

Chapter III. Land Use

The goal of the Land Use Section is to provide a ready resource of existing and potential land use as tailored by the Community Survey results.

GOAL 3.1 Preserve the rural working landscape and protect prime agricultural lands.

This goal addresses those industries that historically have used the land. The intent is to find strategies that ensure sustainability and good management practices.

3.1.1 Recommendation: The Planning Board should prepare and present to the town an amendment to the Zoning Ordinances to add an Agricultural and Forestry Conservation Zoning District. This zoning district should encompass as much of the prime agricultural and forested area as is reasonably possible. The Master Plan Committee has included a recommended area on the Future Land Use Map (See Appendix). The land within this district would be reserved for agricultural and sustainable forest use with limited residential development to support the farms and forests. It is further recommended that the Agricultural and Forestry Conservation District land located on the Future Land Use Map (See Appendix) should be considered for large lot zoning or allowing residential dwellings by special exception only but never on Prime Agricultural land.

3.1.2 Recommendation: Selectmen appoint an Agricultural Lands and Industry Promotion and Protection Committee (ALIPPC) to research funding sources and zoning/planning techniques that will further protect New Hampton's agricultural and sylvan assets. The committee remains a "standing committee" for banking prime agricultural lands and for promoting strategies to assist farmers. The committee will meet with professional foresters to determine if there are planning and zoning initiatives that will ensure best management harvesting practices and long term protection of the timber resource. The committee shall make recommendations to the Board of Selectman and to the Planning Board. The application of Transferable Development Rights and other conservation techniques to this area is strongly recommended.

Goal 3.2 Ensure that the town retains the unique and historic rural character.

This is mainly a visual goal that demands a complicated process of determination of unique character and a process to provide protective scenarios.

3.2.1 Recommendation: The Planning Board should prepare a change to the Zoning Ordinance to create a Mixed-use Town Center Zoning District as shown on the Future Land Use Map (See Appendix). This district should be pedestrian friendly, mixed use, i.e. a mixture of small commercial establishments and residential units including multi-family, sustainable in water and wastewater, and with a limited access to major arterials.

This will promote new mixed income residences in town without significantly impacting any of the other goals. The result will be housing priced at what people working in New Hampton can afford. It would also ensure that the children born in town would not have to move from town once they become adults. This mixed-use area will encourage the development of small businesses, and it is important to place small business where they can prosper without negatively impacting similar or other uses. It is important that businesses be located near future and existing population areas and not impact traffic on the major highways. An example of negative impact would be creating a “miracle mile” atmosphere, which would not preserve the quality characteristics of New Hampton.

In order for this district to be realized, a different method of handling wastewater must be found. As previously recommended, the Town should investigate some of the state-of-the-art innovative systems that have become available during the past 5 to 10 years.

3.2.2 Recommendation: In order to protect the unique characteristics of New Hampton, the town should adopt Architectural Standards for the Business Commercial Districts and the new Mixed-use Town Center area. The Planning Board should select a subcommittee made up of townspeople and business owners to identify unique characteristics of the town and to develop a guideline document that could be presented to the Planning Board. This document could then be the basis for the development of the Architectural Standards implementation into the Zoning Ordinances.

Goal 3.3 Preserve important wildlife Habitat, scenic view areas, ridgelines, wetlands and water resources.

3.3.1 Recommendation: In order for valuable wildlife habitats to be protected, the Conservation Commission should consider working with the Department of Fish and Game to locate valuable habitats and add them to existing maps. This would enable the Planning Board to consider these habitats in future land use planning.

The best method for the protection of wildlife habitat, scenic view areas and ridgelines is to remove them from possible development. In order to do this equitably, the current owner of such lands needs to be reimbursed in some manner. Transferable Developments Rights and LCHIP are two methods that can be used for the reimbursement of the owner. It is recommended the Planning Board working jointly with the Conservation Commission to research funding sources and implement a conservation land-purchasing program.

3.3.2 Recommendation: The Planning Board or Board of Selectman should commission an inventory of all scenic views and vistas located in the Town of New Hampton. This inventory should be added to the Master Plan, and ordinances introduced that would protect these views and vistas from development that would have a negative impact, such as “cell towers, water towers, or high rise buildings”.

3.3.3 Recommendation: The Planning Board, working with the Conservation Commission, should develop zoning and planning amendments for aquifer protection and stream systems. All wetlands and stream systems should be labeled as Sensitive Areas and should receive special attention when their land use is being considered.