

What's Next Atkinson?

2024 Master Plan

Vision and Goals

10/16/2023

Atkinson Vision Statement

Atkinson's vision is to **retain** its rural residential character and historic resources, **protect** natural resources, **encourage** a diversity of housing opportunities, and **provide** or ensure basic services, infrastructure, and amenities that serve the greater community and support the health, safety, well-being, and quality of life of its residents.

Atkinson strives to recognize and balance the competing needs of resources, funding, demographics, environmental impact, and community desires through wise resource planning, strategic planning, governance, and community engagement.

Draft Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. To remain a primarily residential community and retain its rural character.

Atkinson is a predominantly residential community and wishes to stay primarily residential. Economic growth and commercial development will be limited and directed strategically.

Objective:

1. To allow for balanced growth and diversity of housing opportunities.
2. Maintain a primarily residential development pattern and environment through zoning, land uses standards, and innovative land use controls.
3. Look for opportunities in commercial districts to allow for community-desired businesses or services that may not be well suited in residential areas.

Goal 2: Continue to strategically evaluate conservation opportunities in Atkinson to protect the town's natural resources and rural character.

Protected open space preserves the quality of wildlife habitat, clean water, and the small town feel of the community.

Objective:

1. Utilize the 2022 Land Conservation Plan, prepared by the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) in collaboration with the Atkinson Conservation Commission, which identifies several locations in Atkinson for priority conservation based on a co-occurrence analysis to inform evaluation and decisions of future conservation opportunities.

Goal 3. Protect the quality of Atkinson's surface and groundwater resources.

Access to a clean, safe, and reliable supply of drinking water is essential to the health of all residents and wildlife. To safeguard the well-being of current and future residents, and to protect land values, Atkinson should proactively protect this natural resource and its impact on surrounding communities.

Objective:

1. Maintain a development density that will allow for individual sewage disposal systems without the need for public sewage treatment.
2. Provide for continued measures that allow densities and regulations that address soil conditions and keep individual water supplies and sewage disposal systems efficient and without groundwater or surface water pollution.
3. Continue careful identification of land uses and their interrelationship and coordination with soil types
4. Prevent future adverse groundwater impacts through planning, management, education, monitoring, and funding.
5. Continue to participate with the MS4 Stormwater Management Program and evaluate whether to expand monitoring of surface water

Goal 4: Plan for municipal facility needs and infrastructure; including maintenance, upgrades, repairs, renovations, replacement, and land investment.

Part of the duties of local government are focused on stewardship of financial resources and planning. Investments should be carefully planned to stabilize tax rates and to help avoid unanticipated large expenses.

Objective:

1. Strategically coordinate capital investments and maintenance of municipal facilities to ensure Atkinson is proactively addressing facility needs.

2. Consider how investments are funded and the impact on property taxes and seek diverse funding avenues to offset potential impacts.
3. Assess if there is a need to improve walkability, bicycle and pedestrian access & safety and traffic calming measures in key areas
4. Engage the community in planning for longer term investments.

Goal 5: Recognize, support, and encourage the interconnectedness and sense of community throughout Atkinson by continuing to provide recreational, cultural, historic, civic, and social opportunities to grow community engagement.

Strong social networks strengthen community ties and are vital to solving the challenges of the future. Prioritizing this goal through availability of indoor and outdoor space and municipal facilities, supporting volunteerism, and reaching out to residents for creative input, will make Atkinson's future richer and more resilient.

Objective:

1. Establish a long range recreational, open space and community facilities plan to be considered in the town's planning and capital improvement plan.
2. Explore greater connectedness between town government and local community groups.

Goal 6. Use the Master Plan to Guide the Town

Use the Master Plan as a strategic guide for town departments, elected officials, and residents to ensure that short and long-term activities are consistent and inherently connected to the implementation of the Master Plan.

To be effective, Atkinson should engage in a collaborative effort that includes local officials, boards, committees, commissions, and community members to implement and continuously assess and improve the plan's actions and town's response.

Objective:

1. Establish an annual cross-functional review and update of the Master Plan's Implementation Actions.
2. Encourage the adoption by policy and implementation of a 3–5-year mid-term planning process.
3. Use the master plan as a roadmap for department managers and town officials to refer to when planning for town services and service levels, capital improvements and investments.