preserved, how can open space be protected, and how should public open space be used.
- ♦ An increased emphasis on service by town officials and departments. The courteous and efficient provision of town services, from snow plowing and leaf pickup to permit application processing and complaint resolution, and from public safety to recreation programs, are recognized as being important components of the quality of life of Brighton residents and important factors in attracting and retaining desirable businesses.
- ♦ Renewed focus on regional cooperation. Mayor William Johnson of Rochester has taken a leading role in promoting regional cooperation among all of the communities in the Rochester Metropolitan Area. The impact of sprawl, not only on Rochester but on the outlying towns in the region and all of those in between, has renewed the call for planning that recognizes the interdependency of all of the region's communities and the reality of inter-regional, national and global competition.
- ♦ The aging of the "baby boomers." While this is not a new or unpredicted development, its impacts are starting to be seen in the increase in proposals for new senior living projects. These projects themselves are evolving, with more emphasis being placed on "assisted

- living,” “transitional” and “continuum of care” types of development, as opposed to the traditional nursing home.
- ♦ New or maturing land use tools and philosophies. Nationally, there has been increasing use of development control tools such as incentive zoning, transfer or purchase of development rights, conservation easements and floating planned use districts to preserve open space, increase public recreation opportunities and protect sensitive environmental areas. At the same time, support has increased for such physical design elements as “neo-traditional” residential development, town centers and street and housing designs that reflect development pre-1950, and “cluster development” that allows a fair return for the developer while increasing the area of public open space in residential developments. Several of these concepts are already permitted in Brighton’s land use regulations. Brighton has used incentive zoning, conservation easements, and environmental protection overlay districts to achieve its goals.
  - ♦ Recognition of other values and institutions of significance in the Town of Brighton: property values, families, seniors, diversity of population, housing, a tradition of excellence in education, and accessible health care services.

## Plan Process

The policy of the town requires annual review and periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan. Only by going through the entire process necessary to create or update a comprehensive plan can we be assured that the major and subtle changes that occur over time will be addressed. This process will make a plan more valuable as a policy guide. The purpose of the plan is to create a document that is based on the community's vision of Brighton's future, is comprehensive in nature, is user friendly, and has a clear relationship to the town’s budget. ‘

The Comprehensive Plan 2000 Steering Committee (the Steering Committee) provided general guidance throughout the planning process. The Steering Committee consisted of two members of the Planning Board, one member of the Zoning Board of Appeals, one member of the Conservation Board, one member of the Architectural Review Board and six other Brighton residents with diverse backgrounds and interests. Liaisons to the Steering Committee were sought from other town citizen boards, the various school districts within Brighton, neighboring municipalities and other groups. Members of the Steering Committee were appointed by the Town Board in September 1998, and have worked closely with town staff to investigate issues and review and refine working papers and Plan drafts. The Planning Board and Town Board also played key roles in the review of the draft plan and as sponsors of public meetings on the Plan.

The planning process began with an assessment of current conditions within the town and the region, and a comparison of those conditions with the goals, policies and recommendations of the 1990 *Master Plan*.

Following the assessment of current conditions, work was begun by staff and the Steering Committee to develop a vision for the future, investigate issues affecting the town as a whole, and develop responses to those issues in the form of goals and policies. The vision, goals and policies were then used in the development of open space and land use plans.

## Updating the Plan

### Ten Year Update

In accordance with policy established by the Town Board in 1992, the Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed annually and updated periodically, at approximately 10 year intervals, to ensure consistency with the overall community vision. This approach will also provide an opportunity to assess changes in the community and to update background data and action strategies. The following list outlines a general process to be followed when updating the Plan:

- ♦ Gather population, income, employment, and other data to assess trends and compare with projections.
- ♦ Compile progress reports from any annual implementation plans.
- ♦ Assess progress toward implementation of the action strategies in the 2000 Plan.
- ♦ Collect and address user comments regarding problems with the 2000 Plan.
- ♦ Update existing land use maps and background data to reflect current information.
- ♦ Assess progress toward implementation of *Comprehensive Plan 2000* goals.
- ♦ Revise projections and targets as appropriate.
- ♦ Update action strategies by incorporating those from the 2000 Plan that were not implemented and include new items that have emerged as a result of the review process.
- ♦ Prioritize the new set of action strategies for implementation.