

I-B

Land Use

Many broad factors affect a community's land use development patterns and characteristics. Therefore, land use planning in Goffstown must be done in close coordination with and mutually support the other aspects of the master plan.

The findings and recommendations contained in the other sections in the Appendix of this Master Plan, which address topics such as population, housing, education, transportation, community facilities, and economic development, may also have land use implications. The land use plan, then, is really a synthesis of land use considerations which have been created throughout the development and updating of the other sections of the Master Plan. In addition, future land use recommendations are shaped to a great extent, by the existing land use patterns in Town, the natural characteristics of the land as well as the expectations and aspirations of the community regarding future growth and development.

Five major factors governed the development of this land use plan. They are: 1) community vision and goals; 2) an inventory and analysis of natural features as they relate to development capability; 3) existing land use patterns, traffic flow, and utility service areas; 4) projected future land use needs; and 5) current land use regulations and policies.

Taking a *Smart Growth* Approach to Land Use Planning in Goffstown

The recommended actions in the Land Use section are based upon implementation of the 'Smart Growth' principles that have been developed by the New Hampshire State Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) (formerly the Office of State Planning (OSP)) in their 'Achieving Smart Growth in New Hampshire' (2003) publication. These eight principles have been adapted, where needed, for local planning application in Goffstown. They form the framework for the goals and recommended action items discussed later in this chapter. (Minor word changes and word additions have been made to translate them from a state context to local context and to broaden several principles.)



These eight Smart Growth principles adapted for Goffstown are:

Principle #1. Maintain and reinforce traditional compact settlement patterns to efficiently use land, preserve cultural and natural resources, and make the most effective use of investments in infrastructure.

Until the mid-20th century, population and economic vitality in Goffstown was centered on the Town's village centers. This changed in the second half of the 20th century with the spreading of large lot residential development throughout formerly rural areas of Town and suburban-style, strip development occurring in village centers and along Mast Road. The rate of land consumption in Goffstown has accelerated greatly since the 1960s.

This Master Plan Update recommends a less land-consumptive, more village-centered and neighborhood-oriented growth and redevelopment strategy for Goffstown.

Principle #2. Foster the traditional character of Goffstown's downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods that are distinct from rural areas.

During the 1997 Master Plan process and during this 2004 Update, citizens articulated the qualities and character of Goffstown that make it a special place to live and raise a family.

This Master Plan Update identifies concrete steps the community can take to preserve, enhance and build upon these unique community qualities.

Principle #3. Incorporate a mix of uses to provide a variety of housing, employment, shopping, services, economic, and social opportunities for all members of the community.

Development in Goffstown over the past three decades has typically been patterned in an insular, disconnected fashion and often with single use development. Most development has not recognized the context of or connections to surrounding development. Housing has been primarily homogeneous single family subdivisions or apartment/condominium complexes, rather than mixed housing neighborhoods. Commercial developments have typically been single story, strip-style retail development or single-use, single story standalone buildings rather than traditional patterns of housing, retail and commercial uses within the same building or in close proximity to each other.

This Master Plan Update identifies ways to create greater housing variety and introduce greater economic vitality through promoting mixed use commercial development.

Principle #4. Preserve the working landscape by sustaining farm and forest land and other rural resource lands to maintain contiguous tracts of open land to minimize land use conflicts.

Outside the three village centers, over three quarters of Goffstown is zoned Agricultural district. This zone does not make distinctions with regard to the community character, natural resources or natural resource-based economy

that is trying to be protected nor does the district distinguish between areas in which development of various patterns has already taken place. The current Agriculture Zone district has been ineffective at protecting the community character or 'rural character' that Goffstown residents state they highly value.

This Master Plan Update provides a strategy to protect and enhance community character and natural resources, and provide for orderly, managed growth in the community.

Principle #5. Provide choices and safety in transportation to create livable, walkable communities that increase accessibility for people of all ages, whether on foot, bicycle, or on motor vehicles.

Growth management strategies and regulations must mutually reinforce transportation goals and strategies. Growth that is scattered throughout a community makes travel by other than the automobile very difficult and traffic volumes on outlying roadways grow quickly. Travel by walking and bicycling become less safe and less attractive.

This Master Plan Update (within this chapter and in the Transportation Chapter) provides strategies that can help make all forms of transportation safer and more cost-effective for the Town's residents in concert with its growth strategy.

Principle #6. Protect environmental quality by minimizing impacts from human activities and planning for and maintaining natural areas and natural resources that contribute to the health and quality of life of Goffstown and its residents.

The pattern of growth over the past thirty years has in many ways degraded the environmental quality that the Town's residents cherish. Land consumption by residential housing has risen much faster than population, and commercial growth has resulted in a linear strip-style, increasing impervious surface and the degradation of visual quality.

This Master Plan Update builds upon the recent adoption of Design Guidelines and an Open Space Development overlay district by the Town to improve the aesthetic and visual quality, and reduce the environmental impact and land consumptive aspect of development on the Town.

Principle #7. Involve the community in planning and implementation to ensure that development retains and enhances the sense of place, traditions, goals, and values of the local community.

The 1997 Master Plan, this Update, and planning processes in between have begun invaluable, but fragmented, discussions regarding the shape of Goffstown's growth in the future. More continuity of these discussions is needed.

This Master Plan Update recommends that a broader community planning process and initiative be adopted that will provide continuity of planning and create a broader framework for addressing growth in the community.

Principle #8. Manage growth locally in the Goffstown and New Hampshire tradition, but work with neighboring towns, Hillsborough County, and regional and State agencies to achieve common goals and address common problems more effectively.

Goffstown must make sure that it has done its part to put in place the growth management tools it needs to achieve its community vision. Goffstown, though, does not exist in isolation from its neighboring communities or from the larger regional, State, national and international trends. Many of the issues facing Goffstown (traffic, affordable housing, economic development, etc) need to be addressed in a context larger than the Town.

This Master Plan Update identifies steps to coordinate and collaborate more effectively with potential partners including its neighboring communities, regional agencies and the State.

Other Important Smart Growth Planning-related Resources

In August 2002, the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) developed "*A Handbook on Sprawl and Smart Growth Choices for Southern New Hampshire Communities*". Goffstown is a member of the SNHPC. This handbook's purpose is to help communities 'plan smart'. It reviews the status of each community in the SNHPC region for its implementation of smart growth ordinances and regulations and gives case studies to illustrate how New Hampshire communities have started on the path to smarter growth. Notable conclusions from this Handbook are that "from 1986 to 2000, residential acreage was consumed at *twice* the population growth rate, and commercial acreage was consumed at *three times* the population growth rate" (page 5) in the SNHPC region.

In December 2000 the then Office of State Planning issued "*Managing Growth in New Hampshire: Changes and Challenges*", working with the Growth Management Advisory Committee. This document develops definitions of sprawl, discusses indicators to identify patterns of sprawl or smart growth, develops case studies and reaches conclusions and recommendations regarding managing future growth in New Hampshire.

In addition to the application of smart growth principles, specific development proposals should be compatible with architectural scale and character of the neighborhood in which they are to be located. Hence, the Planning Board's development regulations must include design considerations as well as engineering criteria.

1 Existing & Future Land Use Patterns

A. *Historic Land Use Patterns*

Goffstown developed initially as a farming community. The first settlers in the 1700s found the area magnificently forested with hardwoods on the hills and unexcelled stands of white pine on the “pine plains”, which extended along Mast Road. This area was so named for the many pine trees suitable for ship masts which were cut and hauled to the Merrimack River for use by the Royal British Navy.

The first settlement was on the north bank of the Piscataquog River in what is now Grasmere Village, the seat of Town government for more than 100 years. Goffstown Village grew up around the falls on the Piscataquog River where local industry developed because of the availability of water power. Pinardville developed rapidly in the era of the electric trolley car as a residential suburb for employees of the mills in Manchester. The steam railroad also played a part in creating the Town’s nodular pattern of development with stations at Grasmere, Shirley Station, Goffstown Village, and Parker Station.

Through the middle part of the 20th century, population was concentrated in the Goffstown Village and Pinardville areas. But trends which have occurred since the 1960s have resulted in the distribution of development across much of the town’s land area. Furthermore, while single family housing still makes up a majority of the Town’s housing stock, the amount of multi-family and condominium housing has increased substantially since the 1960s. The following items constitute a list of notable events which have occurred over the past 30 years, and which have had a significant effect on shaping the Town’s current land use.

1. The development during the 1980s of high-density residential complexes, primarily in the Pinardville area, where they could tie into water and sewer facilities.
2. The development in the early 1980s of two large “retirement” complexes using manufactured housing and a clustered housing approach.
3. Non-agricultural development in the Agricultural Zone, north and south of the Piscataquog River along both sides of the hill roads. This type of development does not currently have access to town water or sewer.
4. The development of many subdivisions (some of 40 or more lots), most of which were located in the hills north of the Piscataquog River and which required the construction of miles of new roads. This growth has been driven, in part, by proximity to employment opportunities in the greater Manchester region and improved transportation access provided by Interstate 293.

5. External forces, such as the real estate boom of the 1980s, followed by the severe recession in the early 1990s followed in turn by economic recovery and a return to rapid residential development in this region, especially in the neighboring Town of Bedford.
6. A level of economic development in Goffstown which has not been commensurate with population growth. In fact, with visible store closings such as Stuart's department store, Goffstown residents are more dependent than before on businesses located outside of the Town for everyday retail shopping needs.
7. A recent trend toward home based occupations, such that the nature and economics of the household is changing for many Goffstown residents.
8. The connection of parts of Goffstown (including Goffstown Village, Pinardville, and some of the neighborhoods along the River) to the Manchester sewer system, which has increased the amount of development currently served by municipal sewer, and also increased the potential density of future development due to the smaller lot size permitted when municipal sewer is available.
9. The increase in the supply of water by the Goffstown Village Water Precinct and the Grasmere Water Precinct, which made possible more intensive use of the land area serviced by these systems.
10. The expansion in the 1990's of the size of the student body and the facilities at St. Anselm College, which has placed more demands on water and sewerage capacity (although these are currently served by the City of Manchester).

In addition to these events, there are a number of forces in place that affected development in Goffstown in the 1990s and which are expected to continue for some time:

- The general pressure to build more housing;
- The tendency toward building single family homes;
- Development on visually appealing hilly, forested land outside of town water and sewer areas;
- The close proximity of residential uses with other permitted uses, such as gravel pits and animal husbandry, in the Agricultural zone;
- The need to provide municipal services to new single family housing homes that typically contribute an insufficient amount of property taxes to support them;
- Construction of houses in remote portions of the Town, increasing the per unit cost of providing municipal services;
- Increasing pressure to develop land on Mast Road and the Back Road for commercial strip-type businesses; and
- Increasing traffic on the Mast Road and the Back Road corridors.

B. Current Land Use Patterns and Trends

Goffstown's proximity to Manchester and its availability of developable land makes it likely that the Town will continue to see at least moderate levels of residential development relative to its neighbors. The pattern of the vast majority of recent residential development has had numerous unintended consequences:

- Large areas of open space, often working agricultural and forest lands outside of established village areas, have been consumed, thus threatening the very "rural character" townspeople say they cherish so highly.
- Housing costs are driven ever higher, thus limiting sales to those with incomes earned in distant metropolitan areas and forcing those working locally to look further afield for their housing.
- High cost suburban-type housing disproportionately increases traffic both on the part of the owners who commute to far away jobs and those who work here who must, in turn, commute to their own far away less expensive housing.
- Suburban-type housing caters primarily to families with children, thus increasing not only the public works costs of maintaining a large network of roads, but also the demand for education. Both, in turn, disproportionately increase local property taxes.
- The high cost of housing and high local property taxes make it more difficult to attract industries to the Town.
- When single family housing is the predominant type of housing, the housing market neglects the many different types of housing people will need over the course of their lives (apartments, starter homes, family homes, empty nesters', assisted living), known as life-cycle housing.
- Dispersed development disproportionately strains municipal services such as schools, fire, police, and utilities. It is more expensive per unit to serve this type of development than a compact, traditional form of land use

Looking to the future, the concentration of single-family suburban-type housing presents two additional problems to its own residents. First, subsequent generations of children are likely not to be able to afford to start their adult lives here. They won't be able to find small apartments or starter homes. Second, the parents of these children are soon to become "empty nesters" who won't need or want four bedrooms nor two acres of lawn to mow, again limiting their choices for staying in the Town later in life.

Beyond Goffstown, there is significant growth pressure in the southern part of New Hampshire, especially for residential development. Goffstown is affected by this pressure in at least two distinct ways. The primary impact, in terms of land area affected, is the construction of new houses in the

Agricultural Zone, which comprises most of the Town's area. The housing growth is driven by economic and population growth in the region. In some cases, parts of developments approved in the past are now being built, and in other cases, new developments are being approved and built.

The second impact of growth on land use arises from the fact that the Town is situated along the sole state highway which connects the greater Manchester and Nashua employment centers, with the towns of Weare, Dunbarton, New Boston and beyond. As a result, traffic and congestion is increasing on many Town roads, some of which are very rural in nature and not designed to accommodate such traffic volumes. The traffic counts are, in turn, putting pressure on frontage land to be developed into certain types of automobile traffic-oriented commercial uses.

It should be noted that land use decisions made by the Town are made within a competitive land market which affects the actions of private sector development. Therefore, the Town must have an understanding of the developer's perspective and it must also examine how adjacent municipalities regulate development in comparison to Goffstown.

Calculations from the 1967 Comprehensive Plan indicated that residential land uses constituted about one-third (35.2% or 979 acres) of the Town's total developed area in 1966. It is estimated that residential development presently accounts for roughly two-thirds of total developed acreage; however, no actual figures have been prepared for this plan which quantify acreages within various land use categories. Previous master plans, such as the one completed in 1987, have attempted to quantify the amount of land in various uses. However, while laudable, that effort appeared somewhat tortured by the need to make many untested assumptions. At present, with so many built lots in Town, it would be quite an undertaking to construct new numbers from the ground up. Furthermore, the usefulness of determining the number of acres in residential use is also subject to question, since the issues for land use planning remain the same whether that figure is 4,000 or 6,000 acres. However, accurate acreage figures for commercial and industrial use might prove more useful, since they would allow Goffstown to compare its level of economic development to that of other towns. Actual taxes collected are probably the more important economic measure over time, however, and those numbers are available.

The Existing Land Use Map prepared for the 1997 plan illustrates the land use patterns in Goffstown as of July 1996. It identifies land which is used for private development (which includes residential, commercial, and industrial uses), public and semi-public uses, as well as the natural features of rivers, lakes and wetlands. Streets and roads are shown, as are utility lines, which occupy over 700 acres of land. It should be noted that, if a permit has been issued to build a house on newly subdivided land and the house has not yet been built, it is still shown as developed on the map.

In order to compare land use changes over time, the 1966 Existing Land Use Map has also been included as part of this plan. A comparison of these two maps (Figure 1, page IB-10) illustrates how much Goffstown has changed between 1966 and 1996, a period of 30 years, and provides an indication of the

magnitude of changes that may occur throughout the next three decades. While the 1996 map does not show agricultural use as a separate category, it is fair to say that, based on observation, such uses have dwindled substantially since 1966. Another major change illustrated by the maps is that much of the Town north of the Piscataquog River contains new roads and new residential development. However, the tops of the Uncanoonuc Mountains have changed little because the Town bought much of the South Mountain in 1978, and the Water Precinct already owned portions of the North Mountain.

The residential side streets of Pinardville have not changed much since 1966. However, commercialization of Mast Road/Route 114A and the addition of three shopping plazas have affected traffic congestion, as well as the feel and attractiveness of the area. The former Bartlett farm on Daniel Plummer Road is now the site of a busy commercial/industrial area.

Since the 1997 Master Plan, the number of development applications to the Planning Board for residential development has fluctuated between 24 in 1997 to a high of 82 in 2002. Most years, most of the applications have been for residential subdivisions. In 2003, the 25 subdivisions represented 72 new building lots, an average of less than 3 lots per subdivision.

Table 1

Applications Reviewed by the Planning Board

Type	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Subdivision	8	16	23	21	26	37	25	22
Site Plan	9	12	14	17	12	14	19	15
Conceptual	7	13	19	15	15	31	16	5
Total	24	41	56	53	53	82	60	42
% Change from Previous Year	-51%	+71%	+37%	-5%	0%	+55%	-27%	-30%

Source: Town of Goffstown Annual Report, 2003 & 2004.

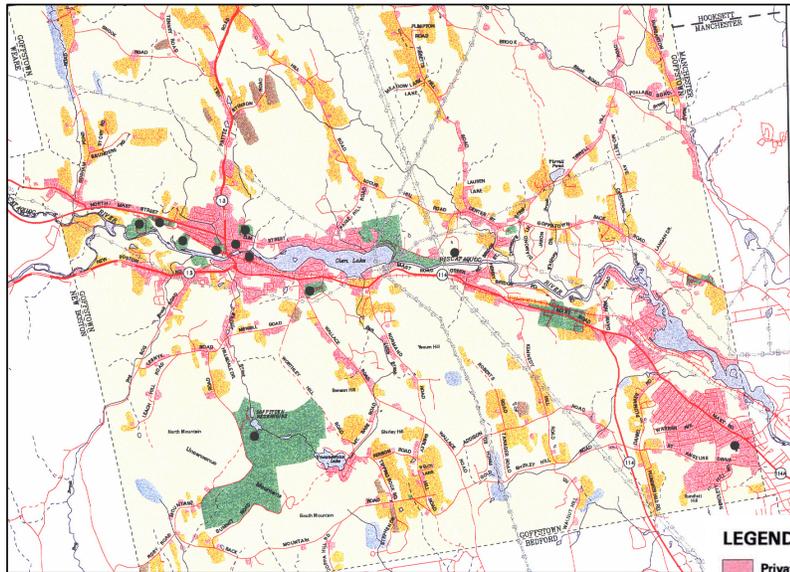
The number of building permits issued during this time period has varied from a low of 53 in 2001 to a high of 100 in 1998. Building permits rose sharply in 2002 and 2003 to 95 building permits issued but dropped to 64 in 2004.

Table 2

Single Family or Duplex Building Permits Issued

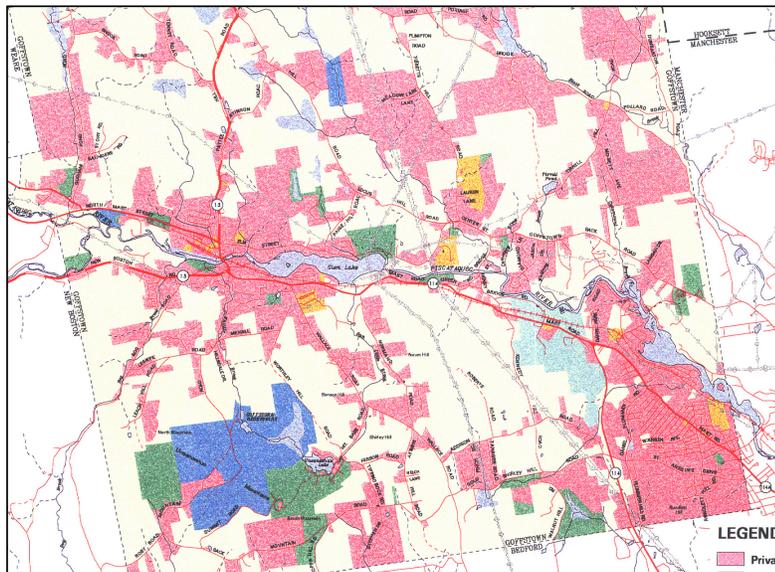
1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
74	100	79	58	53	95	95	64

Source: Town of Goffstown Annual Report, 2003 & 2004.



1966 Land Use

- LEGEND**
- Private Development
 - Public/Semi-Public
 - Agricultural Land
 - Orchard
 - Undeveloped (wooded or open)
 - Water or Wetlands
 - Municipal Building



1996 Land Use

- LEGEND**
- Private Development
 - Cemeteries, Parks, Conservation Land
 - Municipal Land
 - County Land
 - Water Precinct
 - Undeveloped (wooded or open)
 - Water or Wetlands

Land Use Change: 1966 to 1996 Goffstown, NH

Source: 1997 Goffstown Master Plan

Figure 1

C. Future Land Use Planning Concepts and Principles

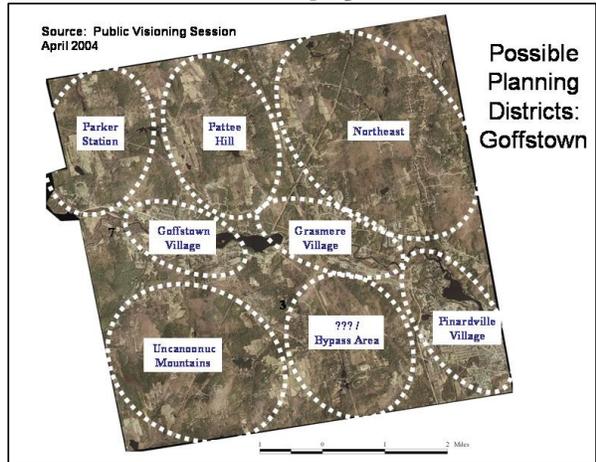
Adopting the State's Smart Growth Principles implies a comprehensive reappraisal of planning approaches in Goffstown. Such a reappraisal can strengthen the link between the Vision and Town's current Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, especially when approached with a view toward the bigger picture of planning taking into consideration more than zoning districts. It would examine the 'building blocks' that can make up a well planned community.

If the Town moved further on reexamining its basic building blocks of planning, some of the important concepts would include: Planning Districts; Village/Village Center; Hamlet; Traditional Neighborhood; Rural Areas; Conservation Area; Suburban Areas. Not only are these individual areas important, but the transition between these areas is critical. There should be distinct edges - one should know when they pass from a rural to a suburban area, for instance.

Planning Districts - These are larger areas within the Town with generally common characteristics or a common identity or history. These areas would be identified balancing existing land uses and zoning with a vision for the future of these areas.

This concept of Planning Districts was explored at a Visioning Session in April 2004 as part of this Master Plan Update process. Groups at the session were asked to identify distinct areas within the community that share common characteristics and possibly a shared identity and history. It was compelling to see the many similarities in the ways five different groups of planner-citizens drew on a map how they 'experience' or understand Goffstown. All groups similarly drew lines around the three village centers (Goffstown Village, Pinardville, and Grasmere Village, if not with different boundaries) and the Uncanoonuc Mountains. Differences emerged, though, on how to describe the area north of the Piscataquog River/Glen Lake areas, and how or if to define the area between the Uncanoonuc Mountains and Pinardville. A combination of these concepts for one possible set of Planning Districts is shown in Figure 1.

Articulated
outcomes of this
Planning Area



exercise should be:

- The distinct Identity and Character of the Planning District to be preserved and enhanced;
- Planning District goals for land use planning;
- Critical Resources to be protected;
- Needed community facilities.

The building blocks for these Planning Areas may include the following.

- Villages;
- Hamlets;
- Traditional Neighborhoods;
- Neighborhood Commercial Centers;
- Suburban Residential Areas;
- Conservation Areas;
- Agricultural Districts;
- Rural Areas.

Village-centered Planning Example:

Concord, City of Villages

A recent planning initiative that is illustrative of the type of village-based visioning that can occur is the Concord 20/20 Vision. A citizens group in Concord, with participation from the City, initiated in 2000 a city-wide planning process that resulted in a 'City of Villages' approach to planning for Concord's future. It recognizes and builds upon the historic settlement patterns in Concord and recognizes new opportunities for growth that will enhance the quality of life for Concord's residents.

These villages are seen as the key to managing future growth and preserving the natural environment and important open spaces in Concord.

The heart of this approach is recognizing the central importance of village centers in shaping future growth and development within Goffstown. The Route 114/ 114A Corridor Management Plan, an adopted part of the current Master Plan, recommends that most future development be within existing village centers, new village centers or adjacent to village centers. For instance, a Business Park concept is recommended to be explored west of the Route 114 Bypass, would be adjacent and connected to both Pinardville and a potential new village centered on the junction of Route 114 and 114A).

Part of the planning process would be to develop specific definitions for these development and conservation forms and devise specific planning tools and techniques to implement to framework. Some Planning Districts may contain each these building blocks while others may contain two or

three.

The current zoning districts and their accompanying regulations fall short of actively directing the location of development and ensuring the high quality of development within the Town.

Particular emphasis should be placed upon 'rationalizing' the zoning in the current Agricultural District. The purpose of the Agricultural District "is a mixed-use district established to accommodate residential developments at low densities in rural settings, together with agricultural, forestry, outdoor recreation and other compatible uses on large lots where municipal utilities may not be present or anticipated." The primary concern over the way this district works is that it is "reactive" - it doesn't identify the key resources that should be protected and then protect them, seeking "compatibility" with

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residential uses. Developments over 20 acres must conform to the Open Space Development provisions, but the mechanisms in that ordinance should be evaluated for their effectiveness at meeting its objectives (see Action Item 23, page IB-27). Areas within the Agricultural District should be evaluated for rezoning to a Residential-oriented zoning district at appropriate densities.

A recent study by the Society for the Protection of NH Forests (*New Hampshire's Changing Landscape*, 2005) estimates that there are approximately 2500 acres of Prime Agricultural Soils in Goffstown and that less than 50 acres is in protected status. If Agricultural uses and other 'working landscape' uses (forestry, etc) are valued, a more proactive approach to protection of agricultural and forested lands is warranted. A first step involves taking an accurate inventory of remaining viable agricultural and forested lands.

Conceptual Future Land Use Map - Figure 2 (following page IB-31) integrates the eight Smart Growth Principles for Goffstown with the Planning Districts concept to derive a Conceptual Future Land Use Map. The map suggests nine general types of distinct variations of land uses to achieve a desired set of characteristics. *Considerable analysis and public outreach/consultation is needed to translate these conceptual areas into specific zoning language and delineate specific zoning district boundaries. In all cases, future development is intended to be compatible with the scale, character and pattern of existing development.*

Land Use Category Characteristics

- **Conservation Open Space:** Large lots, single family, encourage open space uses, low density of development, high priority areas for conservation easement or public ownership.
- **Conservation Subdivision:** Smaller single family clustered lots, developed by open space subdivision, high priority areas for preserving natural resources (forest, wetlands, prime agricultural soils) and creating functional open spaces. (2 acre minimum lot size to determine yield plan)
- **Suburban Residential:** Single family lots of at least two acres developed by conventional and open space subdivision, private water and sewer, public recreation facilities.
- **Residential Mixed Use:** Single family, attached single family (townhomes) and multifamily homes in small projects and limited service, retail or office uses, public sewer and water.
- **Village Residential:** Village design context, small lots, public sewer and water, single family and attached single family integrated into the neighborhood.
- **Village Commercial Mixed Use:** Village design context, small lots, public sewer and water, village scaled service, retail, office and lodging uses, mixed with village scaled single family, single family attached and apartment uses. Create/design village center feel.
- **Village Residential Mixed Use:** Village design context, small lots, public sewer and water, village scaled single family, single family attached and apartment uses, mixed with village scaled service and retail uses.

- **Mixed Use Node:** General location of small (2,000-10,000 sq. ft.), small-scaled service and retail uses integrated into/mixed with small housing development typically centered around an intersection.
- **Campus Mixed Use:** Institutional/College uses integrated with surrounding compatible commercial & residential uses.

2 Natural Constraints

Knowledge of the physical characteristics and the soils of a town, as they relate to the suitability of the land for development, is an important tool for land use planning. Although it may be possible to find engineering solutions to address many land use constraints, the best results can often be achieved through development which is sensitive to the physical characteristics of the land.

Goffstown sits atop a bedrock plateau that varies in elevation from 300 to 600 feet. The Piscataquog River valley cuts into that plateau, while the Uncanoonuc Mountains rise some 600 feet above, to an elevation of 1,300 feet. The 1967 and 1981 master plans evaluated land in Goffstown based on its suitability for development. The Soil Suitability Map from the 1967 plan has been used for analysis in this master plan since soil and slope conditions have changed little over the last 30 years. The soil suitability analysis for the 1967 master plan included the following table.

Table 3
Soil Suitability in Goffstown

Map Color*	Category	Acres	% of Total
Yellow	Slight to moderate soil limitations for homesite locations with septic tank effluent disposal	3,785	16.0
Green	Slight to moderate soil limitations for homesite locations with public sewerage	2,350	9.9
Red	Shallow depth of soil to bedrock	3,870	16.3
Blue	Poorly drained soils	3,130	13.2
White	Other severe conditions - floodplain	200	0.8
White striped	Excessive slope (15% or more) only limiting factor. The soils are otherwise generally suitable for homesites	10,040	42.5
	Water Bodies	305	1.3
TOTAL ACRES IN TOWN		23,680	100.0
Striped	Total excessive slope of various categories	13,715	58.0

* Color as shown on the 1967 Soil Suitability Map.

Table 3 table shows that 10,040 acres, or 42.5% of the Town, exhibit excess slope (>15%) as the “only” limiting factor for development. Areas with “excessive slope of various categories” (i.e. some land has additional soil-based constraints) totals 13,715 acres, or 58% of the Town. Approximately 9.9% of the Town’s land area has some slight limitations for home sites where public sewerage is available. However, some of the land in that category does not presently have access to public sewerage. Other limitations for development in Goffstown include floodplains (0.8%) and poorly drained

soils (13.2%), with the latter category encompassing the Town's wetlands areas¹. This data illustrates the fact that a significant portion of Goffstown is not suitable for the development of buildings and roads.

Finally, water availability will be an increasing problem in Goffstown, both in quantity and quality, for those homes which do not have access to municipal systems. There is a limit to the number of homes which can be developed with private septic systems and wells because of the many natural constraints found in Goffstown, such as sloping terrain, ledge, or the proximity to surface water bodies like Glen Lake.

3 Important Features of the Goffstown Landscape

This section lists some of the important natural and man-made features in Goffstown which help to define the character of the Town and which should be given consideration whenever they may be impacted by development. Some of the Town's important natural features are included in the following list.

- Forested areas on North and South Uncanoonuc Mountains
- Ponds along Route 13 near the Dunbarton town line
- Mystic Brook
- Snook Road heron rookery
- Black Brook/Purgatory Brook wetland complex
- Tipping Rock area
- Top of Shirley Hill and its associated view
- Mountain Base Lake
- Glen Lake
- Marsh at Barnard Park
- The Piscataquog River which has federal designation as a Wild and Scenic River
- Access to the River at the old sewerage plant (off East Union Street)
- View of the Piscataquog River near the New Boston town line
- Kelley Bridge pond
- Yacum Hill
- Shirley Hill

The built environment of Goffstown also has many important features and landmarks. Some of these are hundreds of years old and make Goffstown a special and more enjoyable place to live. Some of the most notable built features are historic buildings which are found in the following locations.

¹For more information on wetlands in Goffstown, see *Wetlands Inventory and Classification in Goffstown, New Hampshire*, by Steven H. Steiner, 1979. It identifies each wetland in Goffstown, including acreage and shape, vegetative classes and sub-classes, vegetative interspersions, site type, cover type, surrounding habitat, wetland juxtaposition, associated water body size, and the number of vegetative sub-classes in the wetland. The 1981 master plan recommended that these data be cross correlated with the soil condition and development constraints map to provide further guidance in development decisions.

- In the Parker Station area
- In the Grasmere Village area
- Along High Street (Route 13) to the Dunbarton town line
- Throughout Goffstown Village area (roughly from North Mast Road near the cemetery to the Villa Augustina)

The Town's parks and ball fields and the buildings on the St. Anselm's College campus are also an important cultural part of the Town.

In addition, there are also old farms, stone walls, and historic houses found atop Shirley Hill, on Addison, Back, Mountain, and Merrill Roads, and on Route 13 South, near Main Street.

Other notable features which contribute to Goffstown's character and quality of life include the buildings of the County Farm and its associated agricultural fields. There is also the historic Alumni Hall at St. Anselm College, along with the facility's attractive and well-maintained campus. From a recreational standpoint, there are roads and trails for hiking, biking, snowmobiling, snow shoeing, and many other outdoor pursuits, which provide enjoyment for both residents and people outside the community. In addition, the Town's lakes (which are constructed), combined with the Piscataquog River, provide opportunities for canoeing and boating.

Overall, Goffstown is quite fortunate in the richness of its natural and man-made environment. However, there are some features of the built environment which do warrant attention. These include the following areas.

- Current zoning and subdivision regulations are not preserving the rural character of the Town.
- The industrial/commercial area along Mast Road, west of the women's prison, is not being used to the extent envisioned.
- Traffic is a problem in Pinardville and Goffstown Village, as are the lack of adequate parking and sidewalks.
- Town parks are insufficient to serve the whole town population.
- In Pinardville and the Village, there are several commercial lots with very long curb cuts and no prescribed traffic flow, which endangers both drivers and pedestrians and degrade the visual quality of the villages.
- There is existing signage in the village areas which is not appropriate for the New England town character, or for the neighborhood in which it is located, or both.
- There are commercial establishments with insufficient buffering from surrounding residential uses.

4 Summary and Recommended Actions

Goffstown remains at a critical juncture where its residents have the opportunity to shape development so that the Town retains the qualities that have made it such a great place to live. While planners and Town officials who prepared earlier master plans for Goffstown (in 1967, 1981, and 1987) may have viewed the Town as mostly undeveloped, the conclusion that there is an endless supply of land for development, reached in 1987, and continued today, no longer exists. In fact, if nothing further is done to guide where, when, and what type of development occurs, the remaining undeveloped land in Goffstown will gradually be built out with new housing.

If not balanced with a commensurate amount of commercial and industrial development, these new houses will likely result in an increased tax rate. Without a suitable supply of vacant land serviced by utilities, few commercial or industrial businesses will locate in the Town other than highway-related strip development.

Without appropriate planning, the community's scenic assets (such as hilltops, old barns, orchards, fields, woods), as well as its overall quality of life, will be at risk. Land which could serve the Town as sites for parks, schools, libraries, playgrounds, and gathering places, will be usurped by housing. In short, much of what has made Goffstown a great place to live, and which has attracted its current residents, may be lost.

The following recommended actions take into account the issues which have been addressed thus far in this chapter. Each recommendation is presented under the corresponding land use Smart Growth Principle which it addresses.

In reviewing these recommended actions it is important to consider two points. First, because some of the recommended actions made in other chapters of this master plan have direct land use planning and implementation implications, the recommendations here represent a synthesis of land use considerations throughout the plan. Second, conditions on which these recommendations are based will change over time. Therefore, these issues will need to be revisited in several years, some in the very near term and some with the next update. In the meantime, Town officials should attempt not only to implement the letter of what is presented here, but also, to understand the intent behind the printed words.

Recommended Land Use & Growth Principles and Actions



Principle #1. Maintain and reinforce traditional compact settlement patterns to efficiently use land, preserve cultural and natural resources, and make the most effective use of investments in infrastructure.

Action LU 1. Revise the current zoning districts as needed to reflect the current desires of the Town to reinforce traditional settlement patterns while still promoting appropriately scaled growth and development and recognizing contemporary residential development patterns.

To do this, the Town should consider modeling the Planning Districts to correspond to the different neighborhoods or areas of the Town. Thus, the Districts would be organized to define not only the three main village areas of Pinardville, Grasmere and Goffstown Village, but also the Uncanoonuc Mountains area, the Black Brook area, Parker Station, and other sections of the Town.

For each Planning District, the town needs to recognize contemporary development patterns, define the desired character and then adopt/implement appropriate zoning. There are likely to be more than one zoning districts within a planning district. For instance, in the Northeast, it may have 'Open Space Development' districts, remnants of an Agricultural or Resource Protection zone, but then appropriately located 'Neighborhood Overlay' districts to create neighborhood centers. See Figure 2: Conceptual Future Land Use Map following page IB-31 for a draft map of this concept.

Action LU 2. Allow for expanded use of home occupations throughout Goffstown, while ensuring that such uses will not affect the character of the area in which they are permitted.

Much of the Town's developed land area is used for housing and more people are earning income in or working from their homes. Furthermore, since much of the Town's historic feel is derived from its older, larger homes, implementation of this recommendation could further the goal of preservation, as well as other goals by:

- Increasing affordability of home ownership throughout Goffstown;
- Reducing pressure to subdivide land where home occupations are operating;
- Preserving neighborhoods throughout Goffstown;
- Increasing economic activity in the Town which could increase tax revenue; and
- Dispersing business-related traffic throughout the Town as opposed to concentrating it in certain areas.

Action LU 3. Attract and direct new commercial and industrial development to appropriate portions of the Town, and provide flexible zoning and development standards as recommended in the Economic Development chapter. Encourage businesses to locate in Town through the use of financial, infrastructure, or other incentives, as feasible and cost-effective.

Early emphasis should be placed upon appropriately scaled infill and redevelopment within Goffstown Village and Pinardville to continue revitalization efforts there.

Rationale - If the Town can build a stronger commercial base, the tax rate will not rise as fast. If taxes are lower it is less costly to preserve undeveloped land, and therefore, there is less pressure on property owners to sell their land. Also, if increases in the tax rate can be reduced somewhat compared to surrounding towns, it will provide more of an incentive for businesses to locate in Goffstown². Currently the Town is very dependent upon property taxes derived from Residential properties with fewer than 10% of property valuation derived from Commercial/Industrial property.

Outside of the established village centers one area recommended for targeted commercial and industrial development is along Route 114 between Henry Bridge Road and the intersection of Route 114 and 114A, as well as along Route 114 from the intersection with 114A south to the Bedford Town line. This is a large area, which should be evaluated before action could be taken. The specific requirements of site development would need to be carefully considered, as outlined in the Route 114/114A Corridor Management Plan. From a traffic perspective, commercial development within this area could create less traffic impacts than elsewhere in the community. Also, because these areas are near the Route 114 connector, they could be more attractive for the location of businesses.

Action LU 4. Form an Infrastructure Task Force composed of members of Town Staff (Planning, Public Works, Town Administrator), Selectboard, Planning Board, the water districts, and Manchester Sewer District. Infrastructure must complement and meet prioritized growth management strategies.

The Task Force would:

- 1) Reassess the current water and sewer service areas and capacities in conjunction with potential growth management/zoning changes as part of the implementation process for this Master Plan Update.
- 2) Reassess the effectiveness of the current organizational structure of the provision of water and sewer services in Goffstown and recommend changes, as appropriate, to best meet future needs and coordinate these services.

Action LU 5. Require the construction of connecting roadways or driveways, or the reserving of right of way to property lines in anticipation of future adjacent development, which would allow vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle access between adjoining land uses in residential, commercial,

² A 1990 fiscal impact study of housing costs in Milford estimated that the community needed to raise \$2,072 for each new three-bedroom home above and beyond taxes and fees generated by homeowners. The study states that Milford needed to attract seven average business taxpayers to offset every ten additional three-bedroom homes. See *Does Open Space Pay?* UNH Cooperative Extension, 1995, pg. 6.³ See *An Agenda for Continued Economic Opportunity in New Hampshire*, BIA, October 1996.

or industrial zones. It should be the presumption (as a requirement in the subdivision regulations) that these connections *will* be provided with rare exceptions provided for specific extenuating circumstances.

Rationale - This would allow access to multiple parcels without requiring vehicles to return to an existing public roadway, thereby reducing/dispersing traffic demands and reducing the number of curb cuts. In some instances (for instance, between residential development and commercial development or between two adjoining residential developments) it may be desirable to provide for only pedestrian and bicycle access between adjacent development. But again, the presumption should be that these connections *will* be provided.



Principle #2. Foster the traditional character of Goffstown's downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods that are distinct from rural areas.

Background

The challenges and opportunities in Pinardville are different from those in Goffstown Village and Grasmere Village. Different skills, techniques, and alliances will be needed to address these distinct areas of Goffstown. It is expected that there would be strong public support for these initiatives because they address both the preservation of what residents say they like most (the quality of life), while alleviating what they like least (the tax rate).

From an economic development point of view, Goffstown's advantage in the 21st century marketplace will not be only related to its ability to be cost competitive, but to the *quality of life and quality of place* that the Town offers³. Village Districts will define where economic development should primarily occur and how it should be regulated, with an expectation that development be of a high quality. It can also define desirable land uses and a vision for the future.

Zoning in Goffstown Village and Pinardville often reflect current uses rather than desired uses and outcomes.

Action LU 6. Promote and attract an appropriate level growth to existing and expanded/new village centers and neighborhood centers by creating appropriate zoning standards, development incentives, streamlined approvals, needed extension of utilities such as water and sewer, and other incentives.

Action LU 7. Require traditional neighborhood forms or clustered development in new subdivisions to help preserve open space and foster more compact development, reducing the overall consumption of land in Town per residential housing unit. The cumulative effect, over time, of residential subdivisions should result in cohesive, traditional neighborhoods.

Action LU 8. Build upon and strengthen the adopted design guidelines for residential and commercial development in Goffstown Village, Grasmere Village, Pinardville and other areas of Town.

Action LU 9. Create a historic district(s) for those areas in Town which have been recommended for such status by the Historic Commission.

Action LU 10. Encourage, or require, as appropriate, new commercial development and redevelopment to be architecturally compatible with the New England style.

Action LU 11. Developing an updated Pinardville Master Plan by expanding and refining the zoning, land use, infrastructure and quality of place concepts for Pinardville presented in the NH Route 114/114A Corridor Management Plan.

Rationale – Pinardville is a vibrant village where in recent decades, suburban style commercial development has brought worsening problems from traffic, pedestrian access, problem intersections, and aesthetics. High traffic counts have attracted a significant amount of strip development. Though this area offers shopping for residents throughout Goffstown, it could service retail needs better, save residents extra driving, and provide more local jobs. Redevelopment of parcels can create higher value uses, increasing property tax revenues.

St. Anselm's College, the largest institution and taxpayer in Goffstown, is a key part of Pinardville. The Town should make more of an effort to understand, and support more fully, the College's development plans. The Town should also make better use of the institution's public resources.

Potential objectives/criteria for the [revised] Pinardville Zoning Districts should be to:

- foster economic development and redevelopment;
- provide solutions for problems related to traffic, parking, and pedestrians;
- protect historic values;
- preserve residential neighborhoods; and
- communicate and coordinate with St. Anselm College regarding its development plans, as they relate to the town's infrastructure or environment.

More specifically, the purposes of this District would be: to increase commerce and safety through improved pedestrian access and upgrading of failed intersections; to improve/expand Roy Park and to provide other park space and recreation space (the John Sarett Recreation Complex was recently completed on the old town landfill); to improve communications between the town and St. Anselm College regarding its plans as they affect traffic, fire, police, drainage, road maintenance, etc.; to address the size and location of

public school(s) in the District; and, to identify what other public facilities are needed and where to locate them..

The purposes of the Master Plan would be to:

- ‘Put the Village back in Pinardville’
- To increase commerce and safety through improved pedestrian access and facilities, access management, improved aesthetics and upgrading of failed intersections;
- To improve/expand Roy Park and to provide other park space; to find a permanent home for the Pinardville Branch Library;
- To improve communications between the Town and St. Anselm College regarding its plans as they affect traffic, fire, police, drainage, road maintenance, etc.;
- Simplify/unify the overall zoning regulations potentially creating a more unified mixed use village center along Mast Road, with adjacent village residential areas;
- Address the issue of appropriate scaled retail development through reconsideration of existing zoning (building footprints, allowable square footage, etc);
- To address the size and location of public school(s) in the District; to identify what other public facilities are needed and where to situate them; and
- To address eventual use of the old dump site by the Town.

Action LU 12. Expand and refine a more unified Goffstown Village Commercial District surrounded by a Village Neighborhood District.

The Town should continue to work with the State Division of Historic Preservation, and the Main Street in order to continually keep informed about what has worked elsewhere and implement an integrated set of recommendations for the Village area. Representatives from Village businesses and area residents should participate in this process.

One of the most important historic aspects of Goffstown is the Goffstown Village area. The Goffstown Village area is generally defined as the land along Route 114 from Normand Road to the intersection of North Mast Road and Church Street, also including adjacent streets and neighborhoods commonly considered part of Goffstown Village. The layout and built environment of Goffstown Village embodies elements that make Goffstown a special place to live. Important aspects of this area include: the grid layout of old main roads; the location of the River and railroad bed; importance historic/economic aspects including the mill, dam, and mill pond; the existing location of Town government, Town library, and churches; and the beautiful old houses lining the main roads and side streets. The buildings, park, and other landmarks tell an important part of the story of Goffstown’s past and

are special to New England and to the centuries preceding the automobile. It is critical to preserve and enhance this working New England village to help maintain the town's quality of life and to pass it on to future generations.

Objectives for the Goffstown Village Districts should be to:

- preserve historic sites and older Village structures;
- foster economic development;
- promote high quality, pedestrian scaled in-fill or redevelopment of underused or vacated properties;
- provide village-scaled solutions for traffic and parking problems; and
- enhance/preserve existing residential neighborhoods and add new neighborhoods, as appropriate

Benefits of zoning changes within the Goffstown Village Commercial District

- Expansion of home occupation uses, as expressed in Action Item 2, is an optimal use within the District for lots currently zoned residential. This approach provides the following benefits.
 - a) It helps to retain the historic, rural-residential character of the Village.
 - b) It preserves neighborhoods within walking distance of the Village, a condition which contributes to the area's vitality.
 - c) While promoting economic activity, it will help to reduce traffic and address other concerns which are cited in the Transportation chapter.
 - d) It provides an economic incentive for owning and maintaining these houses as residences, thus making strip commercial development a less likely outcome. One of the Village's greatest assets is the lack of undesirable types of commercial development and it is critical to retain this characteristic.
- A key part of Village revitalization is to increase the economic value and potential uses of the land in the center of the Village (particularly near the bridge and north of Main Street). Zoning in the Goffstown Village District would permit either commercial and low-impact light industrial uses along with mixed use development within well defined boundaries, as well as other areas where more flexible uses would be permitted.
- The creation of this zone, combined with the improved traffic management, will not in and of themselves foster economic development. As a result, these changes would need to be done in conjunction with town wide efforts to attract new businesses to the Village and retain/expand existing businesses.
- The residential lots on Church Street, White Street, and Clinton Street are under pressure to be developed commercially. At present, this area is recommended for consideration as an incubator area for home

occupations, where the combined use of buildings as residences and businesses would be more appropriate for the high traffic volumes and the proximity to Town services. This area must be evaluated carefully before any action is taken.

- Since rezoning of residential areas in the Village area will be a contentious issue, any such rezoning should be part of the Village District planning process, which should be undertaken in conjunction with the Main Streets and historic preservation programs (as recommended in Recommendation 2 under Objective 1B, and in the Economic Development chapter). There is also a recommendation later in this chapter which calls for the formation of a committee to assist the Planning Board in addressing these types of issues.

Traffic issues related to the proposed Village Districts

Traffic management as a tool in land use planning raises some major issues related to the creation of a Village District. The expanded vehicular circulation system for Goffstown Village proposed in the Transportation chapter should be implemented by the Town with two-way through traffic encouraged not only on parts of Main/North Mast, but also on Church and Depot Streets. A major element of the recommended circulation plan is to create a more interconnected street and parking lot network. An interconnected street network provides alternate routes for local traffic to circulate with the Village.

Furthermore, the Transportation chapter emphasizes that parking and pedestrian travel should be part of any Village improvement plan. Successful revitalization of Goffstown Village will have to include improvements for parking and the safe circulation of pedestrians.

Action LU 13. Evaluate opportunities to create an expanded traditional neighborhood development zoning district to foster a more unified and expanded Grasmere Village that respects the historic integrity of the Village.

The potential to expand the district should be based on development suitability, land ownership patterns and land availability, traffic capacity, and compatibility with the historic district and properties. Linkages to opportunities for development in the vicinity of Henry Bridge Road/Route 114/County land should be emphasized. Historically, this area has been part of Grasmere Village.

Action LU 14. Develop a comprehensive planning approach to address the following concerns about residential development in what is currently the Agricultural zone district.

- a) The importance of rural conditions and a working landscape (forest, farms, etc) to the identity of Goffstown and its quality of life.
- b) Compatibility of uses, such as:

- The need for residential services (e.g. bus stops, public spaces, including play areas) in an agricultural area;
 - New high quality roads which feed onto old roads that may not handle volume adequately; and
 - Permitted uses, such as gravel pits and trucking, near residential areas with pedestrians, including young children.
- c) The fair allocation of Town costs related to the provision of services and infrastructure that are created by residential development.
- d) The availability and quality of water in the Ag Zone District.
- e) Develop a planning process to rationalize the current Agricultural Zone to reflect current uses and the future vision for land use. This may include creating additional residential zoning districts (e.g., Clustered Residential, Neighborhood Center Overlays) to direct where future development makes sense and strengthen the existing Agricultural Zone district to protect valuable natural resources and rural character. A critical element of this process is the recognition of important natural resources and developing the appropriate tools and methods to protect them.

Rationale - The rural character and agricultural land uses of Goffstown are key to its identity, and therefore, such uses should be promoted. Most of the recent developments in Goffstown have consisted of the approval of residential subdivisions in the Agricultural Zone. However, there are no planning tools in place to guide development to address the concerns mentioned above. As this affects the largest portion of developable land in Town, this issue is of high priority.

Action LU 15. Protect the remaining rural, vegetated areas along Route 114 outside of the village areas by establishing an adequate development setback from the right-of-way.



Principle #3. Incorporate a mix of uses to provide a variety of housing, employment, shopping, services, economic, and social opportunities in close proximity to each other for all members of the community.

Action LU 16. Promote more mixing of housing types to be included in appropriate areas of the Town through zoning and other incentives.

Action LU 17. Allow and encourage a greater use of mixed use development, which can help increase the demand for local retail and services, while also broadening the types of housing in the Town, which can diversify the available economic base of the community.

- Encourage infill and redevelopment of existing commercial and industrial areas with mixed use development where Town services already exist.

- Encourage the appropriate reuse of existing building stock to maintain existing community forms and preserve open space in the Town.
- Establish building footprint and/or square footage limitations to manage 'big-box' style commercial development.

Action LU 18. The Planning Board should consider a flexible zone concept which allows for multiple uses in a given area if they meet performance criteria. This would expand the concept inherent in the Commercial-Industrial Flex Zone adopted in March 2005.

Rationale - In certain instances a particular lot may be appropriate for an unanticipated use, where sufficient conditions of approval could be applied to meet the concerns of surrounding owners. This concept should be incorporated, as appropriate, into ordinances. Specific performance criteria (noise, emissions, traffic, light, vibrations, etc) should be established to ensure compatibility of use.

Action LU 19. The Town should create a mechanism to solicit and, if appropriate, approve innovative development proposals from the private sector.

Rationale - Due to the variety of conditions which may arise on individual parcels proposed for development, the Town may be able to further its planning goals by approving projects which present innovative ideas that may not conform to a rigid regulatory structure. The Planning Board should have the flexibility to act on these unanticipated opportunities.



Principle #4. Preserve the working landscape by sustaining farm and forest land and other rural resource lands to maintain contiguous tracts of open land to minimize land use conflicts.

Action LU 20. Inventory active farmland, prime farmland soils, valuable forestland and other important natural resources so adequate protections are afforded them. Survey current farm and forestry operators.

Rationale. The vast majority of the large lot residential development over the past thirty years has occurred in the Agricultural Zone District. It is important to be more pro-active. The current Agricultural Zone District does not make these important distinctions.

Action LU 21. The Town should encourage the conservation of land in larger tracts, for continued use as farmland, unfragmented wildlife habitat, and forestland. The Town should also promote land conservation through the use of tax incentives and/or zoning regulations.

One method might involve publicizing (through tax bill inserts) the requirements and benefits of "current use" for parcels that qualify for a reduced tax amount under this state law. Accepting development rights, granting discretionary easements, and supporting private conservation

efforts, are other tools which should be considered by the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board to achieve this goal.

Land which remains in an undeveloped state is less costly from the perspective of providing municipal services. Undeveloped land is the most desirable from a municipal expenditure point of view, in that there is little impact on roads, police, fire, and schools, while there is a significant positive impact on revenues⁴. Owners of subdividable parcels often sell their land to a developer or develop the land themselves because they cannot afford the taxes. Therefore, lowering the effective tax levy on these parcels could help to keep some parcels undeveloped. Furthermore, the rural feel of agricultural land uses, which might involve keeping a few farm animals, operating a Christmas tree lot, or living near a working field, are key to the identity of Goffstown and should be encouraged.

Action LU 22. The Planning Board should formalize collaboration with the Conservation Commission to better coordinate land use/development review decisions as open space is created as part of the Open Space Development subdivision review process (or subsequent process).

The purpose of this collaboration would be to ensure that as Open Space Development subdivision applications are being considered by the Planning Board that formal input is sought and received by the Conservation Commission. The goal is to create more functional land that is being protected/reserved for open space, natural resource or maintaining forestry/farming/agricultural soils

(See also Action Item 23 below.)

Action LU 23. Form a Working Group or Task Force made up of representatives of the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Town Staff, Select Board and real estate/development interests to report to the Planning Board on the effectiveness of the Open Space Development (OSD) overlay district and recommend appropriate changes, if any.

Specific questions/items to be addressed include, but are not limited to:

- Is the ordinance accomplishing its objectives as stated in the Zoning Ordinance?
- Are the minimum acreages for the requirement of OSD the correct thresholds?
- Address the connectivity, quality and functionality of natural resources of preserved open space in relation to adjacent preserved open space or adjacent undeveloped lands.
- Address the pedestrian, pathway, and street network connectivity requirements of OSD to adjacent existing development or future anticipated development.

⁴See *Does Open Space Pay?*, UNH Cooperative Extension, 1995
Land Use



Action Principle #5. Provide choices and safety in transportation to create livable, walkable communities that increase accessibility for people of all ages, whether on foot, bicycle, or on motor vehicles.

Action LU 24. Implement land use strategies that are complementary to accomplishing transportation goals.

These strategies include (and are more fully described within this Chapter):

- o Village-centered growth management strategies to reduce traffic growth impacts on outlying town roads;
- o Nodal development along corridors to manage growth areas, reduce the incidence of curb cuts, and increase the opportunity for transit success in the future;
- o Connectivity of streets between development and interconnections between adjacent parcels to enhance pedestrian accessibility
- o Neighborhood commercial centers to introduce small-scale retail and service businesses in residential areas to allow shorter vehicle trips or allow walking/biking trips to meet some daily shopping and service needs;
- o Ensure that new development, infill and redevelopment is pedestrian-scaled to reduce automobile dependency and increase the use of alternative modes;
- o Provision of sidewalks and other pedestrian-scaled.

(See **Transportation, Appendix F**, for more Transportation actions and strategies.)



Principle #6. Protect environmental quality by minimizing impacts from human activities and planning for and maintaining natural areas and natural resources that contribute to the health and quality of life of Goffstown and its residents.

Action LU 25. Modify the subdivision regulations to promote the preservation of historic houses and other structures, as well as the scenic character of farms, roads, and adjacent land.

Action LU 26. Use the scenic road designation to encourage road work and development to blend in with existing scenic conditions. The Town should consider scenic road designation for Tipping Rock Road, Ferson Road, Mountain Road, Grady Hill Road, and Black Brook Road.

Existing scenic roads are 1) Shirley Hill Road, 2) Merrill Road, and 3) Ferson Road.

Action LU 27. Develop and implement a Water Resources Management Plan.

This plan should include:

- a) a ground water protection plan;
- b) delineation of a Ground Water Resource Conservation District; and
- c) delineation of a Watershed Overlay District.

Rationale - Although the Town has made a lot of progress in this area over the past 30 years, water quantity and quality could become a problem in the future if not addressed now. Goffstown, unlike neighboring towns, does not perform inspections of septic system installation or operation. Also, enforcement and inspection of development in wetlands and floodplains, performed by federal and State governments agencies, may not now be adequate and may reduced in the future. The Town should not wait until water is polluted, or is in short supply, before addressing this critical resource. Refer to the Recreation, Conservation and Preservation chapter for more information on this issue.

Action LU 28. Survey and inventory the Town's natural resources to complement the recent mapping of Prime Wetlands in Goffstown.

Action LU 29. Continue to protect wetlands and areas of steep slope. A review should be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of current Town regulations in this area.

Action LU 30. Aggressively pursue funding for municipal land acquisition. Components of this process should include the following:

- a) Place one half of the Current Use Penalty in the Capital Improvement Program to provide funds for specific open space acquisition projects.
- b) Target a portion of the Current Use change-of-use fee to be reserved for town land acquisition purposes.
- c) Allow for payment of land in-lieu-of fees or taxes, in cases where the town can actually use the land for a specific purpose. The Town must be in the position to determine whether it wants land or fees.

Rationale - Goffstown does not presently have enough recreational facilities nor will it have enough in the future as population increases, unless the town acquires the necessary land. Due to the town's hilly terrain there is not much land appropriate for active recreation park development. Therefore, it is important to acquire the most suitable parcels before they are used for other purposes, and at a lower price than may be encountered in the future. The areas of the Town that have grown the fastest (e.g., the northeast corner of the Town) are underserved by recreation facilities. Impact fees are now in place for schools and parks, including land and facilities.



Principle #7. Involve the community in planning and implementation to ensure that development retains and enhances the sense of place, traditions, goals, and values of the local community.

Action LU 31. Initiate a community planning process to identify opportunities to create a new village(s), hamlets, and new neighborhood commercial centers within the Town. This should be done in conjunction with the initiation of a 'Planning Districts' approach to planning in Goffstown. Perform a Buildout analysis of the community to assess the implications of the current zoning ordinance and development regulations.

The Route 114/114A Corridor Management Plan (2003 – see Appendix A) identifies the rationale and potential locations for a new village center and neighborhood commercial centers along Route 114. This examination for opportunities should be deliberately expanded Town-wide in scope. This must be done collaboratively with the residents and with their ‘buy-in’ with a specific set of objectives to be achieved and benefits (quality of life, property tax, cost of providing municipal services).

Opportunities for new village centers are likely limited due to their scale and level of investment but hamlets and neighborhood centers offer the potential to create areas of mixed use development including housing and small-scale retail/commercial business (convenience store, video store, small offices) to meet housing needs, the services needs of immediate neighborhood residents, and to create a focal point for the area.

Within the Route 114/114A Corridor Management Study, an opportunity for a new village center is identified in the vicinity of the intersection of Route 114/114A. This new village center, as suggested, would sensitively build upon the strategic transportation location, the existing neighborhood in the area, and the currently County-owned land along Route 114 north and west of Route 114A.

Opportunities for new, small-scaled neighborhood commercial centers were identified at Route 114 intersections at Wallace Road, Normand Road and Henry Bridge Road. Within other parts of the Town, there are also likely opportunities. (See Figure 2, Conceptual Future Land Use Map, page IB-32.)

A helpful technique is to perform a Buildout analysis for the community. A Buildout analysis looks at current zoning, and available developable land and forecasts how much additional residential and commercial development may occur. This level of development is then translated into potential positive and negative impacts upon the community – for instance, traffic, tax revenues, community services, infrastructure, police and fire, and school capacity. This analysis helps a community make informed choices and decisions regarding its land use future.

Action LU 32. Include the Goffstown Historic Commission in the process by which the Technical Review Committee reviews proposed site plans in an effort to preserve and enhance the historic qualities of the Town.

Action LU 33. The Planning Board and Planning Office should report annually in a public forum to townspeople regarding:

- a) progress in implementing master plan recommendations, including economic development initiatives; and
- a) events, data, or trends which affect land use planning and the development of the town.

Rationale - This is a way to initiate dialogue aimed at keeping the intent of this master plan’s recommendations alive until the time of the next master plan update.



Principle #8. Manage growth locally in the Goffstown and New Hampshire tradition, but work with neighboring towns, Hillsborough County, and regional and State agencies to achieve common goals and address common problems more effectively.

Action LU 34. Invite representatives from Hillsborough County (staff and elected officials) to participate in a collaborative visioning/planning process regarding innovative, tax producing and public access uses for County land within Goffstown.

Action LU 35. Actively participate in and leverage the planning resources provided by the NH Department of Transportation's CTAP program as part of the mitigation package for the widening of I-93.

The CTAP program is an unprecedented opportunity to engage and coordinate with Goffstown's neighbors on regional land use/growth management, transportation (addressing regional bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and traffic issues), and conservation and natural resource issues.

Action LU 36. Continue the coordinated implementation of the Town's Geographic Information System (GIS) which contains all factors relevant to land use planning. These maps and databases should be updated, at a minimum, on an annual basis.

Rationale - Good maps are essential in the daily work of town planners. Over the past two years, the Town has made great strides in acquiring, managing and storing geographic information that will be invaluable to making sound land use planning decisions.