

Introduction and Recommendations

New Hampton is set in the geographic center of the state and lies roughly halfway between Newfound Lake and Lake Winnepesaukee, between the White Mountain National Forest and the state capitol in Concord. Interstate 93 and Routes 104 and 132 converge at the town's center.

As travel and tourism continue to be mainstays of the New Hampshire economy, New Hampton by virtue of its very location must be prepared to accommodate not only the growth of its own population, but that of surrounding communities and, indeed, the state as a whole. No town exists in a void, and, particularly since September 11th, 2001, many health and safety issues for New Hampton citizens must be considered in concert with other towns, the region and the state. Motorcycle Week in Laconia, for example, drew a record crowd of 135,000 in 2001. Due to our proximity and location on the Interstate, New Hampton's police, fire and rescue personnel are forced to deal with additional traffic and safety challenges as the popularity of just that one event grows.

Indicative of that reality, communication with other town governments, regionally and statewide, is an important tool New Hampton regularly employs to the benefit of its citizens. The number of state and regional organizations to which New Hampton has affiliated itself is long. New Hampton is a regular member of the Lakes Region Planning Commission and the New Hampshire Municipal Association to name two. The departments which serve its residents maintain memberships in like manner. Some examples include the NH Preservation Alliance, NH Association of Conservation Commissions, NH Ambulance Association, National Fire Protection Association, NH State Firemen's Association, the Belknap County Chiefs of Police, Northern New England Police Association, NH Association of Police Chiefs, the NH Finance Officers Association, NH Association of Assessing Officials, NH City and Town Clerks Association, the NH Tax Collectors' Association and others. Additionally, volunteer civil servants who serve the town's various boards often attend regional and state level conferences and meetings with those expenses paid by the town budget.

The Master Plan is a tool to be used by the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen to guide growth at a rate that is consistent with the town's ability to absorb it, while preserving the existing rural and small town character. The Master Plan furthers this goal through natural resource protection, historic and agricultural preservation, and

protection of the town's aesthetic values, which will assure a pleasant, attractive, and desirable community in which to live and play. The Business and Industry Association of NH, in 1996, after extensive research, identified the *Quality of Life in New Hampshire* as the state's most important economic asset. As a result New Hampshire is the fastest growing state in New England. It is estimated that the population of New Hampshire will grow from 1.2 million in 2001 to 1.5 million in 2020. That is an increase of 25% in just 19 years. New Hampshire is losing 20,000 acres of farm and forestland each year to development. New Hampton is going to see its fair share of that growth and loss of farm and forest. It is not a question of if we are going to see it; it is more a question of how we are going to handle it.

This update to the 1985 New Hampton Master Plan attempts to set down as clearly and practically as possible the best and most appropriate future development of the town, and makes recommendations to aid the boards in designing ordinances that result in preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life and culture that reside in New Hampton. Additionally, it attempts to guide the Board of Selectman, the Planning Board, and other Town officials in the performance of their duties in a manner that advances the principals of smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection.

The revised Master Plan contains five major sections. They are:

- Introduction and Recommendations
- Visioning
- Population
- Land Use
- Historical

Each section is covered in depth and highlights of each are presented here in summary.

Visioning- The Visioning Subcommittee sent out 1,100 questionnaires to residents and voters of New Hampton of which 416 responses were returned for tabulation and analysis. This is a 38% return rate. The chairperson of the Visioning Committee wrote in her summary, " A survey with this overwhelming response is not only a representative reflection of the values and attitudes of the community, but with such a high percentage of respondents can be construed literally as a *mandate* from the community regarding future direction of their town".

Population- This chapter examines five facets of population change in New Hampton: historical population trends, migration pattern,

population demographic changes and seasonal population, and economic patterns.

Land Use- A very important chapter that inventories current land utilization; then based on the visioning results lays out where and how New Hampton should grow.

Historical- Historical interpretation can be used as a mirror to the future. A forward look without a look at the past is an incomplete process that will result in a less than desirable product.

Recommendations:

1. **MIXED-USE ZONING DISTRICT:** After joint meetings of the Master Plan Update Committee and the Sprawl Committee that were appointed by the Planning Board, it is the recommendation of both committees that a mixed-use zoning district be created in the area of Route 104/132, Post Office, Drake Road and Town House Road. The mixed-use area will allow for increased density and would foster the creation of a Town Center Area with multi-family housing, single-family housing, and commercial establishments. It would allow for walkways to accommodate pedestrian traffic.
2. **MUNICIPAL SEWERAGE SYSTEM:** The concept of a mixed-use district is not currently feasible, due to septic requirements and the lack of any municipal sewerage system. Discussions of a municipal sewerage system in the past have centered on laying a line to Meredith, which is cost prohibitive, or tapping into the New Hampton Village District Sewage System. The Village District System is currently operating at peak capacity and would not be able to support an additional district. Therefore it is incumbent on the Town to investigate some of the state-of-the-art innovative systems that have become available in the past 5 to 10 years. It is recommended that a committee be appointed to research the possibilities and cost of these newer technology systems and determine their applicability to New Hampton for a mixed-use zoning district.
3. **IMPACT FEE ORDINANCE :** Any development in New Hampton is going to have an impact on town services. In order for the Town to recoup some of the costs of these impacts, it is recommended that the Town appoint a committee to create an Impact Fee Provision in the town's Zoning Ordinances as currently allowed by state statute. While the costs of correcting existing deficiencies cannot be charged to new development, the costs associated or

attributable to that growth, as it relates to capital facilities consumption or expansion needed to serve that growth, can be charged.

- 4. TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS:** Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is a zoning technique that allows local communities to preserve environmentally sensitive areas, open space, farmland, historic landmarks, or other community assets without using public funds. Using TDRs, landowners in designated preservation areas are given the option of preserving their property by selling their development rights. These transferable rights are purchased (usually by developers) to increase the amount of development allowed in designated areas suitable for higher growth. TDR programs are designed to use market forces to transfer development from one area to another. In effect, TDR programs promote open space or cluster development across parcels. Like open space development, the objective of a TDR program is to preserve open space land without imposing a significant financial loss on the private landowner. The ability to sell TDRs can compensate a landowner for changes to zoning or other restrictions on development that reduce the potential economic value of their property. It is recommended that the Planning Board appoint a committee to investigate TDRs and propose possible applications in New Hampton.
- 5. LOCAL ACCESS MANAGEMENT:** The townspeople of New Hampton expressed their concern about the effects of development on community character, quality of life, and the rural atmosphere. Conventional regulatory practices have an undesired effect on these desirable characteristics. The clearest evidence of this trend is strip zoning along major arterials. This form of development increases the numbers of curb cuts, slows the movement on the arterial, can contribute to accidents along the arterial, and is rarely designed for pedestrian use. No state agency has the authority to prevent strip development, or to prevent access to lands abutting State highways. The State of NH Department of Transportation has jurisdiction over access to State highways, but it is limited. Absent State regulation of strip development, only local government can control development along State highways. Local Access Management means local oversight of all means of vehicular access onto public highways. This means appropriately spacing or limiting the number of driveways while also, and as a result, removing the slower turning vehicles as efficiently as possible. It is recommended that the Town adopt Access Management Tools into the existing Zoning Ordinances, Site Plan Review, and Subdivision Regulations.

6. **PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL ASSETS:** The visual evidence of New Hampton's early character and appearance contributes greatly to the town's current appeal and character, adding personality and a real sense of place. An ongoing, active preservation effort demonstrates that the town has a sense of caring and pride. It is recommended that the Town actively support the preservation of historic assets in New Hampton. This should include the establishment of a Historic District in the vicinity of the Old Institution, financial support in the preservation of historic buildings like the Daniel Smith Tavern, the Old Institution Schoolhouse, the Adventist Christian Church, aka New Hampton Historical Society Headquarters, and the Dana Hill Meeting House. Additional support should be provided to repair and maintain old burial grounds and headstones.

7. **COMMUNITY FACILITIES:** During the research by the Space Needs Committee for their December 1998 report, they perceived a "general sense among the Selectmen, departments and committees of the town that the current facilities do not provide for the delivery of appropriate town services in a manner deserved by the property owners, residents and businesses of New Hampton". The Space Needs Committee issued their report in December 1998 with specific recommendations for addressing the deficiencies. It is recommended the Board of Selectmen continue their efforts to improve the town facilities as noted in the report.

8. **UPDATING THE MASTER PLAN:** It has become very apparent during the process of updating the New Hampton Master Plan that it would be best to update in a time frame that does not exceed 2 or 3 years. House Bill 650-FN, an act relative to Master Plans, is before the 2002 legislature for a vote. If this House Bill should become law, it recommends that revisions to the plan be made every 5 to 10 years. It is recommended that in order to meet the intent of the pending House Bill and to best reflect the needs and desires of the townspeople of New Hampton, the Master Plan be updated by section, versus the entire plan, and a section be updated every two years. This will result in the Master Plan's being updated in its entirety every 8 years.