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# Land Use

Many factors affect a community's land use development patterns and characteristics. Therefore, land use planning in Goffstown must be conducted in conjunction with the other aspects of the master plan.

The findings and recommendations contained in other chapters of the 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 developed throughout the entire master plan. In addition, future land use recommendations are shaped to a great extent, by the existing land use patterns in town, as well as the natural characteristics of the land.

Five major factors governed the development of this land use plan. They are: 1) community 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.

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## 1 Existing Land Use

### A. *Land Use Development - Historical Context*



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 this 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 constitutes 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. In the Agricultural Zone, north and south of the Piscataquog River, non-agricultural development has occurred 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. This was in turn followed 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 was not 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 the Village, Pinardville, and some of the neighborhoods along the river) to the Manchester sewer system. This has increased the amount of development currently served by municipal sewer. It has 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 recent expansion of the size of the student body and the facilities at St. Anselm College, which will place 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 have affected development in Goffstown thus far in the 1990s and which are expected to continue for some time. These include the following items.

- The general pressure to build more housing and the tendency toward building single family homes.
- Opening up new areas of hilly, forested land to development which are beyond access to town water and sewer.
- The juxtaposition of residential uses with other permitted uses, such as gravel pits and animal husbandry, in the Agricultural zone.
- The fact that new single family housing units typically contribute an insufficient amount of property taxes needed to support the municipal services which they require.
- Many of the newer housing units are being constructed in remote portions of the town, which will create a greater burden on the town with regard to providing municipal services.
- Increasing traffic counts and pressure to develop land on Mast Road and the Back Road for commercial strip-type businesses.

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.

## ***B. Current Land Use Patterns and Trends***

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 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 this plan illustrates the current 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 illustrates how much Goffstown has changed over the last 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 radically 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 Pinarville have not changed much since 1966. However, commercialization of Mast Road 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.

## 2 Natural Constraints

A 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.

<b>Map Color*</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
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
<b>TOTAL ACRES IN TOWN</b>		<b>23,680</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Striped	Total excessive slope of various categories	13,715	58.0

\* Color as shown on the 1967 Soil Suitability Map.

Table 1 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 areas<sup>1</sup>. This data illustrates the fact that a significant portion of Goffstown is not suitable for the development of buildings and roads.

### 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

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.

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

<sup>1</sup>For 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 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 man-made), 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.

- The industrial/commercial area along Mast Road, west of the women's prison, is not being used to the extent it could be.
- Traffic is a problem, as is the lack of adequate parking and sidewalks in Pinardville and the Village.
- 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.
- There is existing signage 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.

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## 4 Summary and Recommendations

Goffstown is now 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 prior master plans for Goffstown (in 1967, 1981, and 1987) may have viewed the town as mostly undeveloped, the sentiment that there is an endless supply of land for development 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 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 recommendations take into account all of the issues which have been addressed thus far in this chapter. Each recommendation is presented under the corresponding land use goal which it addresses.

In reviewing these recommendations it is important to consider two points. First, because some of the recommendations made in other chapters of this master plan have land use 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 time after the year 2000. 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.

Goal 1 - Preserve the historic and rural character of Goffstown, including historic places, farms, forests, and scenic views.

*Objective 1A - Promote the enactment of Goal 1 through use of the town's zoning ordinance and subdivision and site plan approval processes.*

#### **Recommendation 1**

Allow for expanded use of home occupations throughout Goffstown, while ensuring that such uses will not affect the character of an area in which they are permitted. The town should also consider permitting more types of home occupations on lots which are larger than the minimum acreage required by the zoning ordinance.

Rationale - Much of the town's developed land area is used for housing and more people are earning income in 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. This action would further the two goals listed below in the following ways.

#### **Preservation of historic and rural assets goal**

- Affordability of home ownership would be increased
- Reduced pressure to subdivide land where home occupations are operating
- Neighborhoods would be preserved

### Transportation and Economic Development goals

- This recommendation would affect houses throughout Goffstown, not just in a single area
- More economic activity in town would increase tax revenue
- Business related traffic would be dispersed throughout town as opposed to concentrated in certain areas

### **Recommendation 2**

Since land which remains in an undeveloped state is less costly from the perspective of providing municipal services, the town should encourage the conservation of land in larger tracts, for use as farmland and forests. The town should also promote land conservation through the use of tax incentives 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.

Rationale - 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 revenues<sup>2</sup>. Owners of subdividable parcels often sell their land to a developer 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 chickens, operating a Christmas tree lot, or living near a working field, are key to the identity of Goffstown and should be encouraged.

### **Recommendation 3**

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

### **Recommendation 4**

In order to ensure that valuable land be preserved in the future as open space, and/or to make open space available for use as playing fields and recreation space, change the formula in the Open Space Development Ordinance for determining the size of an open space easement (as recommended in the Housing chapter).

### **Recommendation 5**

In an effort to preserve the historic qualities of the town, the Goffstown Historic Commission should be included in the process by which the Technical Review Committee reviews proposed site plans.

<sup>2</sup>See *Does Open Space Pay?*, UNH Cooperative Extension, 1995

**Recommendation 6**

Create a historic district(s) for those areas in town which have been recommended for such status by the Historic Commission and as discussed in the Recreation, Conservation and Preservation chapter of this plan.

**Recommendation 7**

Use the scenic road designation to encourage road work and development to blend 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.

**Recommendation 8**

Encourage new commercial development to be architecturally compatible with the New England style.

*Objective 1B - Promote the preservation goal through the creation of overlay districts in the Pinardville and Village areas.*

**Recommendation 1**

Create a Pinardville Overlay District. The general boundaries of this district would be the Manchester city line to the east, the Bedford town line to the south, the Piscataquog River to the north, and the Route 114 by-pass and Danis Park Road to the west.

Rationale - Pinardville is a vibrant neighborhood where in recent decades, commercial development has brought related 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.

St. Anselm 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.

Objectives/criteria for the Pinardville Overlay District should be to:

- foster economic development;
- 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; 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.; 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.

### **Recommendation 2**

Create a Village Overlay District. The town should work with the State Division of Historic Preservation, the New Hampshire Main Streets program, and the national Main Streets program, in order to: inventory the resources of this area and assess its possibilities; learn what has worked elsewhere; and develop an integrated set of recommendations for the Village area. Representatives from Village businesses and area residents should participate in this process.

Rationale - Perhaps the key historic aspect of Goffstown is the Village area. The 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 "the Village". The layout and built environment of the Village embodies elements that make Goffstown a special place to live. Important aspects of this area include: the converging 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 roads. 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 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 Village Overlay District should be to:

- preserve historic sites and Village structures;
- foster economic development;
- provide solutions for traffic and parking problems; and
- preserve residential neighborhoods.

### **Benefits of zoning changes within the Village Overlay District**

1. Expansion of home occupation uses, as expressed in Recommendation 1 under Objective 1A, 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.
2. 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 Village Overlay District would permit either commercial or industrial uses within well defined boundaries, as well as other areas where more flexible uses would be permitted.
  3. The creation of this zone, combined with the rerouting of traffic 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 bring new businesses to the Village.
  4. The residential lots on Church Street, White Street, and Clinton Street are under pressure to be developed commercially, and that pressure will increase with the rerouting of traffic. 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.
  5. Since rezoning of residential areas in the Village area will be a contentious issue, *any such rezoning should be part of the Village Overlay 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 Overlay District

Traffic control as a tool in land use planning raises some major issues related to the creation of a Village Overlay District. *The rerouting plan proposed in the Transportation chapter should be implemented by the town.* If it is not, then, at a minimum, Phase I of this proposal should be implemented, with one-way traffic on parts of Main/North Mast, Church and Depot Streets. If the traffic on Route 114 is not rerouted,

then traffic signals will be installed at great cost, both financially and aesthetically.

*Rerouting traffic is the best option the town has to deal with this traffic issue from a long-term perspective. The Planning Board should consider this option very seriously.*

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

From an economic development point of view, Goffstown's advantage in the 21st century marketplace will not be related to its ability to be cost competitive, but to the *quality of life* that the town offers<sup>3</sup>. A Village Overlay District will define where economic development should occur and how it should be regulated. It can also define desirable land uses and a vision for the future.

The challenges and opportunities in Pinardville are different from those in the 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).

### ***Objective 1C - Promote preservation goal through economic means***

#### **Recommendation 1**

Promote commercial uses of land in Goffstown. Encourage businesses to locate in town through the use of financial or other incentives, if feasible and cost-effective.

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 Goffstown<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Recommendation 2**

Concentrate new commercial and industrial development in one portion of the town, and provide flexible zoning and development standards as recommended in the Economic Development chapter.

<sup>3</sup> See *An Agenda for Continued Economic Opportunity in New Hampshire*, BIA, October 1996.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

Rationale - This commercial/industrial area should have large visual buffers between it and adjoining residential areas, as well as controlled vehicular access to better manage traffic flow and congestion. The area recommended for this type of development is along Route 114, west of the Police Station and east of the Hydro Quebec (or Glen Lake) dam. This is a large, undeveloped and hilly area, which would have to be thoroughly evaluated before any action could be taken. From a traffic perspective, commercial development within this area would create less traffic than residential development would. Also, this area is near the Route 114 connector which would make it more attractive for the location of businesses.

### **Recommendation 3**

Set aside money in the Capital Improvement Program to buy land easements, or fee simple title to the land itself, along scenic roads.

Rationale - The acquisition of land or easements is one method that could be used to preserve the rural and historic character of the town. Once the key parcels in town with special characteristics are developed, it will be virtually impossible to regain that character which makes Goffstown special.

Goal 2 - Develop an orderly land use pattern which includes a balance of residential, commercial, industrial, conservation, and public uses.

The current pattern of development in Goffstown is orderly but the mix of uses is not optimal. The town should employ more tools and mobilize more people to help improve the mix of land uses.

### **Recommendation 1**

The Planning Board should immediately appoint a committee to assist in developing an overall plan for the development of the town. The committee should set priorities wholly consistent with the master plan and move forward on implementation of the plan. Some of these implementation activities should include the development of details for the Pinardville and Village Overlay Districts, the design of flexible development regulations, as well as potential regulations for rural residential areas.

The committee should develop a complete zoning plan in accordance with recommendations from this master plan. It should be based on Goffstown's character in 1997 and designed to meet the town's needs in the 21st century.

Finally, the committee should look at an adjustment in residential lot size requirements and permitted uses for undeveloped land. It should also develop the criteria for how expanded home occupations will operate.

Rationale - If such important decisions are approached on a piecemeal basis, it may be too easy for affected parties to defeat any one of the new proposals. But, if a balanced and integrated package of proposals is presented, which represents the best interests of the town as a whole, it is much more likely to be approved. Furthermore, creation of this committee would help to reduce the work load of the volunteer members of the Planning Board.

**Recommendation 2**

Develop a comprehensive planning approach to address the following concerns about residential development in the Agricultural Zone.

- a) The importance of rural conditions and agricultural pursuits 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, lighting, 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 Zone.

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. A part of the comprehensive approach might be a sub-zone (perhaps called Rural Residential), with specific requirements that would be triggered whenever a minimum number of lots was involved in a new development in the Agricultural Zone.

**Recommendation 3**

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

- progress in implementing master plan recommendations, including economic development initiatives; and
- 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.

**Recommendation 4**

Prepare maps for the town in a computerized form which contain all factors relevant to land use planning. These maps should be updated, at a minimum, on an annual basis.

Rationale - Good maps are extremely useful in the daily work of town planners. Computerization makes map manipulation and distribution much easier. Computerization also makes map and data storage more reliable and may have prevented the apparent loss of the 1981 Development Constraints Map. The disappearance of this map demonstrates that the town needs better ways to prepare and preserve the output of its planning efforts.

Goal 3 - Continue to protect the sensitive areas of town, including floodplains, wetlands, poorly drained soils, areas of steep slope, and drinking water supplies.

**Recommendation 1**

Develop and implement a Water Resources Management Plan. This plan should include : 1) a ground water protection plan; 2) delineation of a ground water Resource Conservation District; and 3) 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.

**Recommendation 2**

Survey and inventory the town's natural resources, including mapping of prime wetlands in Goffstown.

**Recommendation 3**

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.

Goal 4 - Plan for expanded infrastructure in concert with population growth.

**Recommendation 1**

The Planning Board should work with the Selectmen to create a land acquisition committee. This committee would report to the Selectmen.

The function of this group would be to: 1) evaluate town-owned parcels; 2) identify land needs; 3) establish a reserve fund via the CIP process for land acquisition; 4) identify which parcels the town should acquire and develop a schedule for obtaining them; 5) establish equivalents for land and money in the case of land transfers to the town; 6) establish a more appropriate and sophisticated system for collecting off-site impact fees related to land acquisition and preservation; 7) coordinate the town's land acquisition

program with economic development efforts in order to assist, where possible, private land needs for retail, flex-development, or other non-residential development activities.

Rationale - Land use data indicate that although many housing developments have been approved during the past years, the town has not identified where, and how much, land it needs for various public uses. This master plan begins the work, but those with on-going responsibility in this area need to have a process which will extend beyond the completion of this plan – one which can be incorporated into the existing government process of capital expenditure planning.

Goal 5 - Provide land for recreational use, including park land and playing fields.

### **Recommendation 1**

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

1. Place \$40,000 annually in the Capital Improvement Program to provide funds for land acquisition.
2. Target a portion of the Current Use change-of-use fee to be reserved for town land acquisition purposes.
3. 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. For example, a residential development might be permitted to build at a higher density than typically allowed by zoning if land is given to the town for a school or park. However, the overall density of development of the parcel(s) should not be increased.
4. The town should consider implementing an impact fee system to fund off-site improvements, such as schools and parks, including the purchase of land.

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 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.

### **Recommendation 2**

The town should expand the park land area in Pinardville, including expanding Roy Park and creating more parking space there. The town should also develop a Lynchville Park site.

Rationale - Pinardville area residents could use more and/or improved park areas. Public-private partnerships could be one method employed to help

realize these objectives. Refer to the Recreation, Conservation and Preservation chapter for more specifics on this issue.

### **Recommendation 3**

Retain town owned land for public use in the future, including the old landfill site in Pinardville and the parcel north of the Hydro Quebec dam (Assessor's Map 5, Lot 14).

Rationale - The town owns some undeveloped parcels which should be retained because they might be useful in meeting some of the community's needs. Refer to the Recreation, Conservation and Preservation chapter for a further description of the above-mentioned parcel.

Goal 6 - Allow flexibility within the town's regulatory structure for approving innovative land use ideas.

### **Recommendation 1**

The Planning Board should consider a flexible zone concept which allows for multiple uses in a given area.

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.

### **Recommendation 2**

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.

### **Recommendation 3**

Consider the use of connecting roadways or driveways which would allow vehicular access between adjoining land uses in residential, commercial, or industrial zones.

Rationale - This would allow access to multiple parcels without requiring vehicles to return to a public roadway, thereby reducing traffic and curb cuts.

### **Recommendation 4**

Developers should have the choice of paying significantly higher impact fees if they do not want to follow certain town recommendations.

Rationale - This allows for choice, and it puts a price on various aspects of development that might otherwise be given away for nothing. Creating such an impact fee structure is complex and might be delegated to the land acquisition committee described in Recommendation 1 under Goal 4.