

TOWN OF EPSOM

New Hampshire



MASTER PLAN 2010

Adopted date October____, 2010

TOWN OF EPSOM MASTER PLAN

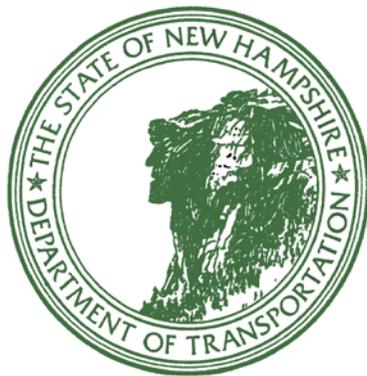
ADOPTED

October____, 2010

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Epsom Planning Board

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In accordance with New Hampshire RSA 674:4, Master Plan Adoption and Amendment, and New Hampshire RSA 675:6, Method of Adoption, the Epsom Planning Board, having held a duly noticed public hearing on _____ hereby adopts and certifies this Master Plan Update, dated _____.

Chair

Vice Chair

Member

Member

Member

Member

Member

Member

Selectmen's Representative

This document was received and recorded by the Town Clerk on _____.

Signed: _____
Epsom Town Clerk

Seal:

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TOWN OF EPSOM 2010 MASTER PLAN UPDATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A master plan is a living document that articulates the vision, desires, and concerns of a community, and provides recommendations on how to maintain or improve the features of a community. This plan is intended to serve in conjunction with the 2001 Master Plan as a blueprint for all future activities of Epsom, including future economic development efforts, land use regulations, and environmental and historic preservation efforts as well as development of affordable housing stock and expansion of community facilities and services for the next five to ten years.

A master plan can be a powerful tool that is used to shape a community by giving direction to appointed and elected officials. However, the true power of the document is derived from the citizens, as they will ultimately be the voice that approves the staffing, funding, and regulatory alternatives and strategies identified by this plan.

As the 2001 Master Plan was being written, it became evident that Epsom was at a crossroads in its history, and this continues to be the case in 2007. As incremental growth creeps from southern portions of the State, and as Concord continues to evolve and expand as a regional source of employment, Epsom will continue to grow and face new challenges and issues. Those who developed this plan did their best to plan for such changes and provide strategies to deal with current and future challenges. It is the resolve of the Planning Board to faithfully and aggressively pursue the goals, objectives, and recommendations included in this document.

This Plan is a Strategic Update of the 2001 Master Plan

The 2010 Epsom Master Plan Update was written to revise certain chapters of the 2001 Master Plan in light of new Census, traffic, and economic data. It is intended to be a strategic and specific update which will be used in concert with the 2001 Master Plan. The chapters that were updated were Goals and Objectives, Population, Economic Development, Transportation, and Land Use. These specific chapters also deal with planning areas that tend to change more noticeably from one year to the next, and as a result, fresh information would best serve the Town of Epsom in dealing with fundamental issues in real time (traffic counts for example can change significantly over a few years as opposed to say natural resources inventories). In short, this update seeks to give Epsom decision makers the most current information to base decisions on regarding some of Epsom's most important areas – population, economic, and transportation.

The population, economics, and transportation chapters will look at what has been implemented since the 2001 Master Plan was adopted. Some relevant recommendations were retained and others were since added. Lastly, a community visioning session and survey were utilized in an effort to see if the community's perspective on various issues has changed since 2001. It appears that much of what the 2001 Master Plan visioning sessions and survey discovered about residents, remains, for the most part, unchanged in 2007. The overall intent was to put a current perspective on the 2001 Master Plan in light of new information in key areas. Some of the highlights for this strategic update include:

- Goals and Objectives:

The Goals and objectives chapter considers which goals and objectives have been met between 2001 and 2010. Based upon what has done since 2001, new goals and objectives were formulated to reflect the need to respond to new challenges. Some of the new goals and objectives include encouraging job development in Epsom, expanding the role of the Economic Development Committee, considering rezoning in some areas, and establishing a Roadway Improvement Plan. These and more goals and objectives are discussed further in the Goals and Objectives chapter.

- Population Chapter:

The 2001 Master Plan was based upon data prior to the 2000 Census (the 1990 US Census, projections for 2000, and other information through 1999). As a result, the current update is based upon the new data as well as new projections. Population trends through 2025 for example, are based upon the 2003 population projections and projected only as far as 2010.

As in the 2001 Master Plan, the Population Chapter considers population trends in Epsom as compared to neighboring communities as well as the region. Population projections, population densities, diversity, gender, income, education, employment, and commuting information, among others, are part of the updated Population Chapter. The 2007 visioning session and survey responses seem to be similar to what was voiced in 2001.

- Economics Chapter:

The Economic Chapter considers updated economic data in its analysis as well as new survey and visioning session information. Some differences can be found in the number of “covered” businesses in town, employment composite trends through 2005, and unemployment trends through 2005. Sections in the Economic Chapter include items such as historic economic trends, number of businesses, number of jobs, unemployment, wage changes, US inflation information, a list of the largest employers, and economic development strategies, among other information.

- Transportation Chapter:

Like the Population and Economics Chapters, the Transportation chapter seeks to use current data and information to update the 2001 Master Plan. For the 2010 Master Plan, Classification Road Mileage is through 2003, traffic counts are through 2006, and crash data is through 2005, as opposed to the 2001 Master Plan where these same items were based upon 1998, 1998, and 1999 data respectively. The deficient bridge data has been updated in light of the fact that 2 of the 4 deficient bridges indicated in 2001 have been addressed.

The Transportation Chapter includes survey and visioning session information regarding transportation issues such as functional highway classification, mileage of road in Epsom,

highway capacity, traffic counts, crashes, dangerous intersections, deficient bridges, access management, and the State of NH 10 year plan, and other transportation items of interest.

- Land Use Chapter

The Land Use Chapter, with the guidance from the visioning and survey information, updates the 2001 Land Use chapter in light of zoning and land use changes from 2001 as well as changes in census data. For 2010, the zoning changes since 2001 were evaluated Subdivision and Site Plan analyzed activity since 1998, and building permits enumerated since 2001.

Chapter I

VISION: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Introduction

Establishing a set of community goals is an important task that requires considerable public input and debate. The purpose of this chapter is to provide broad policy goals that will assist in the development of more issue specific recommendations and courses of action for each chapter of the Master Plan update. As this is an update from the 2001 Master Plan, much of the visioning criteria was derived from the 2001 Master Plan. For this update, a community survey and visioning session were completed to determine if public attitudes have changed from between 2001 and today. Much of what was outlined in the 2001 Master Plan's Goals and Objective's chapter was echoed in the 2007 survey and visioning session.

Overview of 2001 Goals

Community goals are influenced by a variety of factors including growth rates, the local and regional economy, as well as community facility needs. Community goals change overtime.

In order to provide continuity between master plan updates, a review of the goals of the 2001 Master Plan are provided below:

- To continue and expand opportunities for the development of safe, sanitary, and affordable housing consistent with Epsom's unique rural character for all households.
- To better understand the existing and future affordable housing needs of Epsom's residents, and to take action to meet those needs.
- Develop zoning amendments to meet affordable housing needs.
- To adopt and faithfully enforce building codes to ensure the development of safe, sanitary housing.
- Epsom should develop land use strategies to provide for development of all types of housing stock and ensure that Epsom grows in proportion to the central New Hampshire region and neighboring communities.
- Epsom should explore the feasibility of cluster developments.
- In order to maintain a safe and efficient regional road network, Epsom should work closely with the NHDOT and CNHRPC to develop a long-term strategy for maintaining and improving Route 4 and Route 28.
- Epsom should develop a comprehensive, long-term road and bridge improvement plan.
- Epsom should identify dangerous locations for pedestrians and install sidewalks and other needed infrastructure.
- Epsom should identify locations for the development a pathways system to connect residential areas.
- To secure transportation related mitigation when warranted by new development.
- Epsom should control development along Route 4 and Route 28.
- To expand the Town's delivery of recreational opportunities.

- The Town should evaluate which recreational facilities are most needed, and take action to hire personnel or purchase equipment to meet those recreational needs.
- To maintain and improve existing recreational facilities.
- To encourage the development of private recreational establishments.
- To develop more hiking and multipurpose trails.
- Develop a joint Town / School recreation program for school aged children during school vacations.
- Identify specific recreational facilities or services that should be funded (partially or completely) by user fees.
- Develop a comprehensive, long-term Capital Improvement Plan, that details capital needs for all municipal departments and the Epsom school district.
- To establish service standards for town and school facilities and departments based on population.
- To make investments in upgrading specific capital items.
- To identify and implement a solution to the Town Offices space needs.
- To identify and implement a solution to the Library space needs.
- To pursue any alternative methods of funding new community infrastructure and services.
- To monitor the growth rate of Epsom as compared to abutting communities and the central New Hampshire region, and institute growth management policies as necessary.
- To ensure reasonable compliance with the new Affordable Housing legislation.
- To develop an autonomous commercial and industrial zone that would be separate from residential uses.
- To develop architectural performance standards for commercial and industrial development located along the gateway corridors of Route 4 and Route 28.
- To better coordinate land use and transportation plans.
- To create a town center.
- To expand efforts to further define and protect Epsom's rural character.
- Discourage development of Epsom's scenic areas, ridge lines, steep slopes, wetlands, and farmlands.
- Preserve and promote historic sites and structures.
- To control population growth to preserve the community's small town, rural atmosphere.
- Epsom should separate more intense commercial and industrial land uses from residential development.
- To promote commercial, industrial, and office developments consistent with the rural character of Epsom.
- Epsom should encourage the development of businesses that would enhance the quality of life of residents.
- Epsom should encourage the development of businesses that have minimal impacts on the transportation network.

It is the intent of this document to continue relevant goals from the 2001 Master Plan as well as incorporate new goals to direct the community for the foreseeable future. Goals for the 2010 update of the Master Plan are as follows:

Population Goals

Goal: Continue to monitor population growth to ensure that the Town is growing in proportion to abutting communities, and consider extending the Growth Management Ordinance at Town Meeting.

Because Epsom's rate of growth has exceeded that of the region and many abutting communities, and because many abutting communities have adopted growth management ordinances, the Town should monitor future growth to ensure that Epsom does not absorb more growth than it can handle from abutting communities. Unregulated growth can lead to significant increases in the tax rate, as well as place strain on municipal facilities and services.

Goal: Ensure that Epsom is in compliance with RSA 674: 58 through 61, Workforce Housing.

In 2008 the New Hampshire Legislature enacted a new Workforce Housing that seeks to codify Britton V. Chester, which indicated that each NH community must provide an opportunity for workforce housing. If Epsom has its "fair share" or the cumulative effect of its CURRENT regulatory framework permits workforce housing it needs to do nothing, but if it does not action needs to be taken to ensure that such an opportunity exists. It appears that Epsom's regulatory framework permits various types of housing that would qualify as "workforce housing" given the town's existing housing stock, conducting a regulatory audit would serve to fully assess the Town's reasonable compliance with this requirement.

Goal: Continue to monitor increases in the age of the population so that housing and services can be provided to meet the needs of the population.

Population estimates from the year 2000 US Census indicate that over 24% of Epsom's population is age 55 or older. As this segment of the population ages over the next 10 to 20 years, new housing alternatives and social services will be necessary. The community should take appropriate action to ensure that such housing opportunities and services are available for this future demand.

Goal: Consider ways to encourage job development in Epsom to minimize commutes of residents.

As indicated by 2000 and 2004 Census Data, the majority of Epsom's residents commute to work (83%), and a large portion of those commuters drive westward to destinations like Concord. As the population is expected to grow over the next 20 years, the current average commute time of 27 minutes will only get longer with the increase in traffic created by new development. By developing more employment options within the Town of Epsom, this increase in traffic and commute to work times can be slowed. The community should consider ways to increase job opportunities at the local level.

Economic Goals

Goal: Establish a working relationship with State and Regional Economic Development Groups to work to strengthen the local economic base.

In order to help broaden the tax base with desirable businesses, the Town should establish a close relationship with the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development and the Capital Region Development Corporation. CNHRPC also has experience in economic development efforts within the region. Such relationships could help community leaders market the Town to perspective businesses that would fit with the rural character of the community.

Goal: Expand the Role of the Economic Development Committee.

The 2001 Master Plan recommended establishing a local Economic Development Committee, and the Town of Epsom has done that. At this point, it is recommended that the EDC work to expand its role and further work to help grow existing businesses, establish a positive dialog with existing businesses, and serve as a voice of the business community in Town Hall. The committee should continue to consist of community leaders, developers, and business people and could work on long-term economic development issues, such as the expansion of municipal water and zoning changes. In addition, the EDC should work to establish an economic development web page to introduce prospective businesses to Epsom.

Goal: Replace the R/C Zone between Center Hill Road and Route 107 with a gateway transition zone to preserve the unique character of this portion of Route 4.

First recommended in the 2001 Master Plan, it is also recommended at this time that the Town should re-zone the portion of the community located from Center Hill Road to Route 107 from Residential / Commercial to a "gateway transition zone". Because much of the property located in this area is under scenic easements, it is highly unlikely that any future development will occur. However, because some property within this area is still eligible for development, the Town should reclassify this area so only uses that would complement the character of this area would be permitted. Such uses could include open space uses, forestry, agricultural, and recreational uses.

Goal: Continue to examine all alternatives to deliver municipal water west of the Traffic Circle.

As first recommended in the 2001 Master Plan, the Board of Selectmen, working with the Planning Board, Water District Commissioners, and local business leaders should continue to examine alternatives to extend delivery of municipal water to that portion of the community located west of the Suncook River along Routes 4 and 28. Though it is generally accepted in the community that such an expansion is necessary to broaden the tax base, as well as continue to provide opportunities for commercial growth, little progress has been made on any expansion.

Goal: Adopt commercial and industrial architectural standards.

To protect the character and scale of the community, the Planning Board should adopt architectural design standards for commercial and industrial developments as recommended in the 2001 Master Plan. Such standards would require the use of neutral colors, pitched roofs, varied offsets, and specific landscaping and buffering standards. By adopting such standards, the quality of development will increase, thus improving the image and tax base for the community.

Goal: Establish an expedited process for the review of home-based or cottage industry businesses. An expedited review process could help home-based businesses, cottage industries, and other small businesses to better navigate the site plan approval process. Proposals for minimal expansions or changes of use to properties that already have site plan approval or home-based business status could be a way to expedite the process for these businesses. Another option could be a review committee consisting of Police and Fire Chiefs, Town Road Agent, Code Officer, and a representative from the Planning Board. In any event, the Planning Board should look into ways to expedite the site plan process for these types of businesses.

Goal: Reestablish the Chamber of Commerce: Reestablishing a Chamber of Commerce is would provide an opportunity to promote Epsom's businesses (including the micro, cottage, and home-based businesses) and serve as a way to create relationships between the business community and the town, as well as among various businesses.

Transportation Goals

Goal: Establish a Road Improvement Plan

The Town should create a Road Improvement Plan to better plan and schedule short and long term road improvements. The plan should correspond with and relate to the Town Capital Improvement Program and be updated annually. Projects that should be included in this plan include sidewalk construction, road resurfacing, bridge reconstruction projects, and road reconstruction projects. Roads that should be a priority in the plan include Goboro Road, New Orchard Road, Black Hall Road, New Rye Road, and North Road.

Goal: Enact Provisions of RSA 261:153 to Implement \$5 Transportation Surcharge on Motor Vehicle Registrations to Fund Road Improvements

To provide additional funding of transportation improvements, the Town should enact the local option provided by RSA 261:153. This would implement a surcharge of \$5 on each motor vehicle registration that could be used exclusively for road, bridge, sidewalk, and bicycle path construction. It is estimated that this could generate an additional \$31,685 for the Town annually.

Goal: Take Action to Make Major Improvements to Town Roads

The Town should explore the various financing options available, including grants, impact fees, exactions, bonding, and cash to finance short and long-term road improvements. Furthermore, it is recommended that the Town appropriate approximately \$300,000 to \$350,000 per year to help finance major road improvements identified in this chapter.

Goal: Construct Sidewalks and Bicycle Paths along Major Local Collector Roadways

The Town should explore the various financing options available, including grants, impact fees, bonding, and cash to finance the construction of pedestrian infrastructure including sidewalks and bicycle paths along busy roadways in Epsom as highlighted in this chapter. At least \$60,000 per year should be allocated in the fund to help offset the cost of short term and long term sidewalk projects over the next 20 years. Furthermore, the Town should also actively pursue funding allocated by TE through the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and if

appropriate, through the Safe Routes to Schools program to help offset the costs of sidewalk and bicycle path construction.

Goal: Revise Site Plan Regulations to Promote Access Management

In order to preserve and improve the functional capacity of major roadways in Epsom, the Planning Board should revise the site plan review regulations to include access management regulations, driveway regulations, and curb cut permits as described in this chapter.

Goal: Revise Zoning Ordinance to Promote Access Management

Epsom should craft zoning amendments to promote commercial development in nodes along major roadways, as opposed to encouraging strip development. Furthermore, land between commercial nodes on heavily traveled roadways, such as Route 4 and Route 28, should be zoned to have large lot sizes (5-10 acres) and much larger frontage requirements.

Goal: Identify Projects for the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan

Each year, the State of New Hampshire receives millions of dollars in Federal Transportation Funding assistance. The Planning Board, working with the Board of Selectmen, Road Agent, and the proposed Roads Commission, should identify projects eligible for state and federal funds. These projects should be submitted to Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission during the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan process.

Goal: Develop & Adopt a Clear Exactions Policy

Exactions can be charged by a town whether or not they have an adopted *impact fee* ordinance in place. RSA 674:21.V.j indicates that exactions can be charged for highway drainage, sewer, and water upgrades that are needed for a particular development. Exactions are a way for Epsom to ensure that developers pay their fair share of development costs and a clear exactions policy can be done fairly easily and independent of impact fees.

Goal: Require Road Exactions for Developments on Substandard Roads

The Planning Board should require exactions from all developers proposing new subdivisions of site plans on substandard roadways. Common exactions include contributions of land for rights-of-way, drainage improvements, sidewalk construction, road realignments and widening, paving, installation of signals and signs, or monetary contributions in lieu of such improvements.

Goal: Continue to Participate in CNHRPC Annual Traffic Count Data

It is likely that traffic usage will be an important consideration in scheduling major road improvements. Therefore, the Road Agent, Board of Selectmen, and Planning Board should jointly identify locations where traffic counting should be conducted in the future.

Goal: Open a Dialog with NHDOT Regarding Long Range Plans for Routes 4 and 28

The Board of Selectmen and Planning Board should establish a working relationship with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to identify the most favorable improvements to the State Highway System.

Goal: Regularly Review the Feasibility of Instituting a Transportation Fee for all New Commercial and Residential Units

The Planning Board, with a Capital Improvement Plan, should study the feasibility of instituting a road improvement fee for all homes and commercial structures constructed in the community. Such a system will help defray the cost of general road improvements.

Goal: Consider the Designation and Protection of Scenic Roads

The Planning Board, working with the Conservation Commission, Road Agent, and Selectmen, should identify additional scenic roads and craft warrant articles to enroll these roads in the scenic roads program as established by NH RSA 231:157. Furthermore, the Planning Board should also amend the zoning ordinance to minimize additional development along gravel and scenic roads in order to protect those culturally important resources.

Goal: Solicit Outside Professionals for Plan Reviews to Determine Traffic Impacts of Development

The Planning Board and Zoning Board should utilize qualified consultants to review development proposals to determine what the impact of a development could be on the Town's transportation networks. The Board should also note that the financial costs of such reviews can be charged to the applicant under state statute.

Land Use Goals

Goal: Zone Along Lot Line

The current zoning scheme in Epsom is based on broad overlay districts. For example, the boundary of the R/C zone is defined as 500' from the edge of right-of-way of Route 4. This divides a number of lots into two or more zoning districts, thus creating confusion and conflicts. When rezoning occurs in the future, it is recommended that the Town define districts by lot line, as opposed to the current method of measurements off the centerline of roadways. By doing so, the likelihood that some parcels will be divided into multiple zones will be minimized, thus reducing confusion in the long run.

Goal: Implement new environmentally based zoning techniques

To further protect key natural resources in the community, as well as to protect the rural character while providing reasonable opportunities for development, the Town should consider replacing the existing zoning scheme with new zoning techniques such as soil based lot sizing and performance zoning. Such techniques could be employed to protect critical elements such as wetlands, aquifers, steep slopes and floodplains while allowing for development.

Goal: Continuously examine land use trends and take appropriate action to maintain a logical and orderly development pattern

The Town should continuously examine land use trends and development patterns to ensure that the character of the community is preserved and enhanced. A way to do this is by conducting a build-out analysis. The build-out analysis will provide decision makers a scenario of *what could be* if current land use trends are continued.

Goal: Continuously Update Site Plan and Subdivision Review Regulations

The Planning Board, with assistance of professional planning staff, should continuously review and amend the site plan and subdivision review regulations to keep them current with changes in planning trends, technology, state statutes, and regulations.

Goal: Revise Cluster Development Ordinance

The Planning Board should re-write the existing cluster subdivision ordinance so as to create real incentives for developers to use the cluster approach to better protect land and create usable open space, as intended by this type of development. The Town may request assistance from CNHRPC to review and update the bylaw through the Regional Environmental Planning Program (REPP).

Goal: Revise Wireless Telecommunications Facility Ordinance

To further protect the character of the community, while providing reasonable opportunities for the development of wireless telecommunication facilities, the Planning Board should revise the telecommunications ordinance so it requires the use of stealth technology, incorporates the provisions of RSA K-12, encourages the use of new technologies, and reduces the maximum height of such facilities.

Goal: Develop Commercial and Multifamily Architectural Design Standards

To protect the scale and rural character of the community, as well as expand the taxable value of properties, the Town, in the site plan review regulations or zoning ordinance, should create specific architectural façade performance standards for multifamily and commercial/industrial structures.

CHAPTER II

POPULATION

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the various facets and segments of the population of Epsom, including migration patterns, historical trends, demographics, gender and race distributions, as well as projections for future growth. The information for Epsom is compared with other municipalities in the central New Hampshire region, Merrimack County, and the State as a whole. Information presented in this chapter has been derived from the Office of Energy and Planning (NHOEP), United States Bureau of Census, the New Hampshire Bureau of Vital Statistics, and the New Hampshire Bureau of Employment Security.

With a population of 4,021 individuals in 2000, Epsom has the 9th largest population of the twenty communities that comprise the central New Hampshire region. It is important to note that Epsom's population is believed to fluctuate slightly during the summer months; however, no estimate has been completed regarding the total number of individuals that seasonally reside in Epsom.

Key facts identified from this chapter:

- ◆ Epsom's population increased 46.6% during the period of 1980 to 2000. This increase exceeded that of the CNHRPC region, as well as those of all communities directly abutting Epsom, except for Chichester, Northwood, and Deerfield.
- ◆ During the period of 1990 to 2000, Epsom's estimated population increased nearly 12%. This increase also exceeded that of the central New Hampshire region, but lagged behind increases in the neighborhood communities of Deerfield, Northwood, Concord, and Chichester.
- ◆ Based on observed New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning population trends, it is anticipated that the population of the community will increase to approximately 5,510 individuals by the year 2030. Conservatively, this represents an increase of at least 22.2% over the estimated year 2005 population.
- ◆ Epsom's population per square mile increased from 43 persons in per square mile in 1970 to 128.3 persons per square mile in year 2004. Though a significant increase, Epsom's population density is less than 4 of its abutting communities, and the increase in density between 1990 and 2000 was only 12%.
- ◆ Epsom, like much of New Hampshire, is not racially diverse. In 1990, only 0.7% of the Town's population was not Caucasian, and in considering the Census data from 2000, it seems that this ratio has remained more or less unchanged.
- ◆ In the year 2000, the female population was slightly higher, with 47.1% of the population male, while 52.9% was female. This represents a slight increase in the female population from 1990

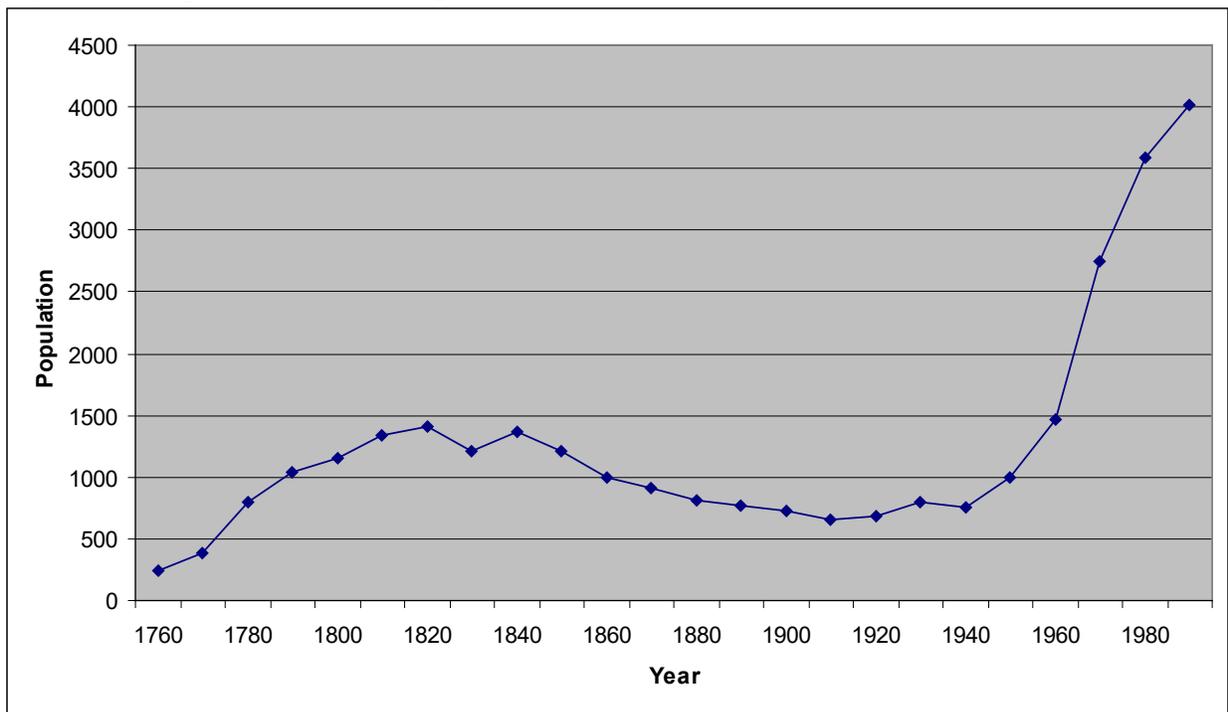
(48.9% were male, and 51.1% were female in 1990).

- ◆ In 1990, the median household income of Epsom was \$36,398. This figure was slightly higher than that of the State, but lower than many of the communities in the central New Hampshire region. By 2000, the median income was \$50,685 which is a 39% increase over the decade, making Epsom higher than several surrounding communities.
- ◆ In 1990, 5.8% of Epsom's population lived in poverty. This figure was comparable to the regional average. By 2000, 3% of Epsom's residents lived below the poverty line.
- ◆ In 2000, 83% of Epsom's work force commuted to another NH community for employment. Additionally, 46.73% drove westward for work, and the largest portion of the workforce, 860 persons, drove to Concord for work.
- ◆ As of 1990, 28.44% of Epsom's population had secured an Associates degree or higher. This amount was higher than most abutting communities. By 2000, 35.4% of Epsom's residents had an Associates degree or higher, which was higher than several of the surrounding communities.
- ◆ Based on past population trends, it is estimated that over 24% of Epsom's population is 55 years of age or older. In addition, 6.1% of the population is between the ages of 55 and 59. Over the next 10 to 20 years, this aging segment of the population will likely require alternative housing arrangements and increased public services, such as emergency medical care. Over the next ten years, the Town needs to proactively plan for such housing arrangements and services.
- ◆ In 1990, 22% of the population was 55 years of age or older, and in 2000, 24% was. It would appear that Epsom's population has gotten older over the 10 years between 1990 and 2000.
- ◆ Results of the community survey for the 2001 Master Plan indicate that 65% of residents feel that growth (i.e. the construction of new homes and increases in community population) is an important issue in Epsom. However, survey results also indicated that residents feel that Epsom is growing as fast as abutting communities. Additionally, the 2007 Master Plan survey indicated that 48.6% felt that the town's growth rate was "about right."

Historical Population Trends

Changes in population of any community are influenced by a variety of factors ranging from changes in the local economic base to national events, such as wars and recessions. In 1765, Epsom’s population was approximately 250 individuals. Most residents were farmers and hunter/trappers. The population of the community increased steadily through 1840, as the economic base of the community diversified when mills began to locate along the Suncook and Little Suncook Rivers. These rivers became host to a variety of mills, including a gristmill and a shoe factory. During the period of 1850 to 1930, the population of the community waned. This can be attributed to such local events as the closing of several mills, as well as national events such as the Civil War, World War I, and the Great Depression. However, from 1950 to the present day, the population of the community has increased substantially. This increase can be attributed to the baby boom of the 1950’s, post World War II in-migration, as well as the growing economy of Concord. Please refer to Figure II-1 for more detail.

Figure II-1: Epsom Historical Population Trends: 1790 to 2000



Source: New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning.

Regional Population Trends: 1980 to 2000

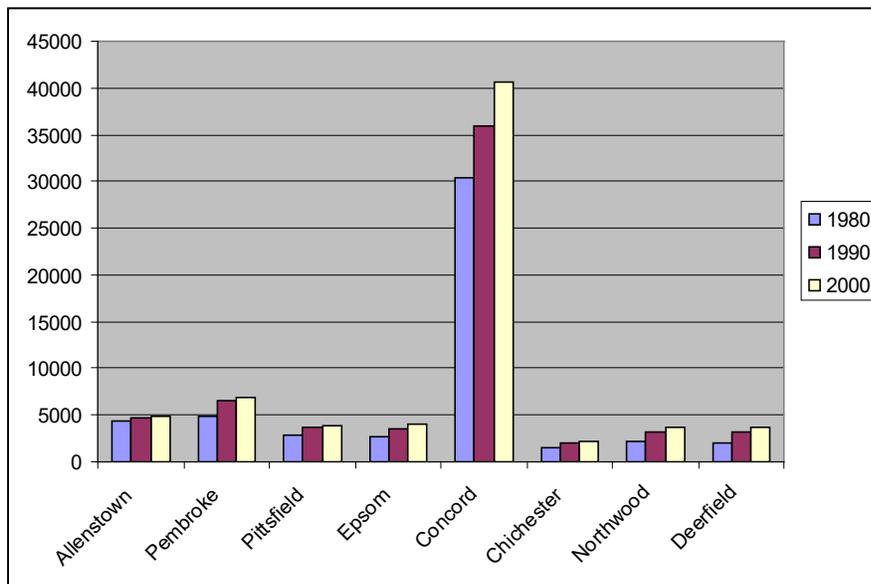
During the period of 1980 through 2000, Epsom experienced a significant population increase of nearly 47%. As compared to abutting communities, this increase surpassed all of the neighboring communities except for Chichester, Northwood, and Deerfield. This increase was also larger than the increase observed for the central New Hampshire region. Between 1990 and 2000, Epsom’s population changed 11.97%, 5th in the region. With only a 6% difference between Epsom and the highest increased population in the region, and a 7.8% difference with the lowest population increase in the region, Epsom appears to be in the middle with regard to regional population increases between the years 1990 and 2000. For more detail regarding these trends, please refer to Figures II-2 and II-3.

Figure II-2: Population Trends in Epsom & Neighboring Communities, 1980-2000

Town	1980	1990	2000	Change 1990-2000	Change 1980-2000	% Change '80-2000	% Change, '90-2000
Allenstown	4398	4649	4843	194	445	10.11	4.17
Pembroke	4861	6561	6897	336	2036	41.90	5.12
Pittsfield	2889	3701	3931	230	1042	36.06	6.21
Epsom	2743	3591	4021	430	1278	46.60	11.97
Concord	30400	36006	40687	4681	10287	33.83	13
Chichester	1492	1942	2236	294	744	49.90	15.14
Northwood	2175	3124	3640	516	1465	67.35	16.52
Deerfield	1979	3124	3678	554	1699	85.85	17.73
Central NH	50937	62698	69933	7235	18996	37.30	11.5

Source: U.S. Census, CNHRPC

Figure II-3: Population Trends for Epsom & Neighboring Communities, 1980 - 2000



Source: US Census, CNHRPC

Population Trends 1996 to 2006:

As mandated by New Hampshire RSA 78-A: 25, the New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning is required to complete annual estimates for the population of each municipality in the State. The following is the most current population estimate for Epsom and surrounding communities.

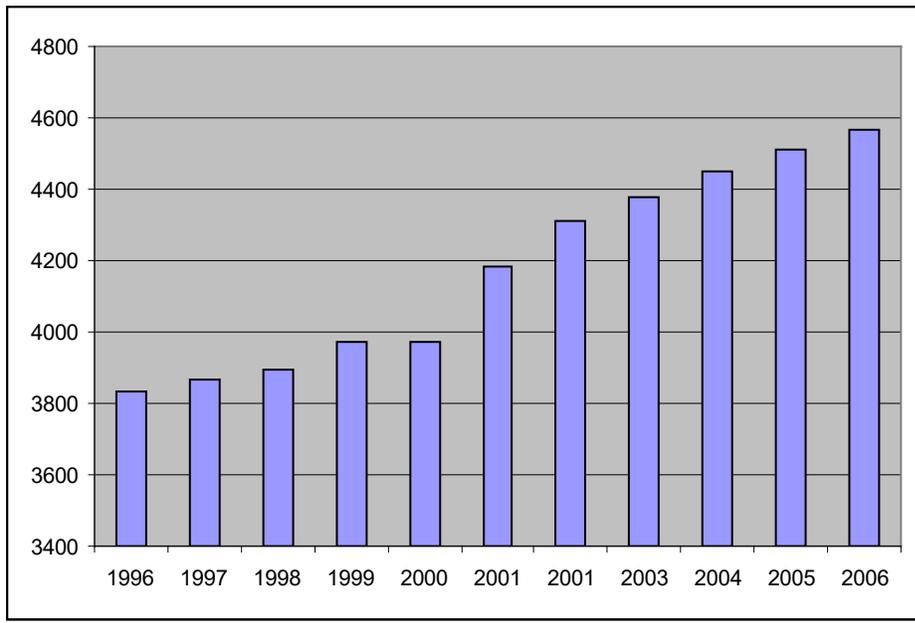
Figure II-4: Estimated Population Trends in Epsom, NH, and Abutting Communities, 1996-2006

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Net Change	Net Change %
Allenstown	4,839	4,823	4,850	4,992	4,843	4,934	4,990	5,032	5,033	5,032	4,991	152	3.14%
Chichester	2046	2072	2115	2159	2,159	2335	2406	2440	2469	2482	2471	425	20.77%
Epsom	3834	3866	3896	3971	3,971	4184	4312	4380	4451	4512	4564	730	19.04%
Pembroke	6688	6724	6733	6777	6,777	6989	7125	7231	7276	7352	7336	648	9.69%
Pittsfield	3916	3930	3961	3996	3,996	4035	4154	4233	4307	4362	4370	454	11.59%
Deerfield	3339	3397	3449	3554	3,554	3915	4077	4151	4177	4272	4314	975	29.20%
Northwood	3228	3242	3283	3327	3327	3708	3737	3784	3885	3982	4049	821	25.43%
Central NH Region	100,301	101,197	101,933	103,169	114,849	109,157	110,922	112,803	114,113	115,031	115,032	14,731	14.69%

Source: NH Office of Energy and Planning

As noted by Figure II-4, it is estimated that the population of Epsom has increased by 19.04% during the period of 1996 through 2006. This increase was more than that observed for the central New Hampshire region, and higher than all towns in the region except for Chichester, Deerfield, and Northwood. For a graphic representation of estimated population increases in Epsom, please refer to Figure II-5.

Figure II-5: Estimated Population Trends in Epsom, New Hampshire, 1996 through 2006



Source: New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning

Population Projections

Based on observed past population estimates, it is possible to develop population projections for future years. As noted in the Community Facilities Chapter of the 2001 Plan, predicting future population growth is crucial for planning the expansion of community services and facilities.

Prediction of future population fluctuations can only serve as a best estimate of what may happen in the future. As noted previously, population trends are affected by numerous variables, including economic shifts and other similar events. Because of unforeseen events that may occur, the following can only serve as an estimate of what may occur between now and 2025.

In order to provide a better understanding of what changes in the total population are likely to occur in the future, an estimate has been created.

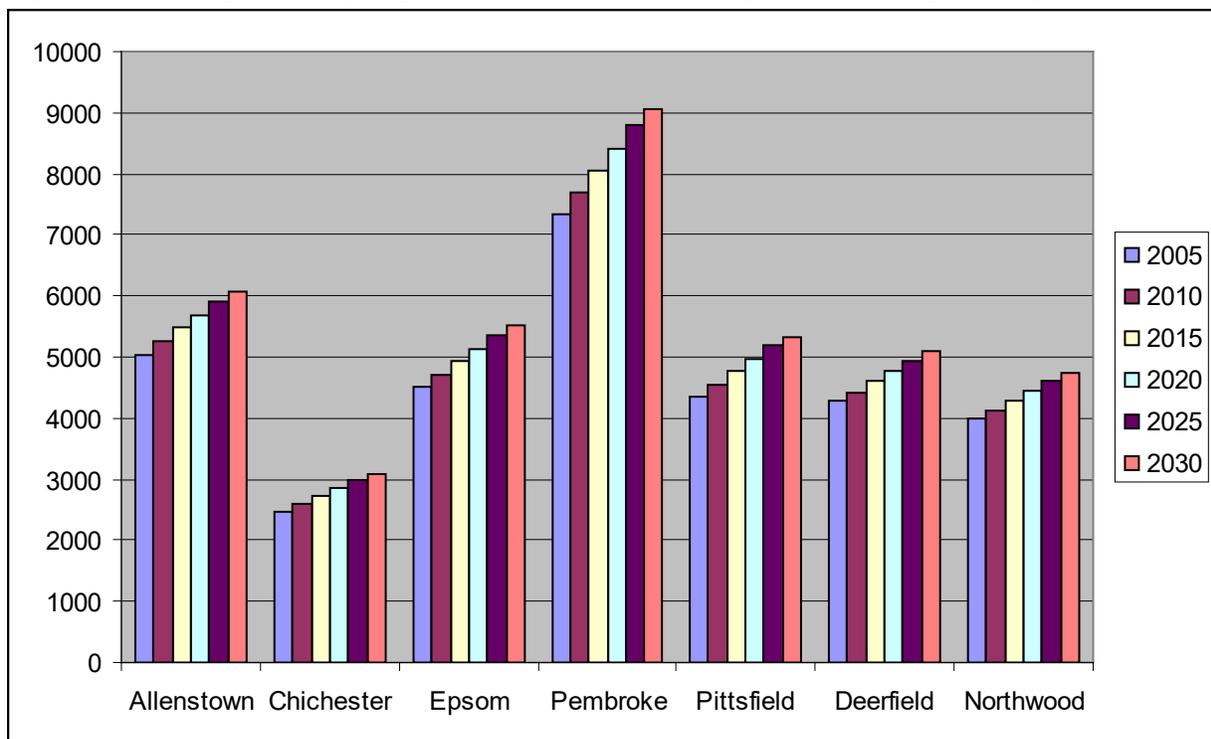
The estimate is based upon changes in the total population from 1990 through 2000. Based upon this approach, it is estimated that the population of Epsom will increase to 5,510 individuals by the year 2030. This represents an increase of 1,000 individuals between 2005 and 2030, or a total increase of 22.2%. For more detail, please refer to figures II-6 and II-7.

Figure II-6: Estimated Population Projections for Epsom and Abutting Communities for Years 2003-2025 base on Trends Observed from 1990-2000

Municipality	2005	----- Projections -----					Net Change, '05 - '30	Net Change percent '05 - '30
		2010	2015	2020	2025	2030		
Allenstown	5030	5260	5480	5690	5910	6070	1030	20.5%
Chichester	2480	2600	2720	2850	2980	3080	590	23.8%
Epsom	4510	4710	4920	5130	5350	5510	1000	22.2%
Pembroke	7350	7690	8050	8420	8790	9070	1730	23.5%
Pittsfield	4360	4560	4760	4970	5190	5340	980	22.5%
Deerfield	4270	4420	4620	4780	4940	5100	820	19.2%
Northwood	3980	4120	4300	4450	4600	4740	760	19.1%

New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (OEP), Municipal Population Projections 2003-2025.

Figure II-7: Comparison of Population Projections for Epsom and Neighboring Towns



New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (OEP), Municipal Population Projections 2003-2025.

Population Densities: 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2004

One common measure of population, in relation to community character and sense of place, is population density per square mile. As noted in Figure II-8, Epsom has the 4th lowest population in 2004 per square mile as compared to abutting communities. This indicates that though the population of the community is increasing, the relative density of the community population has only increased 10.6% between 2000 and 2004. Also of note for comparison purposes, Manchester had a population density of 3,308.4, Nashua 2,842.6, Portsmouth, 1,326.5, and Concord 662.2 persons per square mile. Please see Figures II-8 and II-9 for more detail.

Figure II-8: Comparison of Population per Square Mile for Epsom and Abutting Communities, 1970 - 2004

	Land Area	1970	1980	1990	2000	2004
Allenstown	20.6	132.6	213.5	225.7	235.9	242.9
Chichester	21.1	51.3	70.7	92	106.1	117.1
Epsom	34.2	43	80.2	105	117.7	128.3
Pembroke	22.8	186.9	213.2	287.8	302.1	320.8
Pittsfield	23.6	106.7	122.4	156.8	166.8	179.1
Deerfield	50.8	25	39	61	72.2	79.2
Northwood	28.1	55	77	111	130.1	139.3
CNHRPC Av.	N/A	79.4	99.9	125	135.4	N/A

Source: U.S. Census, NHOEP, and CNHRPC

Racial Diversity

The central New Hampshire region, including Epsom, exhibits little racial diversity like most of the rest of the State. Epsom is not an exception to this general trend. In 1990, only .7% of Epsom was not Caucasian. By 2000, US Census data indicates that this ratio has not changed much. For more detail regarding the racial composites of Epsom and abutting communities, please refer to Figure II-10.

Figure II-10: Population Sorted by Race for Epsom, New Hampshire, and Abutting Communities, 1990-2000

Town	1990 POP	1990 %Caucasian	2000 POP	2000%Caucasian
Concord	36006	98.17	40687	95.5
Pittsfield	3701	99.48	3931	96.8
Northwood	N/A	N/A	3640	99.23
Allenstown	4649	98.66	4843	96.94
Pembroke	6561	99.1	6897	98.17
Chichester	1942	99.27	2236	98.93
Epsom	3591	99.27	4021	99.3

Source: US Census

Population by Gender

Epsom's population, when analyzed by gender, is relatively equally distributed, although there has been a small difference (about 1%) in the female population. This is in keeping with regional, state,

and county averages. Please see Figure II – 11 for details.

Figure II-11: Population Sorted by Gender, 1990-2000

Town	1990 % Male	2000% Male	1990% Female	2000% Female
Allenstown	49.5	48.4	50.5	51.6
Chichester	49.6	50.4	50.4	49.6
Concord	48.5	49.5	51.5	50.5
Deerfield	N/A	48.9	N/A	51.1
Epsom	48.9	47.1	51.1	52.9
Northwood	N/A	50.1	NA	49.9
Pembroke	49.5	49.6	50.5	50.4
Pittsfield	48.3	48.3	51.7	51.7

Source: US Census

Income Analysis

Income and poverty levels of a community serve as indicators of the types of social services that a municipality may require.

Between 1990 and 1999, the median household income in Epsom rose 39%. As of 1990, Epsom had an annual median household income of \$36,398. This amount was less than the average regional median family income by \$463. Epsom's median family income was higher than Merrimack County median income by \$571, and comparable to the State median household income. By 1999, Epsom's income was \$50,685 which was higher than the state average of \$44, 927, but less than the regional average of \$51,828 and the county average of \$51,357. Please see Figure II-12 for more detail.

Figure II-12: Median Family Income for Communities in CNHRPC Region, 1990-2000

	1990 Population	1990 Median Household Income	2000 Population	1999 Median Household Income
Allenstown	4,712	\$33,469	4,854	\$41,958
Boscawen	3,586	\$31,304	3,684	\$42,524
Bow	5,500	\$54,633	7,168	\$79,329
Bradford	1,405	\$36,667	1,458	\$49,018
Canterbury	1,687	\$45,724	1,991	\$58,026
Chichester	1,942	\$39,957	2,259	\$56,741
Concord	36,006	\$32,733	40,765	\$42,447
Deering	1,707	\$36,302	1,885	\$48,750
Dunbarton	1,759	\$44,250	2,250	\$65,081
Epsom	3,495	\$36,398	4,021	\$50,685
Henniker	4,194	\$36,951	4,444	\$50,288
Hillsborough	4,442	\$34,167	4,950	\$44,500
Hopkinton	4,806	\$46,810	5,412	\$59,583
Loudon	4,211	\$38,923	4,510	\$55,185
Pembroke	6,503	\$39,059	6,917	\$49,494
Pittsfield	3,700	\$29,627	3,955	\$38,833
Salisbury	1,063	\$36,771	1,143	\$55,000
Sutton	1,457	\$35,536	1,556	\$50,924
Warner	2,250	\$37,917	2,769	\$44,142
Webster	1,405	\$40,043	1,591	\$54,052
CNHRPC Median	N/A	\$36,861	5,379	\$51,828
Merrimack County	N/A	\$35,801	N/A	\$51,357
State of NH	N/A	\$36,329	1,235,786	\$44,927

Source: U.S. Census

Persons in Poverty

Poverty is defined by the US Bureau of Census and is adjusted annually to allow for changes in the consumer price index (CPI). Unfortunately, poverty data for municipalities is only published every ten years, after the decennial census. The poverty level figures vary according to family size, number of children, and age of the householder.

In 2000, the percentage of individuals living in poverty in Epsom was 3%. This figure was lower than the State average of 5.3%, the CNHRPC average of 5.7%, and the Merrimack County average of 5.7%. See figure II-13 for more details.

Figure II-13: Income & Poverty Data for Epsom, & the CNHRPC Region, 2000

	2000 POP	# of Persons	% Persons
Allenstown	4843	184	3.8
Boscawen	3672	241	6.6
Bow town	7138	129	1.8
Bradford	1454	60	4.1
Canterbury	1979	49	2.5
Chichester	2236	67	3
Concord	40687	2980	7.3
Deering	1875	75	4
Dunbarton	2226	61	2.7
Epsom	4021	121	3
Henniker	4433	281	6.3
Hillsborough	4931	472	9.6
Hopkinton	5399	97	1.8
Loudon	4481	270	6
Pembroke	6897	372	5.4
Pittsfield	3931	344	8.8
Salisbury	1137	22	1.9
Sutton	1541	77	5
Warner	2760	179	6.5
Webster	1579	78	4.9
CNHRPC TOTAL	107220	6159	5.7
Merrimack CO	136225	7721	5.7
State NH	1477357	78530	5.3

Source: US Census Bureau

Commute to Work

Epsom's workforce, like that of much of America, relies on the automobile as the primary way to get to work. The US Census report tracks the data of individuals' commute to their jobs, and this information can be used to look at where people go for work, but also, how far they are traveling to these jobs.

Of Epsom's workforce in 2004, an overwhelming majority, 83%, commuted to another NH community for work leaving 14% behind to work locally in Epsom. The remaining 3% commuted out-of-state for work. Figure II-14 contains these details. In the year 2000, 860 Epsom Residents commuted to Concord for work, while 289 worked in the Town of Epsom. Manchester was the next highest commute destination with 189 commuters, and Hooksett was the 4th most popular work commute destination at 103. The complete list of Epsom's ten most frequent work commute destinations is depicted in figure II-15. Of towns directly abutting Epsom, Pittsfield retained the largest portion of Epsom's residents as workers at 54, and the most common direction that Epsom's commuters traveled in was to the west (46.73%). Lastly, the average commuting time for Epsom's residents was 27 minutes in the year 2000. These final 3 items are depicted in figures II-16, II-17, and II-18 respectively. Overall, it would appear that the majority of Epsom's residents commute to Concord and the west for work, leaving only 14% of Epsom's citizens as employees within town. As it is economic opportunities that can drive people to commute long distances to work, the

specifics of Epsom's local economic health and employers will be discussed further in the Economic Development Chapter of this plan. Figures II-19 and II-20 echo the sentiment that Epsom's residents are commuting distances to work. The information from the 2007 survey indicates that 71.4% drive to work alone, and 60% Commute to Concord.

Figure II-14: Commute Destinations of Epsom's Workforce, 2004

Location	% of Workforce
Epsom	14%
Another NH Community	83%
Out of State	3%

Source: 2004 US Census Data/NH Office of Energy and Planning

Figure II-15: Top Commute Destinations for Epsom's Workforce, 2000

Top 10 Commute Destinations	# of Commuters
Concord	860
Epsom	289
Manchester	189
Hooksett	103
Bow	73
Pittsfield	54
Pembroke	50
Nashua	44
Northwood	36
Chichester	35
Allenstown	33

Source: 2000 US Census

Figure II-16: Direction of Epsom's Commuters, 2000

Direction of Commute	# of Commuters
Total heading south (19.50%)	412
Total traveling west (46.73%)	987
Total traveling North (2.79%)	59
Total traveling to Seacoast and East (4.02%)	85

Source: 2000 US Census

Figure II-17: Commute Destinations for Epsom Residents to Abutting Towns, 2000

Abutting Town	# of Commuters
Epsom town Merrimack Co. NH	289
Pittsfield town Merrimack Co. NH	54
Pembroke town Merrimack Co. NH	50
Northwood town Rockingham Co. NH	36
Chichester town Merrimack Co. NH	35
Allenstown town Merrimack Co. NH	33
Deerfield	Not Listed

Source: 2000 US Census

Figure II-18: Direction of Epsom Commuters' Travel

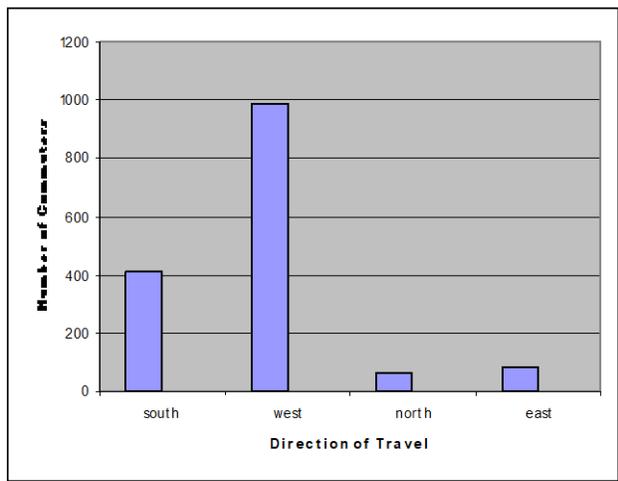


Figure II-19: Percentages of how Epsom's Residents Get to Work (2007 Survey)

How do you get to work?	% of Responses
Walk	7.10%
Bicycle	0%
Drive alone	71.40%
Carpool	7.10%
Work at home	10.70%
Other	3.60%
Total	100%

Figure II-20: Where Epsom's Residents Commute to Work (2007 Survey)

Where do you commute to work?	% of Responses
Suncook	5%
Concord	60%
Lawrence, MA	5%
Manchester	10%
Pembroke	5%
Epsom	10%
Merrimack	5%

Educational Levels of Residents

Of the total population living in Epsom in 1990, 28.44% of the community has an Associate Degree or higher. This is above the average of some abutting communities and less than others, but slightly lower than the County average. Nearby communities that retained a higher percentage of the population with advanced education than Epsom in 1990 were the towns of Chichester, Pembroke, and Deerfield. By 2000, about 35.4% of Epsom's population had at least an Associates Degree or higher with Chichester, Concord, Deerfield, and Northwood having more. This represents an increase in educational attainment since 1990. For more detail regarding the educational levels of

Epsom and abutting communities, please refer to Figures II- 21, II-22, and II-23.

Figure II-21: Educational Levels of Residents, 1990

	Less than GR 9	Some HS	HS graduates	Some College	Associates Degree	Bachelors Degree	Graduate/Prof. Degree
Allenstown	14.08	15.53	37.71	16.44	8.02	6.37	1.82
Chichester	4.77	9.15	40.2	16.87	7.4	15.54	5.73
Concord	5.26	10.23	30.35	18.6	7.4	17.15	10.97
Deerfield	N/A	N/A	13.8	7.6	3.3	11.7	3.8
Epsom	8.54	8.8	34.32	19.86	9.54	12.39	6.51
Northwood	N/A	N/A	8.5	5.2	2.3	4.6	1.3
Pembroke	7.67	8.24	30.7	19.28	9.97	18.09	6.01
Pittsfield	6.93	20.8	43.72	14.04	3.29	8.77	2.41

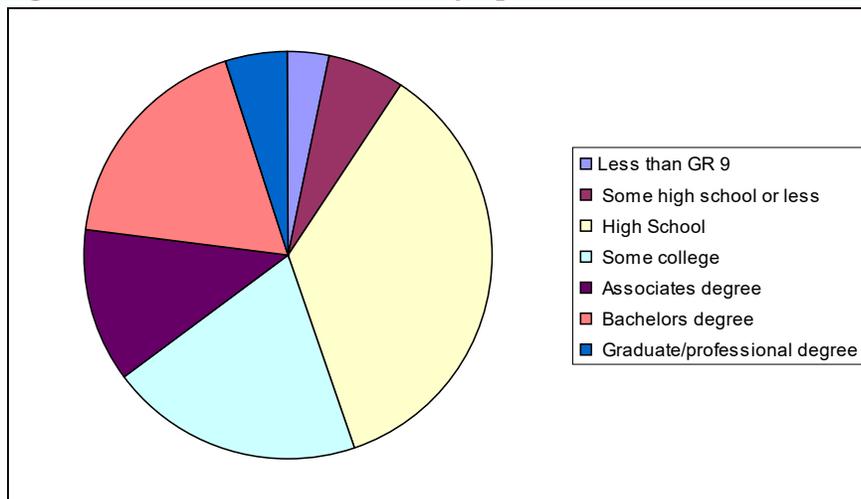
Source: 1990 US Census as prepared by the Department of Commerce. Selection based on US Census Data.

Figure II-22: Educational Levels of Residents, 2000

	Less than GR 9	Some High School	High School Graduate	Some College	Associates Degree	Bachelors Degree	Graduate/Prof. Degree
Allenstown	10.7	2.6	43.5	25.6	7.1	7.4	3.1
Chichester	1.7	2.2	38	19	12.4	16.8	9.9
Concord	3.4	2.3	30	23.4	8.3	19.3	13.3
Deerfield	2	0.7	34.4	18.6	10.6	22.6	11.1
Epsom	3.2	6.2	35.2	20	12.4	17.9	5.1
Northwood	1.5	1.8	36.5	23.5	11.2	17.9	7.6
Pembroke	5.3	1.6	36.9	22	11.4	16.3	6.5
Pittsfield	7.1	4.2	41.7	21.1	11.2	11	3.7

Source: 2000 US Census as prepared by the Department of Commerce. Selection of Communities was based on US Census Data.

Figure II-23: Educational Levels of Epsom Residents, 2000



Population by Age Group, 2000

Understanding population trends by age group (or cohort) can help communities allocate resources for public infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the population.

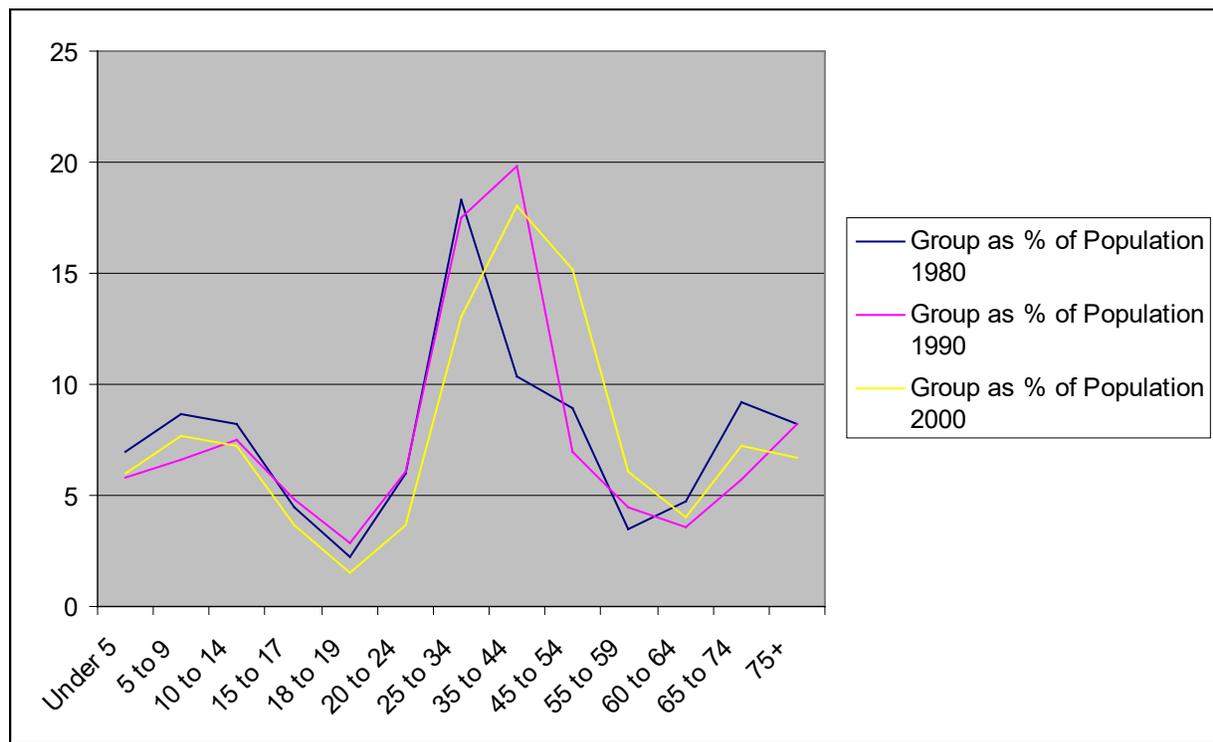
For the 2001 Master Plan, an estimate for the trends in population cohorts was conducted as the data for the year 2000 was not fully available at that time. This was done in an effort to project what the needs of the population would be in the years to come. The estimations at that time indicated that the 2 largest age groups in town were ages 35 to 44, and ages 45 to 54 years of age. Additionally, it appeared that the estimations for the portion of Epsom's population aged 55 and older was at about 16.8%. Based on this data, it was surmised that by 2010 over 45% of Epsom's population would be rapidly approaching retirement age. In light of the US Census data for the year 2000, it seems that the estimated population aged 55 and older was lower than the actual. The Census data for the year 2000 has indicated that 24% of Epsom's population is aged 55 and older (as opposed to the estimated 16.8% from the 2001 Master Plan). With the actual number being significantly higher than the estimate, it can be presumed that there is a greater sense of urgency to meet the needs of this segment of the population than in the 2001 Master Plan. As a result, this indicates that some trends in housing and social services may need to be shifted. For example, such a large aging population will require alternative housing arrangements (i.e. a trend in downsizing from traditional single family homes to condominium or other similar housing arrangements). Such a trend also indicates that new programs geared towards an aging population may become necessary. Such programs may include expanded emergency response services and recreational programs. Please refer to Figures II-24, II-25, and II-26 for more detail.

Figure II-24: Trends in Population Cohorts for Epsom, New Hampshire, 1980-2000

	Epsom 1980	Group as % of Population 1980	Epsom 1990	Group as % of Population 1990	Epsom 2000	Group as % of 2000 pop
Under 5	193	7	204	5.8	241	6
5 to 9	240	8.7	229	6.6	309	7.7
10 to 14	226	8.2	263	7.5	290	7.2
15 to 17	123	4.5	169	4.8	149	3.7
18 to 19	60	2.2	100	2.9	60	1.5
20 to 24	165	6	214	6.1	150	3.7
25 to 34	502	18.3	612	17.5	525	13.05
35 to 44	286	10.4	691	19.8	724	18
45 to 54	245	8.9	243	7	610	15.2
55 to 59	95	3.5	159	4.5	246	6.1
60 to 64	129	4.7	126	3.6	157	4
65 to 74	253	9.2	199	5.7	289	7.2
75+	226	8.2	286	8.2	271	6.7
Totals	2743	100	3495	100	4021	100

Source: U.S. Census, 2000 Estimate developed by CNHRPC

Figure II-25: Trends in Age Groups, 1980-2000 (Estimates from 2001 Master Plan)



Source: U.S. Census, 2000 Estimate developed by CNHRPC

Figure II-26: Trends in Age Groups, Under the Age of 55

Town	Under age 5, 1990	Under Age 5, 2000	Over 55, 1990	Over 55, 2000	Age 6 to 54, 1990	Age 6 to 54, 2000
Allenstown	8.6%	6.6%	16.7%	18.7%	74.6%	74.7%
Chichester	7.4%	6.1%	17.1%	18.7%	75.3%	75.2%
Concord	7.1%	5.8%	21.5%	21.5%	71.3%	72.7%
Deerfield	9.4%	7.6%	13.7%	14.4%	76.8%	76.1%
Epsom	8%	6%	21%	24%	70%	86%
Northwood	8.6%	6.2%	16.5%	18.0%	74.8%	74.9%
Pembroke	7.9%	6.1%	15.9%	17.8%	76.1%	7%
Pittsfield	9.2%	6.6%	18.5%	18.5%	72.2%	75.7%

Source: U.S. Census

Workforce Housing

Background

On June 30, 2009 SB 342, also known as the Workforce housing Bill, was signed into law and was subsequently codified as Chapter 299, Laws of 2008. The general implication of the law is that it requires all municipalities to provide reasonable and realistic opportunities for workforce housing. The law was created in an effort to codify the ruling in *Britton v. Chester, 134 N.H. 433 (1991)*, holding that every municipality must provide a reasonable and realistic opportunity for the development of housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households, and particularly

for the development of multi-family structures. To prove that such a need has already been met, a community may determine its “fair share” of the region’s affordable housing. If a community can show that it has met (or exceeded) its “fair share,” it needs to do nothing more. If it has not, the municipality will need to take some steps to ensure compliance with SB 342.

Implications

The law may be applied when a developer submits a development proposal *along with* a written statement indicating that the proposal is for workforce housing. Once the developer invokes jurisdiction (with the written statement) the municipality must not require any conditions that add unnecessary costs to the construction of the project. Also, the regulatory framework must not add any unnecessary costs. If the developer feels that such costs have been added by the regulatory framework or by conditions of approval, he or she can seek relief (including the “builder’s remedy”) via an appeal to the Superior Court. Such an appeal must be made within 30 days and the Court must review the merits of the case within six months. If a builder’s remedy is granted by the Court, the developer may proceed without further interference by the municipality.

In terms of ensuring that the regulatory framework of Epsom is in compliance with the workforce housing statute, there are a few things to consider. First, it is the *cumulative* impact of the regulatory framework that must be considered (zoning, site plan, and subdivision, as well as other ordinances and regulations adopted under RSA 674). Second, “affordability” is defined as 30% cost burden and “workforce housing” is defined as 60% of the median area income for renters and 100% for home owners. Thirdly, for the purpose of meeting its workforce housing obligation, a municipality may not restrict multi-family structures to 3 or 4 units (the law defines multi-family as 5 or more). Fourth, municipalities are not to be held responsible for things that are beyond their control, like the real estate market and “built out” conditions. Fifth, the “geographic area” or “region” that is most likely to be used is a HUD Fair Market Rental Area. Sixth, a planning commission may assist, but is not required to identify the “fair share” number for a municipality. And lastly, the law allows for reasonable restrictions to be imposed for environmental protection, water supply, sanitary disposal, traffic safety, and fire and life safety protection.

What Does This Mean for Epsom?

In order to be in compliance with this new law, Epsom should first determine its “fair share” of housing and then determine if its regulations are in compliance with the law’s requirements as well. CNHRPC could assist with both of these processes. Of note is the fact that regional planning commissions are not required by law to indicate what each town’s “fair share” of housing is, and that in some cases using the planning commission region as the “region” indicated in the legislation may not even be desirable. That having been said, CNHRPC can assist Epsom with this process as well as conducting a “regulatory audit” to determine compliance. If there are compliance issues, regulatory changes would then be in order. Lastly, as with any proposed regulatory change, Epsom should seek the advice of Town Counsel on any proposed regulatory language.

How Should Epsom Proceed?

Below is an outline that Epsom could follow to determine compliance with statutory requirements. CNHRPC could assist with this process. A “road map” to compliance includes:

1. General

- “Audit” existing zoning and regulations (contact CNHRPC)
 - Identify and consider removing or reducing *unnecessary* provisions that add to housing costs
 - Evaluate compliance with SB 342 (greater-than-50-percent provision, multifamily housing standard (allowing structures with at least five units), etc.)
- Develop zoning and regulatory strategy to “allow workforce housing in a majority of land zoned residential” IF NEEDED
- Amend zoning, subdivisions and site plan regulations accordingly
- Develop procedures for workforce housing applications

2. Fair Share?

- SB 342: Municipality already meets the law’s requirements if deemed to be providing current and foreseeable fair share need for workforce housing
- Current CNHRPC Regional Housing Need Assessment does not address fair share obligation
- Communities with substantial workforce housing stock may wish to conduct analysis using New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority methodology (http://www.nhhfa.org/rl_docs/housingdata/housing_needs_assessment/Appendix2.pdf).
- Few communities will meet the standard

3. Audit Existing Zoning and Regulations

- CNHRPC recommends this process:
 - Identify zoning and regulatory provisions that add to housing cost but are not serving a valid purpose
 - Evaluate compliance with greater-than-50-percent provision
- Identify workforce housing-friendly provisions that could be added:
 - Accessory apartments
 - Mixed uses
 - Multifamily definition (should allow structures with at least five units)
- Develop a set of amendments to address these issues

4. Develop a Strategy

- Remove or reduce *unnecessary* provisions that add to housing costs
- If necessary, make adjustments to the definition of multifamily housing

- Address compliance with greater-than-50-percent provision
 - Make all zones in town compliant
 - Special purpose workforce housing zones
 - Create a Inclusionary Housing (RSA 674:59: “This obligation [to allow workforce housing...] may be satisfied with the adoption of inclusionary zoning...) or Workforce Housing Overlay Zone
5. Inclusionary Zoning
- As a strategy to comply with SB 342, inclusionary zoning has significant advantages over other options:
 - Can be applicable to 100 percent of zones in town (as overlay districts)
 - Evaluated and controlled case-by-case via a Conditional Use Permit process
 - Flexible standards
 - Mixes market and workforce housing
 - IZIP planning assistance grants may be available through New Hampshire Housing in the future
 - SB 342 prohibits using inclusionary housing “conditions” to exclude workforce housing – the message: conditions have to be reasonable to the objective
6. Implement the Strategy
- Zoning amendment for next possible Town Meeting (or special town meeting)
 - Adopt subdivision and site plan regulation amendments prior to July 1, 2009
 - Show good faith; show good progress; get help if you need it

Summary and Recommendations:

Many aspects of Epsom's population are consistent with trends in other communities in the central New Hampshire region. The population of the community is racially homogeneous, reasonably well educated, and income and poverty levels are generally consistent with regional trends. However, two critical issues related to the Town's population are on the horizon. First, population estimates based on the 2000 US Census data indicated that nearly one quarter of Epsom's population is 55 years of age or older. Based on this estimate, the community will have significant challenges in the future to meet the needs of this substantial population, such as alternative housing arrangements and increased public safety personnel. Secondly, the majority of Epsom's workforce commutes westward to work, with a large portion of the workers going to Concord. As populations for the region and town increase of the next 10 to 20 years, it is reasonable to assume the number of commuters heading to Concord and westward for work will increase as well. In response to the issues outlined in this chapter, the following recommendations are intended to provide potential solutions for identified issues.

Recommendation: Continue to monitor population growth to ensure that the Town is growing in proportion to abutting communities, and consider extending the Growth Management Ordinance at Town Meeting.

Because Epsom's rate of growth has exceeded that of the region and many abutting communities, and because many abutting communities have adopted growth management ordinances, the Town should monitor future growth and take action to ensure that Epsom does not absorb more growth than it can handle from abutting communities. Unregulated growth can lead to significant increases in the tax rate, as well as place strain on municipal facilities and services.

Goal: Ensure that Epsom is in compliance with RSA 674: 58 through 61, Workforce Housing.

In 2008 the New Hampshire Legislature enacted a new Workforce Housing that seeks to codify Britton V. Chester, which indicated that each NH community must provide an opportunity for workforce housing. If Epsom has its “fair share” or the cumulative effect of its CURRENT regulatory framework permits workforce housing it needs to do nothing, but if it does not action needs to be taken to ensure that such an opportunity exists. It appears that Epsom’s regulatory framework may permit various types of housing that would qualify as “workforce housing” given the town’s existing housing stock but conducting a regulatory audit would serve to fully assess this requirement.

Recommendation: Continue to monitor increases in the age of the population so that housing and services can be provided to meet the needs of the population.

Population estimates from the year 2000 US Census indicate that over 24% of Epsom's population is age 55 or older. As this segment of the population ages over the next 10 to 20 years, new housing alternatives and social services will be necessary. The community should take appropriate action to ensure that such housing opportunities and services are available for this future demand.

Recommendation: Consider ways to encourage job development in Epsom to minimize commutes of residents.

As indicated by 2000 and 2004 Census Data, the majority of Epsom’s residents commute to work (83%), and a large portion of those commuters drive westward to destinations like Concord. As the population is expected to grow over the next 20 years, the current average commute time of 27 minutes will only get longer with the increase in traffic created by new development. By developing more employment options within the Town of Epsom, this increase in traffic and commute to work times can be slowed. The community should consider ways to increase job opportunities at the local level.

TOWN OF EPSOM New Hampshire

Scale 1:50,000
1" = 4167'

MAP IV-1: ROAD CLASSIFICATION BASE MAP



Legend

Road Classifications

- Class I Highways
- Class II Highways
- Class V Highways
- Class VI Highways
- Private Roads/Other Roads

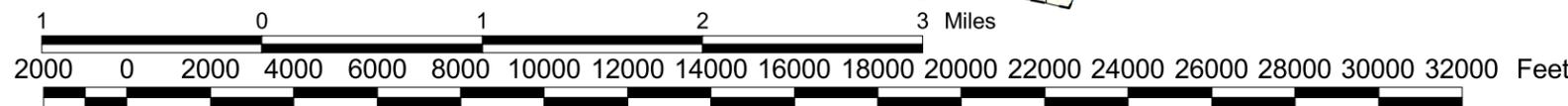
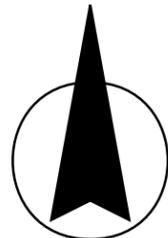
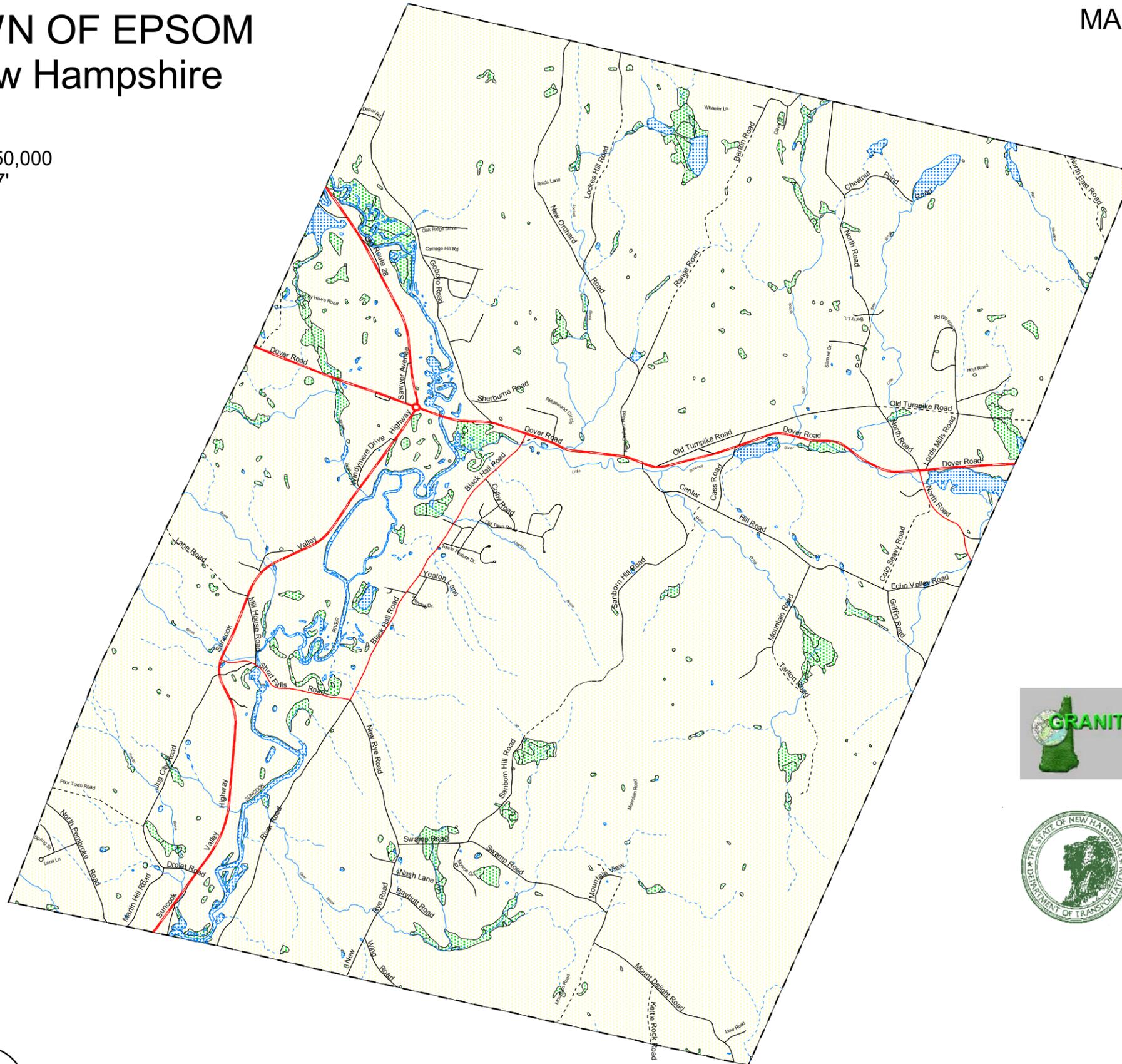
- Rivers and Streams
- Intermittent Streams
- Water Bodies
- Wetlands
- Topography (20' Contour Intervals)
- Political Boundary

This map is to be used for planning purposes only, not for legal boundary interpretation. Any information depicted on this map is assumed to be accurate as of the date of printing, and may be subject to change at any time as more detailed and accurate information becomes available.

Data sources:
digital USGS Quadrangle series,
digital information developed by the CNHRPC
and by the NH GRANIT System

Central New Hampshire
Regional Planning Commission
28 Commercial Street
Concord, NH 03301

phone (603) 226-6020
web www.cnhrpc.org



CHAPTER III

ECONOMICS

Introduction

Over the past 30 years, New Hampshire communities have begun to focus increased attention and resources on economic development. Economic development is the practice of preserving and enhancing existing industry, while promoting and attracting new business. There are several reasons for escalated economic development in New Hampshire communities, but the primary drive behind this trend has been tax-base diversification and a goal to shift tax burdens away from residential properties to commercial development.

Economic development is an issue that can directly affect the quality of life and image of a community. Overly aggressive economic development can lead to loss of community character, housing and labor shortages, and other social problems. At the same time, efforts not to diversify the employment base of the community can leave the community more vulnerable during economic down-turns. Therefore, a balance between community character and a diversified economic base must be achieved.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the economic base of Epsom, explore current conditions impacting economic development, review past economic development strategies, as well as to develop recommendations regarding how to best preserve and encourage business development that is consistent with Epsom's scale, location, and rural character.

Key Findings in this chapter

- ◆ Epsom's unemployment rate was around 2.85% in 2000 and up to about 3.2% in 2005.
- ◆ Epsom businesses created 899 jobs in 1995, and 992 jobs by 2005. This figure represents an increase of 10.345% in the employment base (or 93 jobs) since 1995. Based on this past trend, it is estimated that the number of jobs in the community will increase to 1,101 by the year 2015.
- ◆ In 2005, Epsom had a total of 99 businesses according to the NH Department of Employment Security. Based upon trends from 1995 to 2000, it is estimated that this number will increase to 121 by the year 2015.
- ◆ There may be numerous (over 100) cottage industries/microbusinesses/home-based businesses in Epsom. Because these businesses have the potential to grow into small businesses, the Town should continue to encourage them and their growth.
- ◆ Average wages paid by Epsom for all employment sectors increased during the period of 2000 to 2005. Wages for manufacturing increased 22%, non-manufacturing jobs increased 21%, and government (local and federal) increased by 18% during that period.
- ◆ Based upon the 2001 Master Plan survey, Epsom residents and community leaders value commercial and light industrial development, but remain concerned that such development, if

improperly located or designed, could detract from the rural character of the community. This trend seems to be confirmed by the 2007 Master Plan Survey.

- ◆ The vast majority of businesses in Epsom are small, employing less than 5 workers each.

Residents Opinions and Needs

Public participation is important in the planning process. In an effort to get as much input as possible for the community for the 2001 plan, two visioning sessions and a community wide survey were conducted in 1999 for the Master Plan Update. In total, over 50 individuals attended each visioning session and 33% of all households in the community responded to the community survey. As the Master Plan update for 2010 is for selected chapters, a survey and visioning session was used to determine if there are any changes in community opinions since 2001. The next Master Plan update should incorporate updated survey and visioning session information.

The following is a summary of opinions expressed by residents during visioning sessions and survey responses related to economic development in Epsom for the 2001 Master Plan as well as the 2007 survey and visioning session for the Master Plan.

Visioning Session Results

As part of the visioning session process for the 2001 Master Plan, residents identified several community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to economic development in Epsom.

Strengths include the general location of the town, a relatively high median income, and good opportunities for the development of starter homes, the presence of many cottage industries, a strong sense of local control, as well as an attractive “rural” landscape. Participants felt that challenges in the community included the lack of a “high-tech” infrastructure, lack of an industrial park, lack of ecologically concerned business, as well as the poor aesthetic appearance at the Traffic Circle.

Key opportunities identified by visioning session participants included availability of land for an industrial park, the presence of skilled population, and a diverse local economy with no single dominating employer. The community should still consider finding a “formula” for the balance of population and economic development.

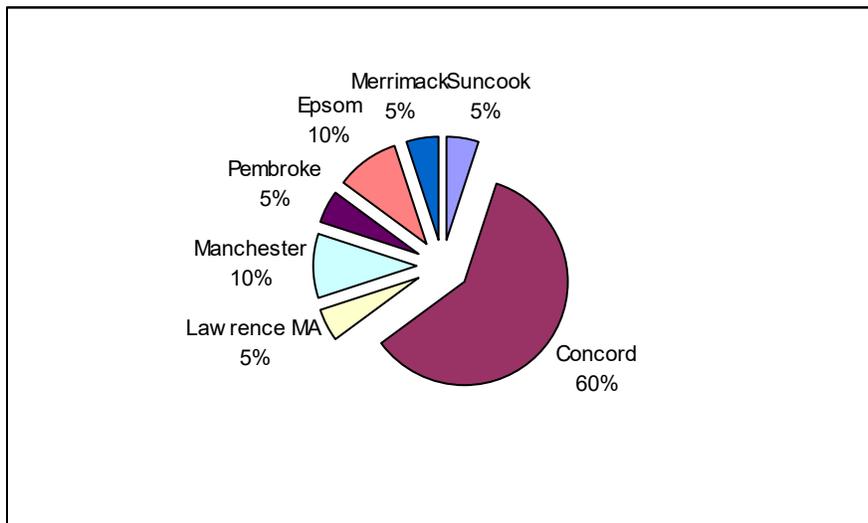
Several items and features that visioning session participants felt would be desirable for Epsom to acquire or develop in the future included a study of the maximum population for Epsom, a high-tech infrastructure, an increase in home-based businesses, increased opportunity to live near where residents work, more aesthetically pleasing commercial development (i.e. buildings that reflect the rural community character), energy efficient firms, and businesses that can meet the daily needs of the population. The 2007 Visioning Session confirmed and echoed much of the 2001 Visioning Session’s findings.

Community Survey Results

In order to broaden the amount of public input received for the Master Plan update, a survey was distributed to each household in the community for the 2001 Master Plan Update. In total, the survey consisted of over 40 questions, of which 13 addressed economic development issues. The survey for the 2010 Master Plan addressed similar, yet specific issues. The 2007 Survey and visioning session was compared to the previous survey and visioning session in an effort to determine if public opinion had changed since 2001.

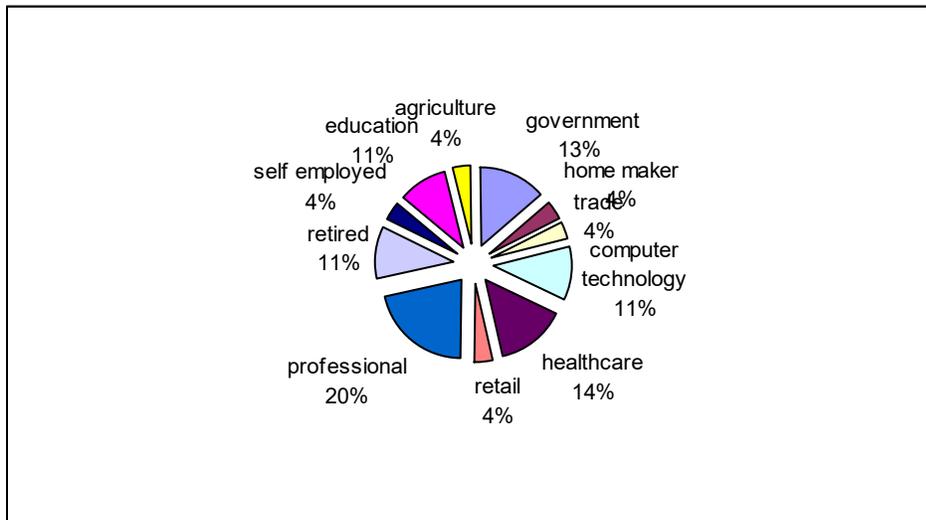
In 2001, to understand the skill level and commuting patterns of the local population, residents were asked to indicate where they commuted for work. Not surprisingly, 33% of residents work in Concord, 16% in Epsom, and 12% in Manchester. In 2007 46.1% of Epsom residents worked in Concord, 7.69% in Manchester, and 7.69% in Epsom. Compared to 2001, this shows that more people are driving to Concord, and most are still working in Concord, Epsom, and Manchester. Expanding employment opportunities within the town of Epsom could help to decrease the commute time of Epsom residents. Please see figure III-1 for more detail.

Figure III-1: Employment Commuting Destinations for Epsom Residents



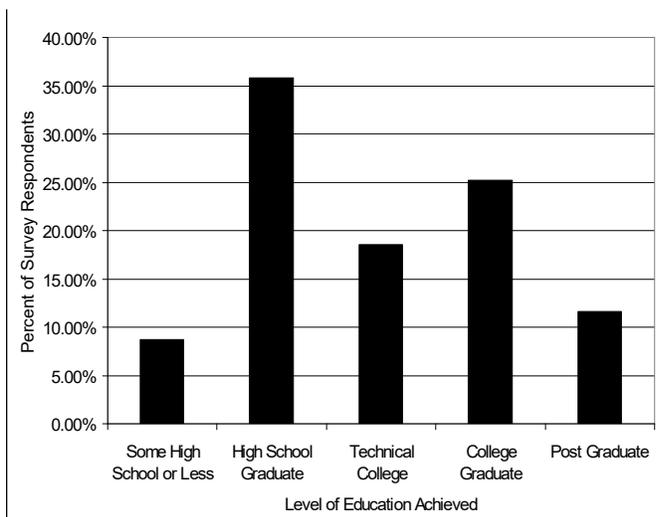
Also, to better estimate the employment composite and skill level of residents, survey respondents were asked to indicate their occupation in 2001. Interestingly, no single category of occupation dominated the survey results, thus indicating that the community has an economically diverse population, and this trend continued in 2007 for the most part. This is important during economic down turns.

Figure III-2: 2007 General Employment Classifications of Survey Respondents



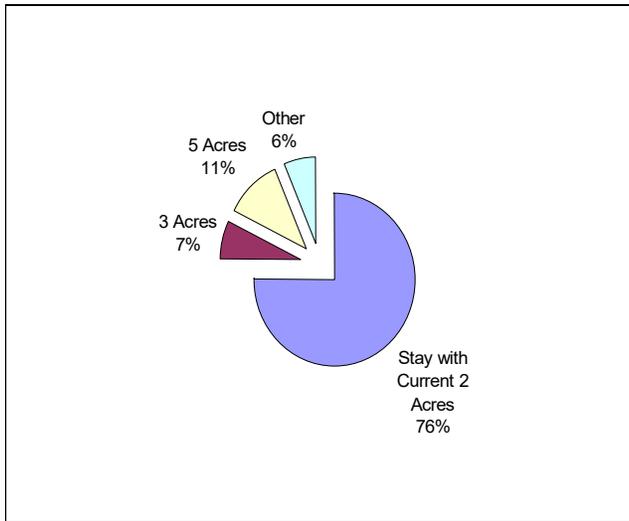
Educational levels of residents are an important component to understand when developing a long-range economic strategy for a community. Fostering job growth that corresponds to the education level of Epsom’s residents ensures that they are qualified for such jobs. For the 2001 Master Plan, to better estimate the education level of the population, survey respondents indicated their highest level of education. Results from 2001 indicate that over 35% of the population has earned a high school diploma and that 25% are college graduates. As indicated in Chapter II, the 2000 US Census data echoed the 35% high school graduate number, but indicated a 55.4% number for college graduates (Associates Degrees or higher).

Figure III-3: Educational Levels of 2001 Master Plan Survey Respondents



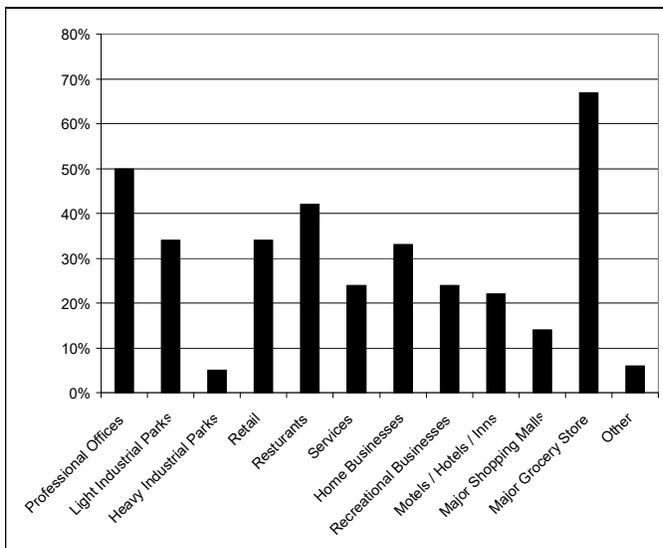
For the 2001 Master Plan, to better understand residents' opinions regarding commercial development respondents were asked whether lot sizes for commercial development should be increased, decreased, or remain the same. A strong majority, 76% respondents, indicated that commercial lot size requirements should generally remain 2 acres.

Figure III-4: Respondents Opinions Regarding Lot Size Requirements for Commercial / Industrial Uses (2001 Master Plan Survey Results)



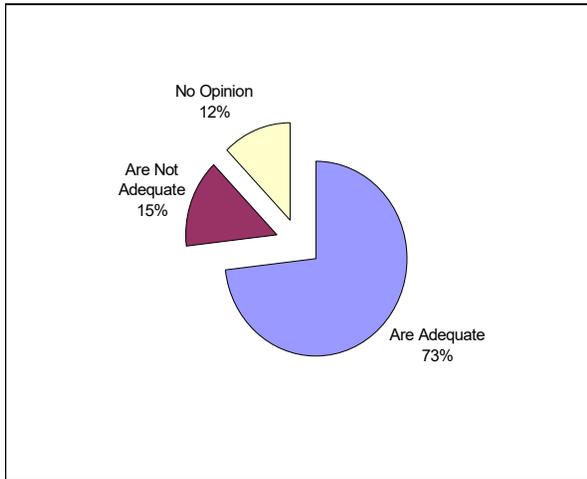
To understand what types of commercial development to encourage in the future, residents were asked to rank various types of development for the 2001 Master Plan. Types of development most favored by survey respondents included a major grocery store, professional offices, and restaurants. The 2007 Visioning Session and survey for the Master Plan confirmed much of this and added high tech industries to the list of desired businesses

Figure III-5: Respondents Opinions Regarding Types of Commercial Enterprises to Encourage in the Future (2001 Master Plan Survey Results)



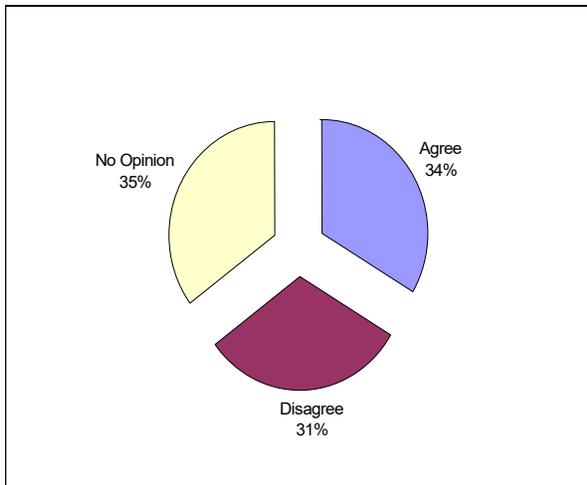
Residents were also asked whether they believe if the existing size and location of the commercial zone was adequate for the 2001 Master Plan. A large majority of respondents (73%) indicated that they believed that the existing commercial zones were acceptable. However, it is important to note that this is contradictory to input received during the visioning sessions.

Figure III-6: 2001 Master Plan Respondents Opinions Regarding if Existing Commercial Zoning Districts are Adequate



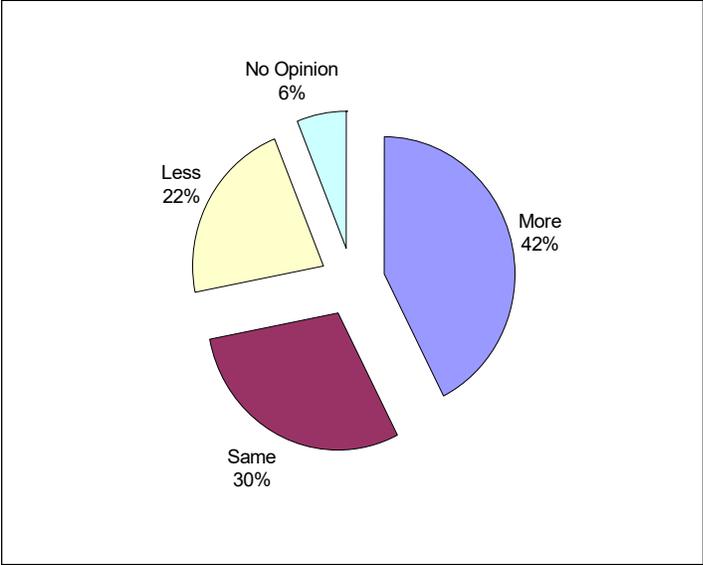
Because the current commercial zone allows residential uses thus causing land use conflicts, residents were asked in 2001 if the Town should develop an independent commercial zone. Responses to this question were mixed, and there was no clear consensus on the issue.

Figure III-7: Respondents Opinions Regarding if the Town Should Create an Autonomous Commercial Zoning District (2001 Master Plan Survey Results)



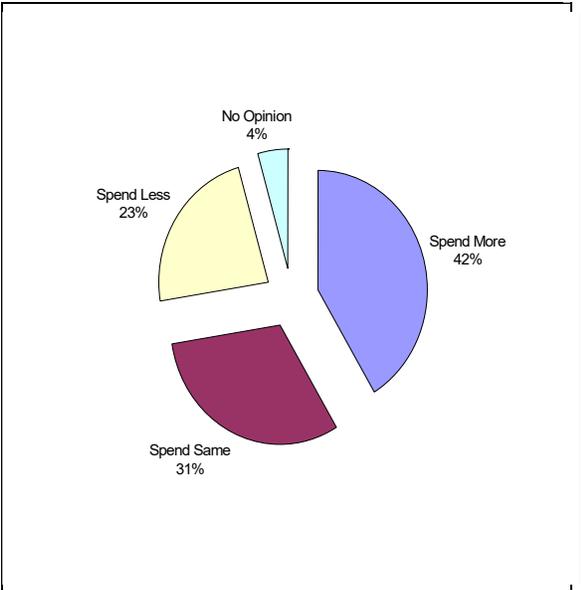
To help the Town better use its resources; residents were asked what level of effort the Town should focus on economic development. A total of 42% of respondents indicated that more effort should be expended.

Figure III-8: Respondents Opinions Regarding the Level of Effort the Town Should Focus on Economic Development Activities (2001 Master Plan Survey Results)



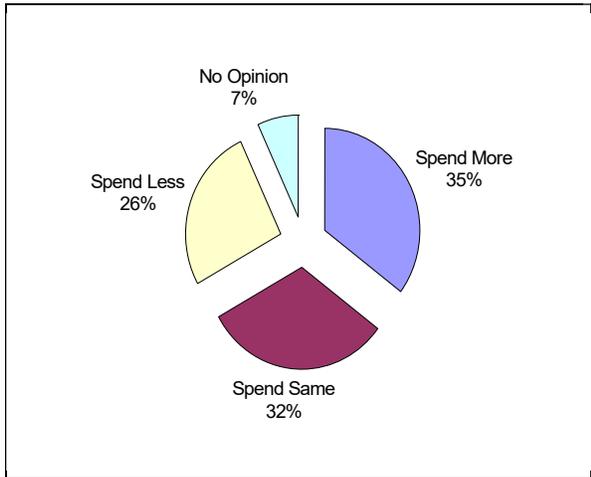
Survey respondents were also asked in 2001 to indicate the amount of town funds they felt should be devoted to economic development. A total of 42% of respondents desired more spending on economic development efforts.

Figure III-9: Respondents Opinions Regarding Use of Town Funds on Economic Development Activities (2001 Master Plan Survey Results)



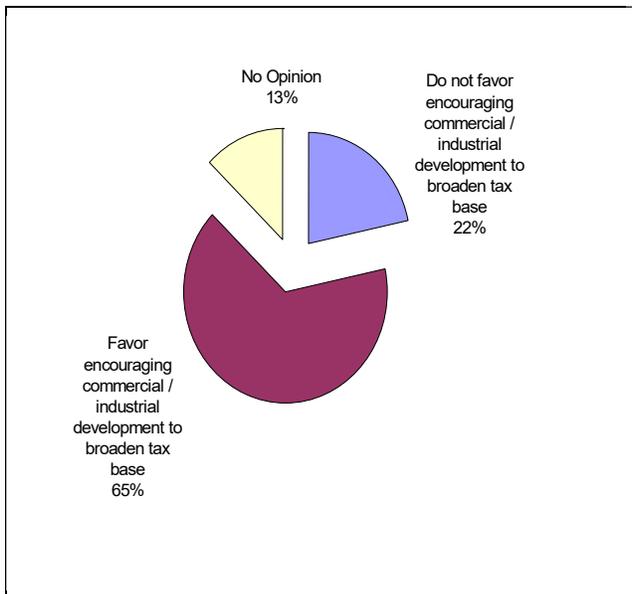
As with other questions, no solid consensus among survey respondents could be identified regarding whether the Town should appropriate resources to preserve and attract light industrial development. Thirty-five (35) percent felt that Town should devote more resources to such an effort.

Figure III-10: 2001 Master Plan Respondents Opinions Regarding Use of Town Resources to Attract and Preserve Light Industry



Lastly, survey respondents were asked their thoughts regarding the encouragement of economic development to broaden the tax base. A significant majority of the community (66%) indicated that they favor such a proposal.

Figure III-11: 2001 Master Plan Residents Opinions Regarding Encouraging Development of Commercial and Industrial Development to Broaden the Tax Base



The results from the 2007 Master Plan Survey and Visioning Session alludes to some to these factors as well.

Figure III-12: What type of Development would you Like in Epsom (2007 Master Plan Survey)

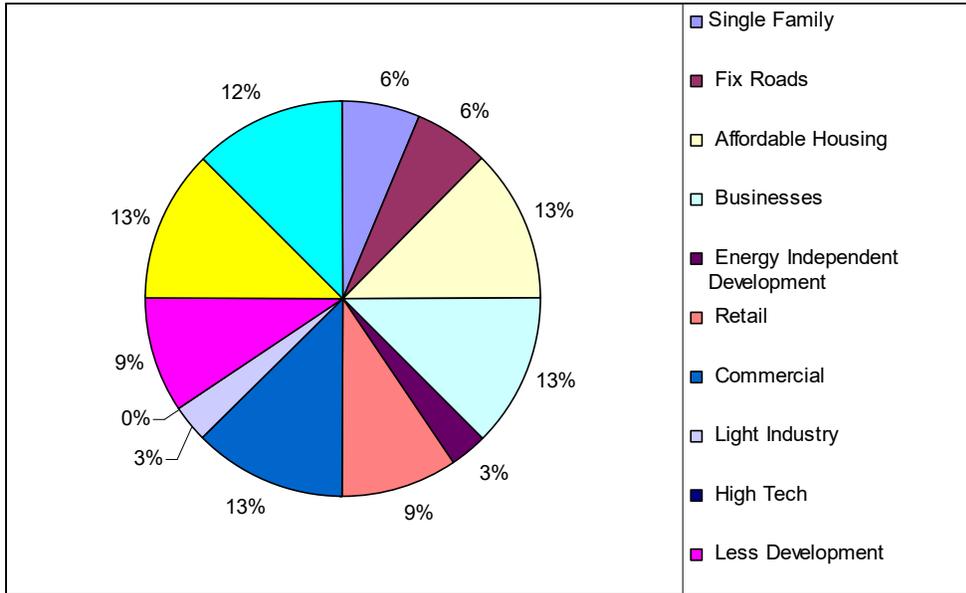


Figure III-13: Where Should Development Occur in Epsom (2007 Master Plan Survey)

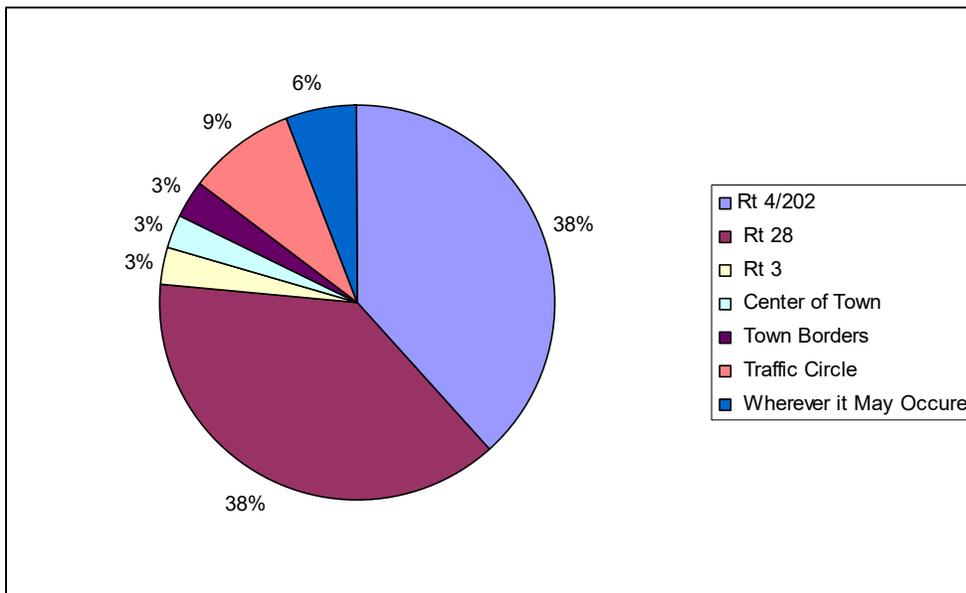
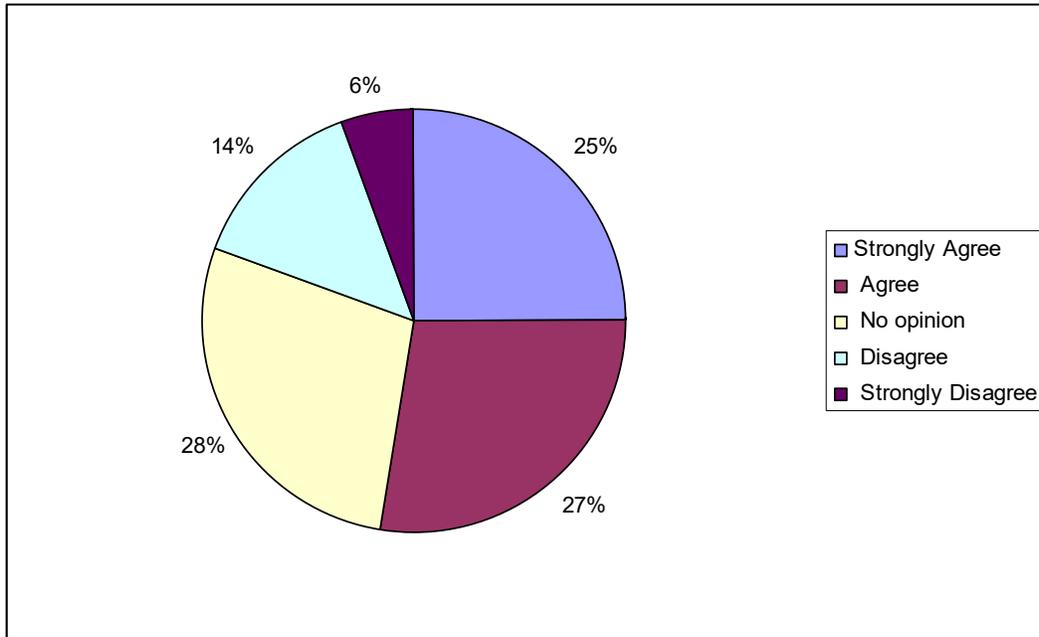


Figure III-14: Should the Town Rezone to Expand Commercial & Industrial Development (2007 Master Plan Survey)



Overview of Past Economic Development Efforts in Epsom

Epsom Economic Development Committee

Over the past thirty years, there have been few organized economic development efforts in the community. During the 1980's, Epsom's first economic development committee was created. Consisting of community leaders and business people, this ad-hoc organization served largely as a public relations group to promote Epsom as a business-friendly community. Despite the best efforts of the group, the group disbanded in the early 1990s, and in light of recommendations made as part of the 2001 Master Plan, the EDC was re-established. The EDC should continue to grow and expand its role by taking a proactive role in fostering community involvement, as well as the promotion, retention, and recruitment of business in Epsom. The EDC should also look at ways to foster the increased exposure of Epsom's businesses, and find ways to ensure that existing businesses can expand easier and make locating a business in Epsom easier to accomplish and advantageous to do so.

Chamber of Commerce

Unlike some other smaller communities in the region, Epsom does not have a local chamber of commerce. Rather, some larger businesses in the community have joined the Concord and Pittsfield Chambers of Commerce. Because the community does not have a local economic development committee or chamber of commerce, it is difficult for town officials, community leaders, and local business people to establish a mutually beneficial working relationship. The Economic Development Committee can help to serve in a role traditionally served by a chamber of commerce.

Overview of Historic Economic Trends

Local Employment Base by SIC Code 1980-2000

Understanding historic trends in the local economic base can help the community better develop sound economic development strategies for the future. One key trend is the changes in the size and type of the local employment base. Local employment data (i.e. the number and types of jobs in community) is collected by various government agencies, including the US Census Bureau and New Hampshire Office of Employment Security. Using a classification system known as SIC, or Standard Industrial Classification, the number of employment positions for each business in the community can be identified and tracked over time.

Since 1980, the number of job sectors as a percent of the total employment base of the community decreased for 6 of the 13 observed SIC employment categories. The 6 employment sectors that have become less prevalent in the community included agriculture, mining, construction, manufacturing, professional services, and some other industries not reported. All other businesses noted in SIC codes either remained constant or increased. Types of employment sectors with notable increases included communications/public utilities, wholesale-retail trade, and financial/insurance/real estate.

In total, the number of total jobs in Epsom increased nearly 198% from 1980 to 2000. For more detail, please refer to Figure III-15.

Figure II-15: Trends in Employment Base, as Sorted by SIC Code, 1980 – 2000

Industry	1980	1980 (% of Total)	1990	1990 (% of Total)	2000	2000 (% of Total)	Change 1980 - 2000
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	17	1.4%	32	1.9%	18	1.0%	5.9%
Mining	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
Construction	124	10.4%	179	10.6%	147	8.8%	18.5%
Manufacturing	231	19.4%	305	18.1%	266	15.9%	15.1%
Transportation	27	2.3%	27	1.6%	88	5.2%	225.9%
Communication/Public utilities	39	3.3%	14	0.8%	84	5.0%	115.3%
Wholesale-Retail Trade	267	22.4%	347	20.6%	384	22.9%	43.8%
Financial/Insurance/Real Estate	66	5.5%	109	6.5%	223	13.3%	237.9%
Personal Services	30	2.5%	35	2.1%	55	3.3%	83.3%
Entertainment/Recreation	0	0%	22	1.3%	11	0.6%	NA
Professional Services	250	20.9%	389	23.1%	115	6.9%	-185.1%
Public Administration	93	7.8%	118	7%	187	11.2%	101.0%
Industry Not Reported	50	4.2%	108	6.4%	99	5.9%	98%
TOTAL	1194	100%	1685	100%	1677	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census

Number of Total Employers (Private Sector)

When tracking trends in the total number of businesses in a community, it is important to note that the criteria for tracking businesses may vary between agencies and private corporations. For example, data presented in Figure II-16 from the New Hampshire Office of Employment Security reflects "covered" employment, or businesses and jobs eligible for unemployment

insurance. Other data, discussed later in this chapter provided by Dunn & Bradstreet, highlights all firms in the community, including home occupations and other "uncovered" businesses.

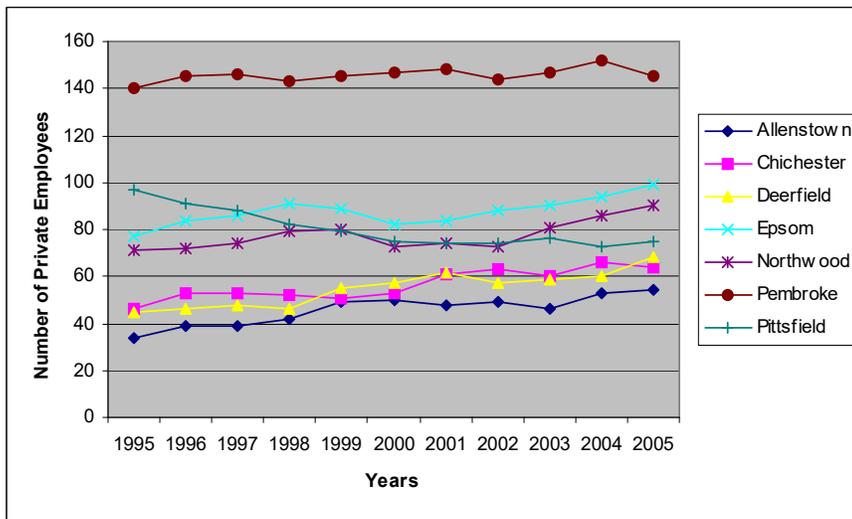
Tracking the total number of covered or uncovered is an important indicator of the health of the local economy. According to the New Hampshire Office of Employment Security, the total number of "covered" local businesses in Epsom increased from 77 in 1995 to 99 in 2005. This is a net growth of 29% or 22 new firms. This increase surpassed all other communities that directly abut Epsom except Deerfield (23). Based upon the trend from 1995 to 2005 (a 22% increase in businesses), it is estimated that a total of 121 businesses will reside Epsom by 2015. For more detail regarding trends in the number of local "covered" businesses, please refer to Figures III-16 and 17.

Figure III-16: Number of "Covered" Private Businesses in Epsom 1995-2005

Town	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Change 95-05
Allenstown	34	39	39	42	49	50	48	49	46	53	54	20
Chichester	46	53	53	52	51	53	61	63	60	66	64	18
Deerfield	45	46	48	46	55	57	62	57	59	60	68	23
Epsom	77	84	86	91	89	82	84	88	90	94	99	22
Northwood	71	72	74	79	80	73	74	73	81	86	90	19
Pembroke	140	145	146	143	145	147	148	144	147	152	145	5
Pittsfield	97	91	88	82	79	75	74	74	76	73	75	-22

Source: NH Department of Employment Security, 1995-2005.

Figure III-17: Number of "Covered" Businesses in Epsom and Abutting Communities, 1995-2005



Source: NH Department of Employment Security, 1995-2005.

Number of Jobs 1995-2005

As is the case with tracking the number of businesses in the community, trends in the total number of jobs in the community is also an important measure of the health of the local economy. During the period of 1995 to 2005, the employment base in Epsom increased by 93 jobs. This represents a 10.3% increase. This increase was not as significant as those

experienced by the abutting communities of Northwood, Allenstown, Pembroke, Chichester, or Deerfield. Pittsfield was the only abutting community that saw a decrease in the number of jobs.

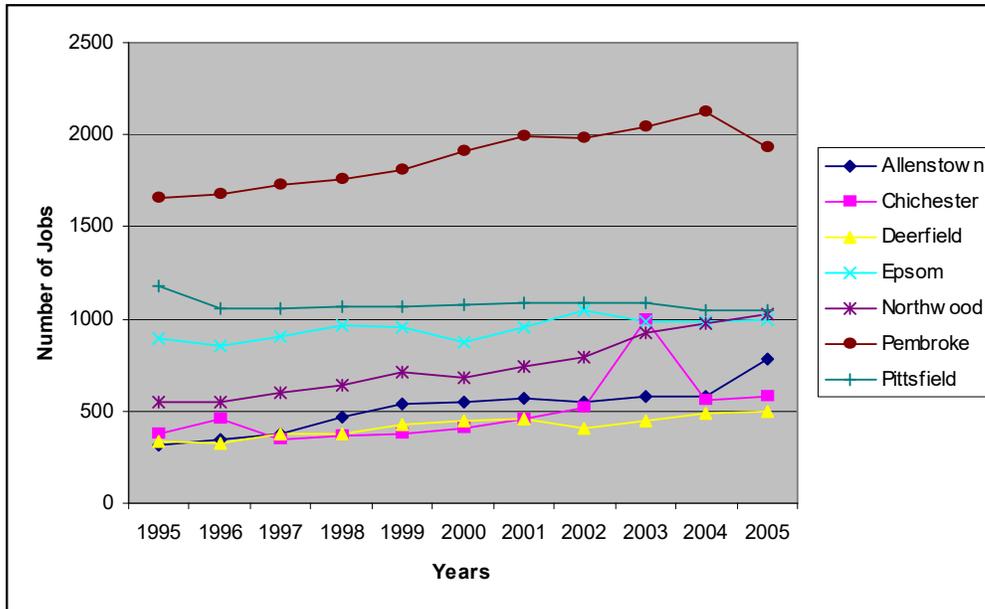
Based upon the trends observed from 1995 to 2005 (a 10.3% increase in jobs), it is projected that Epsom will have a total of 1,102 jobs by the year 2015. For more detail regarding Epsom's employment base, as compared to abutting communities, please refer to Figures III-18 and III-19.

Figure III-18: Total Number of Jobs in Epsom, New Hampshire and Abutting Communities, 1995-2005

Total jobs	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Change 1995 - 2005
Allenstown	319	350	379	470	542	545	567	547	575	580	783	464
Chichester	381	456	346	366	371	406	460	521	991	562	580	199
Deerfield	333	324	372	375	423	449	455	409	452	490	502	169
Epsom	899	852	906	962	957	876	958	1,050	990	987	992	93
Northwood	545	552	599	640	716	678	740	795	928	980	1,031	486
Pembroke	1661	1681	1732	1755	1,805	1,907	1,995	1,985	2,041	2,127	1,935	274
Pittsfield	1178	1059	1061	1070	1,062	1,082	1,089	1,086	1,087	1,042	1,046	-132

Source: NH Employment Security, 1995-2005

Figure III-19: Total Number of Jobs in Epsom NH and Abutting Communities, 1995 - 2005



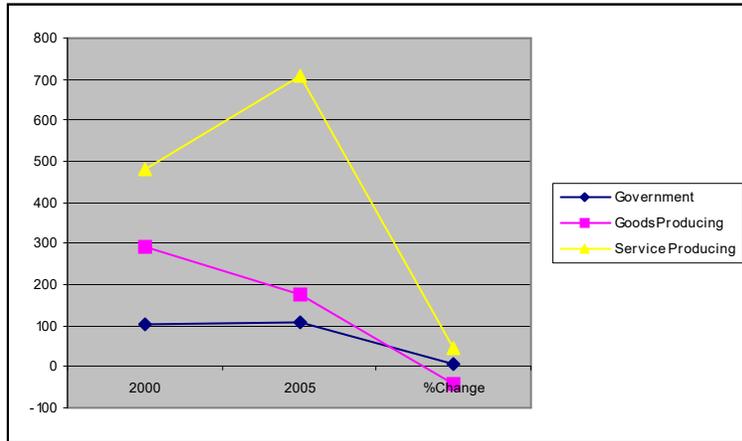
Source: NH Employment Security, 1995-2005

Employment Composite Trends, 2000-2005

As the economy of the region has evolved, the job base of the community has also changed. Between 2000 and 2005, Epsom saw a 6.8% increase in government jobs, and a 46.5% increase in service jobs, while the goods-producing jobs declined 40%. Merrimack County on the other

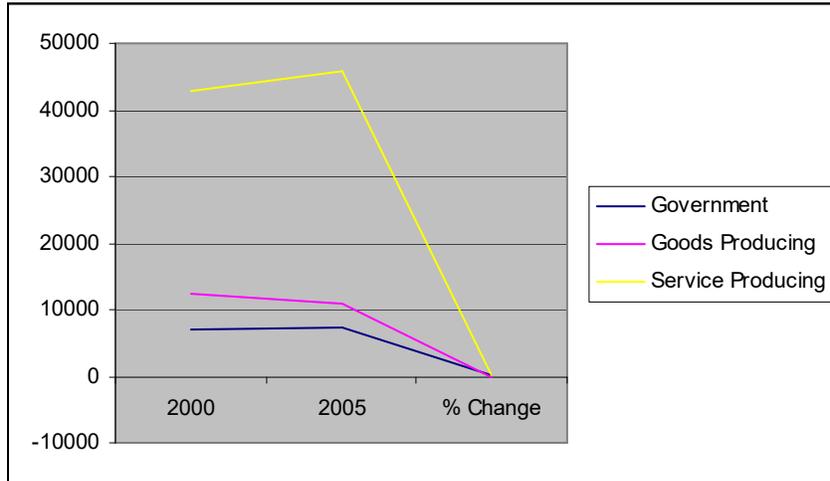
hand, saw increases in government jobs and service jobs at 4.9% and 7.6% respectively, while the goods producing jobs decreased 11.8%. In all three categories Epsom exceeded the rates of the county. See Figures III-20 and III-21 for more detail.

Figure III-20: Epsom Employment Composite Changes, 2000-2005



Source: NH Employment Security

Figure III-21: Merrimack County Composite Changes, 2000-2005



Source: NH Employment Security

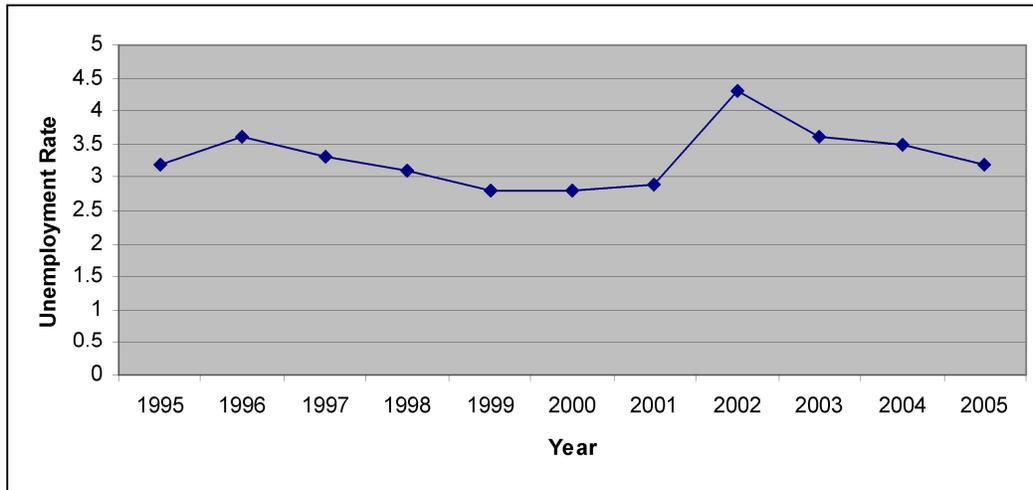
Unemployment Trends, 1995-2005

In addition to tracking the number of employers and jobs in the community, the unemployment rate of a municipality also serves as an indicator of the general condition of the local economy.

During 1995, unemployment in Epsom was around 3.2%. The economic recovery that followed has yielded an unemployment rate of less than 3% in 2000. Since this low in 2000, the unemployment rate has risen to 4.3% in 2002, but then gradually declined to a rate of 3.2% by 2005. Though a low unemployment rate indicates a very strong economy, it also indicates that there is little opportunity for expansion of the economy due to a lack of available workforce.

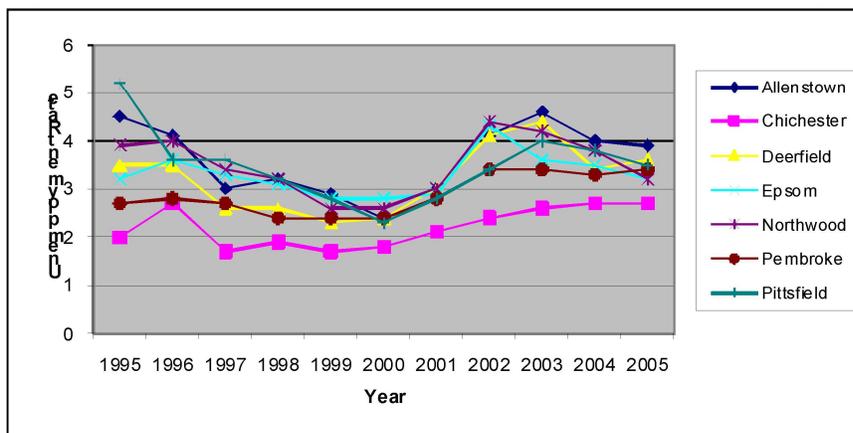
Ironically, this also means that some local employers may have to relocate to find available workforce, or pay inflated wages that ultimately can lead to significant increases in living expenses, home prices, and local housing shortages. Please refer to figures III-22 and III-23 for an overview of unemployment trends in Epsom and abutting communities.

Figure III-22: Epsom Unemployment Rate, 1995-2005



Source: NH Employment Security

Figure III-23: Comparison of Unemployment Rates to Abutting Communities, 1995-2005



Source: NH Employment Security

Trends in Wages Paid by Local Employers

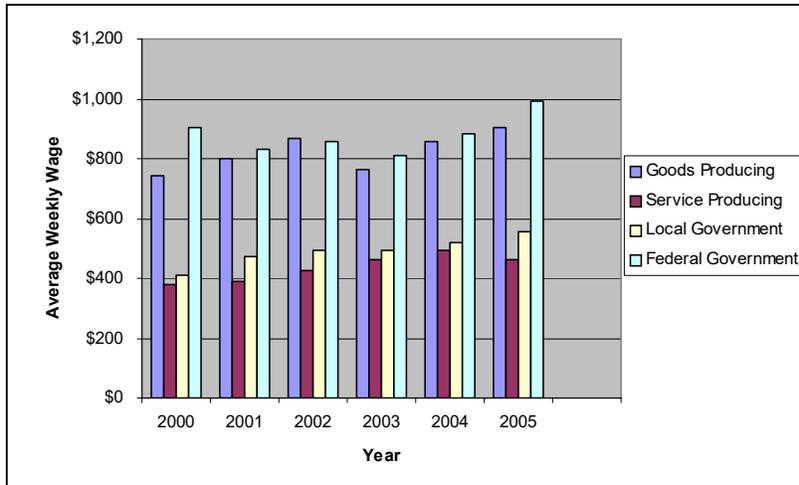
Wages paid by local employers is yet another good indication of the strength of the local economy. Overall, total wages paid in Epsom have increased significantly from 2000 to 2005. Non-manufacturing wages increased 21%, manufacturing wages increased 22%, and local government wages increased 35.4% while Federal government wages increased 9.7%. For more detail, please refer to figures III-24 and III-25.

Figure III-24: Trends in Wages Paid by Epsom Businesses, 2000-2005

Weekly Wages Epsom	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Percent Change
Goods Producing	\$743	\$798	\$865	\$763	\$857	\$905	22%
Service Producing	\$381	\$391	\$428	\$460	\$492	\$461	21%
Local Government	\$410	\$473	\$493	\$491	\$520	\$555	35.40%
Federal Government	\$906	\$830	\$858	\$812	\$885	\$994	9.70%

Source: NH Office of Employment Security

Figure III-25: Trends in Wage Increases for Manufacturing, Non-Manufacturing, and Public Sector Jobs in Epsom, NH 2000-2005



Source: NH Employment Security

Wage Changes vs. US Inflation Rate

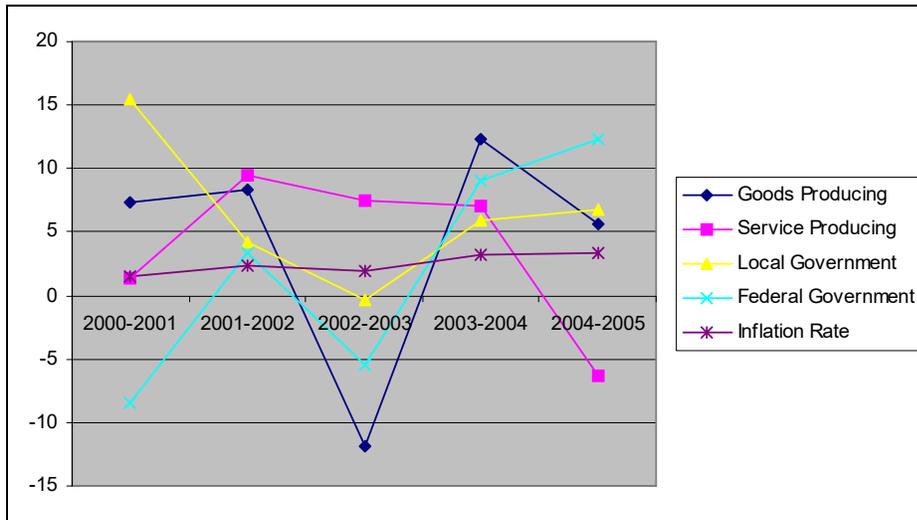
By comparing the change in wages with the inflation rate, one can get an idea of how the buying power of Epsom’s residents has changed between 2000 and 2005. An increase in buying power for a sector of the economy would occur when wages rise faster than does the inflation rate. Conversely, when the inflation rate rises faster than the wage rate, a decrease in buying power would occur. A decrease in wages below that of the rate of inflation would indicate a drastic decline in buying power. Please see figures III-26 and III-27 for details.

Figure III-26: Wage Change vs. US Inflation

Wage vs. US Inflation	2000-2001		2001-2002		2002-2003		2003-2004		2004-2005	
	Wage Change	Inflation								
Goods Producing	7.4	1.55	8.4	2.38	-11.8	1.88	12.3	3.26	5.6	3.42
Service Producing	1.3		9.5		7.5		7		-6.3	
Local Government	15.4		4.2		-0.4		5.9		6.7	
Federal Government	-8.4		3.4		-5.4		9		12.3	

Source: inflationdata.com & NH Employment Security

Figure III-27: Wage Change vs. US Inflation Graph



Source: inflationdata.com & NH Employment Security

Local Employers

As noted previously, tracking key characteristics of local employers can assist the community in developing a long-range economic strategy. According to Dun & Bradstreet, a private for profit business tracking company, Epsom has a total of 204 businesses. Of that total, 159, or nearly 78%, of all businesses in the community have less than 5 employees. As stated previously, NHDES listed the number of “covered” businesses as 82 in 2000, and the difference of 122 businesses most likely represents additional businesses that are not “covered”, which could be an indicator of Epsom being home to many small and home-based businesses. In total, there were 1,123 job opportunities in the community in 2000 according to Dun and Bradstreet. See Figure III-25 for details.

Figure III-28: Local Employers Sorted by Number of Employees

Number of Employees	Number of Businesses In Epsom
5 or Less	159
6 to 10	23
11 to 20	13
21 to 30	3
30 to 40	1
40 or More	5
TOTAL	204

Source: Dun & Bradstreet, fall 2000

The same data also indicates that 71% of businesses in Epsom had gross sales less than \$200,000. The total sales generated by Epsom businesses in 2000 were \$93,632,699. See Figure III-29 for details.

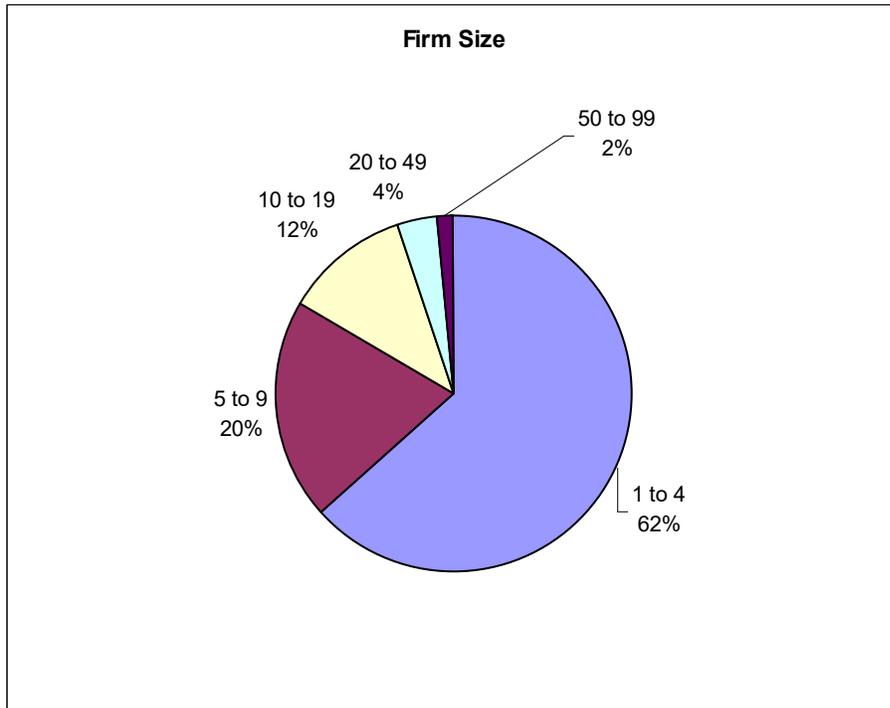
Figure III-29: Total Number of Local Businesses Sorted by Gross Earnings

Gross Income	Number of Firms
Under \$200,000	145
\$201,000 to \$400,000	15
\$401,000 to \$600,000	11
\$601,000 to \$800,000	7
\$801,000 to \$1,000,000	6
Over \$1,000,000	20
Total	204

Source: Dun & Bradstreet, fall 2000

In Epsom, 24 businesses provide 633, or 56.4%, of the 1,123 total employment opportunities in the community. Furthermore, these same businesses generated \$58,360,044 in gross sales, or over 62.3% of total sales in the community. Clearly, these twenty-four (24) businesses play an important role in the local economy and thus, the Town should take appropriate actions to preserve these important employers. However, at the same time, the Town should also encourage diversification so that, in the event any of these major employers should leave the community, there will be opportunity for other businesses to absorb the loss.

Figure III-30:



Factors Influencing Economic Development

Land Availability

Based upon the 2001 Master Plan Existing and Future Land Use Chapters, Epsom had approximately 1,264 acres of land, or 5.8% of the total community land area, zoned for commercial use. Of that total, only about 300 acres, or 25% of the commercially available land was developable due to the presence of wetlands, floodplains, or scenic easements held by NH Department of Transportation. Because of these factors, relatively little land was available for commercial or industrial development.

The 2001 Master Plan community survey noted that nearly 65% of residents favored expanding the non-residential tax base of the community. However, because of the limited amount of land that was available for commercial uses, it appeared that more land would have to be re-zoned for such uses in order to have any significant expansion of the tax base. In reviewing the transportation network, land use patterns, as well as natural development constraints, land located to the south of the commercial district, west of the traffic circle would be most appropriate for future commercial and light industrial development. This area is largely undeveloped and is dominated by Windsor, Shapleigh, and Gloucester soils. These are sandy soil groups with slopes generally ranging from 3% to 15%. Because of the presence of well drained soils, few wetlands, and generally gentle slopes, as well as access to major roadways, this area of the community would be the most appropriate location to expand commercial zoning. Since the 2001 Master Plan made these recommendations, the Town of Epsom has established a new Residential/Light Commercial District situated along Routes 4 and 28. The purpose of this district is to provide light commercial uses that are compatible with residential uses. Permitted uses include professional offices and retail shops to name a few.

Building Availability

Availability of commercial, industrial, and office space is critical to the attraction and expansion of desirable businesses. Based upon a survey of property records, Epsom retains a total of 85,590 square feet of non-residential/commercial building space. Approximately 14,196 square feet of that is office space. Though no formal statistics are available, it is generally believed that there is little vacant commercial space available for rent.

According to the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development (NHDRED), there does not appear to be any current data on the average rental fees for commercial, industrial, or office space in Epsom. For the 2001 Master Plan update NHDRED had typical ranges for Epsom as follows:

Commercial (Per Square Foot):	\$ 5 to \$10
Industrial Space (Per Square Foot):	\$5.50 to \$5.75
Office Space (Per Square Foot):	\$18.00

It should be noted that as market values have increased over the past 7 years, that it is reasonable to assume that these rates may have increased as well, although there are no formal statistics available. Noting that Concord, as the center of the region, can influence rental fees in its neighboring communities, it is important to note and compare Epsom's rates to that of Concord. As of 2007, NHDRED has indicated rental rates in Concord as follows:

Industrial Land (Per Acre):	\$ 45 to \$65
Industrial (Per Square Foot):	\$ 5.50 to \$6.50

Office (Per Square Foot): \$14 to \$ 23

In comparing Epsom's average from 2000 to Concord's average for 2007, it would seem that Epsom's 2000 numbers are comparable to Concord's 2007 numbers. Given that Concord's numbers probably reflect an increase over the past 7 years and Epsom's do not, it is reasonable to assume that Epsom's numbers have increased along with the market as well. It should be noted that small businesses would most likely use Concord as a comparison to other average rentals in the region, and would most likely locate in the community in which overhead could be lower. With rent being a key component of business overhead, any effort to lower rent would be beneficial to the town. Some possible ways influence the rental rate in town could be to expand non-residential zoning in an effort to encourage more non-residential development in town, thus increasing the potential for supply, and possibly to encourage the expansion of public utilities like sewer and water (sewer and water are discussed in more detail below).

One key component of a long-term economic development strategy requires the retention of some office and commercial space to be used as "incubator space". Incubator space is generally small office or industrial building space that start-up businesses, or expanding cottage industries, can occupy at reasonable rates. Epsom had very little incubator space at the time the 2001 Master Plan was written, and it does not appear that this has changed. This was attributable to the fact that much of the limited quantity of industrial and commercial space in Epsom was owner-occupied in 2000. A search of Non-residential real estate in Epsom conducted in February, 2007 has confirmed that this trend continues at the time the 2010 Master Plan update was written. As a result, commercial ventures that may be desirable in Epsom may be forced to look to other communities, specifically Pittsfield, that has such space readily available. Establishing the new Residential/Light Commercial district was done in an effort to expand the commercial/office space in Epsom, and it is recommended that the town continue to make accommodations to encourage this type of development in order to further diversify the local economy, as well as encourage growth of existing cottage industries.

Home Occupations

Home occupations are an important component of the local economy of Epsom. For the 2001 Master Plan update it was estimated that there were approximately 100 home businesses in the community, and as of February 2007 this number appears to be accurate. Home businesses are regulated by Article III, Section K of the Zoning Ordinance. This ordinance requires that all home businesses shall be accessory uses, have no more than 2 employees, and that hours of such businesses shall be limited to 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The planning board requires a site plan review to establish home businesses.

In order to encourage home businesses, the planning board should consider developing reduced site plan review or performance standards for home occupations, or perhaps delegating such responsibility to a town official or a minor plan review committee consisting of the Police and Fire Chiefs, Town Road Agent, Code Officer, and a representative from the planning board. This Minor Plan Review committee are used in communities around the state, including the towns of Alton, Durham, and Londonderry.

Water / Sewer Coverage

As noted in the Community Facilities Chapter of the 2001 Master Plan, Epsom has a limited public water system and no public sewer available. These circumstances hinder the growth of certain types of commercial and industrial development.

Currently, municipal water service is located along Route 4, east of the traffic circle, and extends to Short Falls Road and the southern portion of Goboro Road. In total, there are approximately 300 service connections. Consumers are charged \$0.475 per cubic foot of water for the first 1,000 feet, and then \$4.75 for each additional gallon. Water is provided to users by two stratified drift aquifer wells. One well is located on Route 4, near the Library, and the other is located on Water Street, near the Epsom Central School. Together, these wells generate approximately 80,000 gallons of water per day. Both wells are in good condition, and maintenance for both was conducted between 2003 and 2005.

The current distribution system is comprised of pipes of varying material including cast iron, ductile iron, A/C pipe, and PVC plastic pipe. Water mains range in size from 2 to 14 inches in diameter. The oldest pipes in the system were installed in the 1940s. Overall, the water district contains 10.6 miles of pipe.

For several years, Town Officials have discussed expanding the water system, primarily to promote economic development. However, no formal plans to extend the district beyond the current geographic area were developed, because preliminary cost estimates indicated that the cost of such an expansion would be prohibitive. It is important to note that alternatives are available for extension of water lines beyond the Suncook River. Possible alternatives include use of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to offset costs of expansion, creation of an independent water district with separate infrastructure and governing body from the existing water district, or the use of tax increment financing (TIF) to finance payment of debt for expansion of water lines for new businesses. Unfortunately, further study of these alternatives is necessary to determine if any are viable solutions for expanding water coverage. Regardless of the means, most residents and community officials believe that the expansion of water coverage to commercial land west of the Suncook River is critical for the long-term economic prosperity of Epsom.

Natural Constraints

Natural constraints are important in the long-term economic strategy for Epsom. Currently, a significant amount of the commercially zoned land in the community is encumbered. Floodplains associated with the Suncook and Little Suncook Rivers make additional acres not developable.

Generally, soils located in the existing commercial zones are adequate for development. Hinkley, Au Gres, and Gloucester soils are dominant in areas located outside of floodplain areas. These soils are sandy loams with few development constraints.

Strategies to Promote Economic Development

There are several ways for a community to promote economic development. Tools such as land use controls, tax incentives, and infrastructure can all influence how a community's economy grows. The Town can put land use and other tools in place that make bringing or expanding one's businesses in Epsom a more attractive. With these tools in place, Epsom's economy can grow like a well fertilized garden.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF): Tax increment financing (TIF) is an innovative tool that uses tax revenue from new developments within certain designated areas of communities to pay for new infrastructure to serve those new businesses, business expansions, and affordable housing projects.

TIF is a planning concept that was created in the 1970's and has been widely adopted by several states in the nation. As of 1985, 33 states had adopted TIF enabling legislation. The State of New Hampshire granted authority to municipalities to create tax increment finance districts in 1979, with passage of RSA 162-K: 1-15. Currently, at least nine (9) communities in the State of New Hampshire have implemented tax increment finance districts. The most successful districts are located in the cities of Keene and Concord.

There are numerous legal and planning issues to consider when implementing tax increment finance districts. In New Hampshire, communities must adopt a TIF plan and development program to ensure that the community has a clear focus on what the TIF will accomplish. There are several legal considerations that communities must adhere to when instituting a tax increment finance district. These requirements are mandated by NH RSA 162-K: 1-15.

Also, before adopting a TIF, communities must establish the geographic boundaries of the proposed TIF district. In conjunction with this step, NH RSA 162-K: 6 requires that a development program be created for the proposed area. This program must contain "a complete statement as to the public facilities to be constructed within the district, the open space to be created, the environmental controls to be applied, the proposed reuse of private property, and the proposed operations of the district after the capital improvements within the district have been completed (RSA 162-K: 6)." Furthermore, state law requires that the development program "provide for carrying out relocation of persons, families, businesses concerns, and others displaced by the project, pursuant to a relocation plan, including the method for relocation of residents in decent, safe, and sanitary dwelling accommodations, and reasonable moving costs, determined to be feasible by the municipality (RSA 162-K:6)." Essentially, the program development plan is a master plan for the area to consider the broad social, environmental, and fiscal impacts of a proposed TIF.

The second major requirement of TIF enabling legislation is that communities must have a TIF Plan. Mandated by RSA 162-K:9, the plan must contain the following: "costs of development programs, sources of revenue to finance those costs including estimates of tax increments, amount of bonded indebtedness to be incurred, and the duration of the program's existence (RSA 162-k:9)." The plan must also contain "a statement of estimated impact of tax increment financing on the assessed values of all taxing Jurisdictions in which the district is located (RSA 162-K:9)." Prior to the adoption of this plan, State law requires that the County Commissioners and School Board or District be afforded the opportunity to meet with the governing body to

voice concerns and understand how the tax burden will be shifted to maintain the revenue stream (NH RSA 162-K:1-15).

Tax increment financing is attractive to communities, as it can provide incentives for economic development in the community, without taking resources away from other projects and community needs. However, TIF is legally complex and requires the assistance from legal, planning, and financial experts to make it successful.

Performance Zoning: This approach to zoning is an alternative to conventional zoning approaches. As opposed to developing a prescriptive zoning scheme, which dictates permitted uses and uses by special exception, performance zoning allows a wide range of uses, provided that such uses meet environmental, aesthetic, and other performance standards. In addition to providing specific performance standards, such ordinances also include incentives for developers to develop better projects. Common examples include density, height, setback, and other dimensional bonuses in exchange for greater landscaping; donation of off-site property for a public purpose; location of parking to side or rear of buildings, or construction of public art.

Performance zoning is slowly being utilized in New Hampshire. Presently the towns of Bedford and Bow are among the handful of communities that have adopted such an ordinance.

Adoption of RSA 79:E: RSA 79:E was adopted by the New Hampshire Legislature in 2006, and during Town Meeting in 2007 several New Hampshire communities have adopted it as a way to help foster revitalization of downtown buildings. Revitalization can serve to foster economic growth and development in a community. RSA 79:E provides opportunities for temporary tax relief for qualifying structures in light of renovation efforts. Quoting a press release from the NH Main Street Center, adopting the provisions of RSA 79:E permit that:

“Any city or town may adopt the incentive program with any majority vote of its legislative body. Once it is adopted, a property owner who wants to substantially rehabilitate a building located in downtown, or in a village center, may apply to the local governing body for a period of temporary tax relief. The law is structured to encourage not only rehabilitation of downtown structures, but housing in the downtown area.

The temporary tax relief consists of a finite period during which the property tax on the structure will not increase as a result of its substantial rehabilitation. In exchange for the relief, the property owner grants a covenant ensuring the continuation of the public benefit during the period of the tax relief. Once the tax period expires, the structure is taxed at its full market value, taking the rehabilitation into account”

RSA 79:E makes it easier and more likely that a property owner will rehabilitate downtown properties. As a result, this can be conducive to economic development.

Recommended Land Use Changes to Promote Existing Businesses

In order to provide opportunity for future economic growth and to protect the rural character and natural resources of the community, the following zoning changes are recommended. It should be noted that the 2001 Master Plan made recommendations for zoning changes and that the following recommendations are presented in light of what has been implemented since the 2001 Master Plan.

Create a Light Industrial / Commercial District west of the Traffic Circle: To meet the goal of separating intense commercial and industrial land uses from residential areas, the 2001 Master Plan recommended that land west of the Traffic Circle be zoned exclusively for industrial and commercial uses, and this is still recommended. By excluding residential development from this area, future land use conflicts will be avoided.

In this area of the community, permitted uses would include fast food restaurants, manufacturing establishments, light industrial uses, as well as retail and whole sale establishments.

Though residential uses would not be permitted in this area, it is recommended that specific architectural and landscaping requirements be developed to ensure that future commercial and industrial developments help strengthen the aesthetics and image of the community.

To protect residential uses located along Goboro Road, appropriate noise and lighting performance standards should be enacted in this proposed district.

Remove land between Center Hill Road and North Road from the Commercial District and replace with a Gateway Transition Zone: Because much of the land along Route 4 between Center Hill Road and North Road are wetlands or under a scenic easement, it is recommended that this land be rezoned to a "gateway transition zone".

This change as proposed for the 2001 Master Plan would help promote the scenic qualities of this area and limit future development and/or expansion of industrial uses in this area. It would also help to enhance the image of the community, and as a result is still recommended.

Create a flexible commercial district from North Road west to the Northwood Town Line: Because some important seasonal businesses and restaurants are located along Route 4, east of North Road, it is recommended that the Town rezone this area to encourage water based uses, such as the existing marina, small restaurants, and seasonal homes on reduced lots. Incentives should also be included for the removal of some of the blight located within this area. This recommendation from the 2001 Master Plan is still beneficial.

Architectural and Design Performance Standards: During the 2001 Master Plan process, perhaps the most important issue to the residents of Epsom was the preservation of the unique rural character of the community. This issue was expressed strongly by residents through the community survey and visioning sessions conducted at that time.

Undoubtedly, growth is the single largest threat to the rural character of Epsom. The 2001 Master Plan indicated that residents are concerned that development of large structures, with

significant amounts of impervious surface, would detract from the rural character of the community. The issue of aesthetic appeal and compatibility of commercial and industrial development with the Town's rural character has become increasingly important as growth in the community has increased. In 2001, the majority of residents in the community have expressed that the traditional styles of franchise architecture, as exhibited by the Dunkin' Donuts, McDonalds Restaurant, and Wendy's Restaurant, detract from the community. In an effort to protect the character of the community, while providing opportunities for commercial growth, numerous municipalities in the State, including Concord, Bow, and Wolfeboro, have adopted architectural ordinances or guidelines to help developers plan projects so that they are more compatible with the community character. Standards typically enacted by communities relate to landscaping, facade, and buffering. Building façade was a recommendation in the 2001 Master Plan and is a recommendation as part of this Master Plan update.

Building Facade

Building facade is the most prominent component of an attractive commercial site. As stated previously, the community should enact regulations to ensure the development of more aesthetically appealing and appropriate commercial development.

Below are examples of existing developments in Epsom, as well as samples of similar developments from other locations in the State. For example, rather than permitting a standard, "cookie cutter" structure, the Town should require the development of sites that are more consistent with the scale and rural character of the community.

The following examples serve to underscore how architectural design standards could impact existing commercial development in Epsom.



EXISTING: Dunkin' Donuts located on Route 4 west of the traffic circle. Note that the flat roof, bright contrasting color scheme, and style of the structure do not complement the character of the community.



PREFERED: Dunkin' Donuts located on Route 3 in Boscawen, NH. By using an existing structure, the impact to the rural character of the community was minimized. Also, the use of neutral colors, pitched roof, and limited signage helps to preserve and promote rural character.



EXISTING: McDonalds Restaurant located on Route 4 in Epsom (east of traffic circle). Note that contrasting color scheme, multicolored signage, and mansard roof does not promote the unique character of the community.



PREFERRED: McDonalds Restaurant located on Route 11 in Alton, NH. Note that features such as the pitched roof with neutral asphalt shingles, small scale, use of traditional windows and neutral color scheme help the site better complement and preserve the rural character



PREFERRED: Sample retail design located in Alton, New Hampshire. Again, small scale, use of varied roof offsets, small scale lighting fixtures, and neutral colors help to preserve rural character.



PREFERRED: Drug Store, Bedford, New Hampshire. As with previous examples, soft colors, scale, varied roof offsets, a “barn” appearance, and minimal signage help make this site more aesthetically appealing.

As demonstrated in the examples, the Town should enact regulations mandating that no exterior building surface visible from a public right-of-way or abutting residential property be constructed of any material except face brick, stone, stucco, architecturally treated concrete, cast in place or precast panels, decorative block, glass, clapboards, vinyl siding, metal or a combination thereof. To further protect the appearance of the community, the planning board should stipulate that metal siding could only be used on a maximum of 20 percent of the visible exterior building surface. Such a requirement would encourage the use of other materials that may be more in keeping with the rural character of the community.

The Town should also employ basic requirements related to the color of structures. As part of such a requirement, the Town should mandate that subtle, neutral colors shall be used on larger and plain buildings, such as warehouse style structures, “big box retail centers”, and franchise restaurants. The planning board should stipulate that colors that are disharmonious to other colors used on adjacent structures should not be permitted. Paint colors shall relate to natural material colors found on buildings, such as brick, terracotta, stone, or ceramic tile and existing elements such as signs or awnings. Complementary colors and accent architectural details should be required.

Scale is an important component to building design. The planning board should require new commercial buildings to relate vertical, horizontal, or other facade characteristics of new buildings to the predominant direction expression of nearby buildings.

Roof form is an important visual element and can have a significant impact on a building's form and silhouette. The board should stipulate that new roof forms should relate to the roof forms of adjacent structures, where appropriate, by duplicating the shape, pitch, and materials. Unless specifically waived, the planning board should require that a pitched roof be provided in order to have new development better fit with the rural and residential character of the community. Common roof forms shall be duplicated on the primary structure whenever possible.

Varied offsets, roof heights and forms, and window placement shall be incorporated into all new structures, or additions to existing structures.

Lastly, in relation to building design, the planning board should stipulate that all rooftop mechanical equipment be screened from view with either building walls or roof forms. All sides visible to the public and abutters should employ screening materials. Screening materials shall be the same material as used for building cladding.

Landscaping and Buffering

As with building facade, the Town should also consider developing more concise regulations relating to landscaping and buffering. Such standards would layout the exact location and planting densities necessary for commercial and industrial development.

Fiscal Strategies and Resources

The following is a list of resources that could be employed by the Town to help encourage and promote economic development.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG): As noted in other chapters of the 2001 Master Plan, CDBG funds are a valuable resource available for funding a variety of public needs. In addition to funding affordable housing programs and community centers, CDBG funds can also be used for economic development purposes, such as the expansion of public waterlines. In 1999, New Hampshire received over 10 million dollars in CDBG funds that, through the grant process, were allocated to communities across the State. In 2009 the Family Estates Cooperative received a CDBG Emergency Septic & Electrical Grant in the amount of \$77,000.

Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA): The Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) was established by legislation (RSA 162-L) in 1983 to address the issues of affordable housing and economic opportunity for low and moderate income New Hampshire residents. The Authority is both a body politic and a nonprofit corporation that is governed by an eleven-member board of directors that are appointed by the governor for five-year terms.

By statute, the board is composed of four representatives from community development organizations, two from small business, one from organized labor, one from employment and education, two from the private financial community, and the Commissioner of the NH

Department of Resources and Economic Development or his/her designee. The Authority does not receive an appropriation from the state.

The Authority provides financial and technical assistance to community development corporations, worker cooperatives, and certain municipal entities. The Authority is unable to assist a for-profit business directly, but can work with a nonprofit partner.

CDFA administers a variety of economic development grant programs including the Economic Development Ventures Fund, Tax Credit Program, and various discretionary grants.

CDFA administers numerous programs. One such program is the Economic Development Ventures Fund. This fund is at the exclusive control of CDFA's Board of Directors who will set terms for its use and is to be used to support unique opportunities that may appear from time-to-time. For example, the fund may be used to cover a short-term funding gap in the event that access by a nonprofit community development organization to other public funding is delayed. The fund may also be used as a source for equity investment in a cooperative venture or nonprofit business opportunity. Terms and conditions of the funding are determined on a case-by-case basis. Funding levels of this program will be determined on an annual basis.

CDFA finances major community development projects primarily with the Community Development Investment Program. The program has proven to be a major source of support for affordable housing and economic development and is one of the most successful initiatives that CDFA has implemented. The Community Development Investment Program enables New Hampshire's businesses to donate funds or property, either in lump sum payments or pledged over a predetermined period, to fund economic development and housing projects throughout the state. Contributions made by these business donors entitle donors to a 75% state tax credit when the tax returns are filed with the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration. For example, a donor making a \$10,000 cash donation to CDFA on behalf of an approved project will receive a tax credit for \$7,500. This credit may be applied directly on a \$1: \$1 basis against the following state business taxes:

- 1) Business Profits Taxes imposed by RSA 77-A
- 2) Insurance Premium Taxes imposed by RSA 400-A
- 3) Business Enterprise Taxes imposed by RSA 77-E

Through recent legislation, CDFA's ability to issue tax credits for approved projects has been expanded. As of July 1, 1999, CDFA may accept up to \$5 million in each state fiscal year in donations of cash and property for approved CDFA projects and programs. Previous tax credit commitments from the initial tax credit program (for projects approved before June 30, 1994) of \$2 million have been made each year through June 30, 2002. Therefore, CDFA has the authority to accept \$3 million in new donations for CDFA approved projects each fiscal year through June 30, 2002, and \$5 million each fiscal year thereafter.

CDFA charges the nonprofit project sponsor a fee, typically 20% of the award amount, for participation in this program. The fees are used to support other CDFA community development initiatives and to cover CDFA's operating costs.

Capital Regional Development Council (CRDC): CRDC is a non-profit regional development corporation that has been promoting economic development for more than 55 years. Governed by a Board of Directors consisting of experts in the fields of banking, private development, business, law, and real estate, the organization provides SBA 504 small business loans throughout New Hampshire and direct small business lending, real estate development and economic development consulting in Merrimack, Sullivan and Hillsborough counties. The mission of CRDC is to create new and permanent jobs, enhance personal income of workers, and expand community property tax bases through private investment. CRDC also assists cities, towns and counties prepare community development block grant applications (CDBG) that provide business and infrastructure financing. CRDC also works with Coastal Enterprises, Inc. located in Portland, Maine to identify and structure New Market Tax Credit financing for projects located throughout New Hampshire in qualifying census tracts. For additional information visit CRDC's web page at www.crdc-nh.com.

Summary and Recommendations

In summary, the economy of Epsom is relatively healthy. The number of jobs and businesses in the community has increased significantly. During the same period of time, wage rates for local jobs have increased for all sectors of the local economy. Also, the local unemployment rate has been in decline since hitting a significant high in 2002. However, despite significant improvement in the health of the local economy, limited amounts of land for future economic development, as well as limited availability of public water coverage may harm the development of desired businesses. Also, a lack of commercial incubator space for fledgling businesses and an unusually tight local labor market may threaten the growth of the local economic base. A significant amount of micro/cottage/small/ and home businesses also appears to make up a large portion of Epsom's employers.

In the long-term Epsom desires to maintain and develop an economic base that complements the rural community character of the Town. Rather than promoting types of development that are unattractive and not well planned, solely for the sake of broadening the tax base, residents want to encourage well designed, aesthetically pleasing commercial development. Furthermore, the Town is concerned that unattractive strip development and franchise architecture will diminish the unique character of Epsom. Therefore, it is recommended that the Town adopt performance standards to ensure that attractive developments are constructed, and site plan process makes it easier for home businesses or small businesses to react to changes in the economy. Furthermore, the community understands the importance of protecting historic structures, and further efforts should be made to protect them, while making them viable for commercial uses.

Recommendation: Establish a working relationship with State and Regional Economic Development Groups to work to strengthen the local economic base.

In order to help broaden the tax base with desirable businesses, the Town should establish a close relationship with the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development and the Capital Region Development Corporation. CNHRPC also has experience in economic development efforts within the region. Such relationships could help community leaders market the Town to perspective businesses that would fit with the rural character of the community.

Recommendation: Expand the Role of the Economic Development Committee.

The 2001 Master Plan recommended establishing a local Economic Development Committee, and the Town of Epsom has done that. At this point, it is recommended that the EDC work to expand its role and further work to help grow existing businesses, establish a positive dialog with existing businesses, and serve as a voice of the business community in Town Hall. The committee should continue to consist of community leaders, developers, and business people and could work on long-term economic development issues, such as the expansion of municipal water and zoning changes. In addition, the EDC should work to establish an economic development web page to introduce prospective businesses to Epsom.

Recommendation: Replace the R/C Zone between Center Hill Road and Route 107 with a gateway transition zone to preserve the unique character of this portion of Route 4.

First recommended in the 2001 Master Plan, it is also recommended at this time that the Town should re-zone the portion of the community located from Center Hill Road to Route 107 from Residential / Commercial to a "gateway transition zone". Because much of the property located

in this area is under scenic easements, it is highly unlikely that any future development will occur. However, because some property within this area is still eligible for development, the Town should reclassify this area so only uses that would complement the character of this area would be permitted. Such uses could include open space uses, forestry, agricultural, and recreational uses.

Recommendation: Continue to examine all alternatives to deliver municipal water west of the Traffic Circle.

As first recommended in the 2001 Master Plan, the Board of Selectmen, working with the Planning Board, Water District Commissioners, and local business leaders should continue to examine alternatives to extend delivery of municipal water to that portion of the community located west of the Suncook River along Routes 4 and 28. Though it is generally accepted in the community that such an expansion is necessary to broaden the tax base, as well as continue to provide opportunities for commercial growth, little progress has been made on any expansion.

Recommendation: Adopt commercial and industrial architectural standards.

To protect the character and scale of the community, the Planning Board should adopt architectural design standards for commercial and industrial developments as recommended in the 2001 Master Plan. Such standards would require the use of neutral colors, pitched roofs, varied offsets, and specific landscaping and buffering standards. By adopting such standards, the quality of development will increase, thus improving the image and tax base for the community.

Recommendation: Establish an expedited process for the review of home-based or cottage industry businesses. An expedited review process could help home-based businesses, cottage industries, and other small businesses to better navigate the site plan approval process. Proposals for minimal expansions or changes of use to properties that already have site plan approval or home-based business status could be a way to expedite the process for these businesses. Another option could be a review committee consisting of Police and Fire Chiefs, Town Road Agent, Code Officer, and a representative from the Planning Board. In any event, the Planning Board should look into ways to expedite the site plan process for these types of businesses.

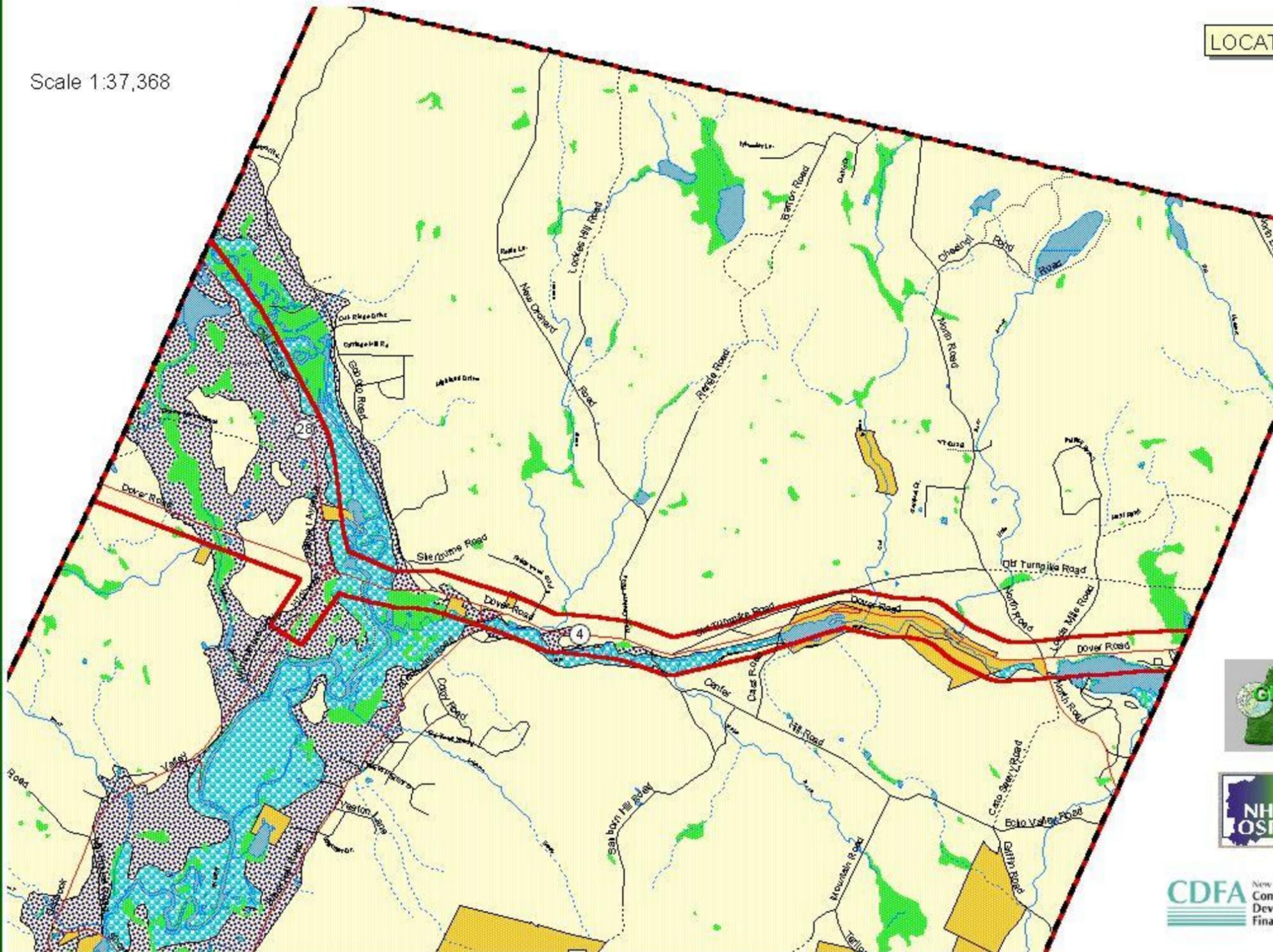
Recommendation: Reestablish the Chamber of Commerce: Reestablishing a Chamber of Commerce is would provide an opportunity to promote Epsom's businesses (including the micro, cottage, and home-based businesses) and serve as a way to create relationships between the business community and the town, as well as among various businesses.

Recommendation: Adopt the provisions of RSA 79:E: If Epsom adopts the provisions of RSA 79:E, rehabilitation of downtown structures will be more economical and more likely. Rehabilitation can be a component to expanding the existing local economy.

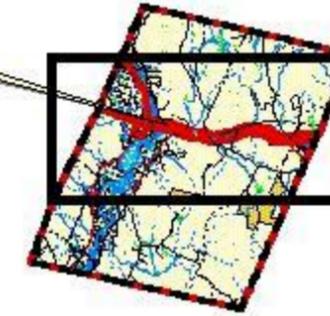
TOWN OF EPSOM New Hampshire

MAP V-1: EXISTING COMMERCIAL ZONE WITH DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

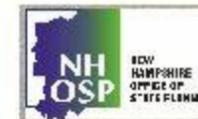
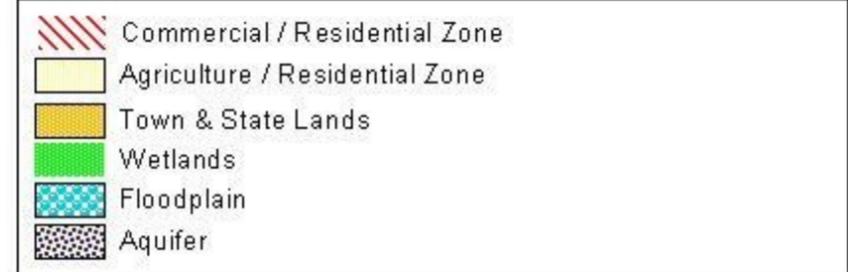
Scale 1:37,368



LOCATION

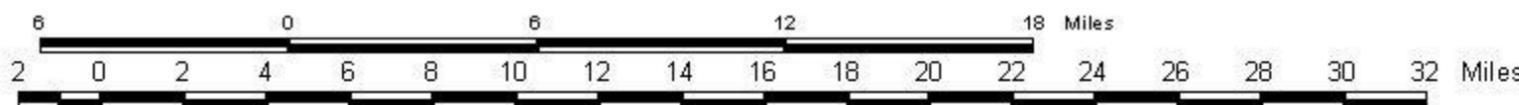
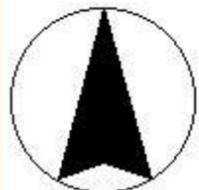


Legend: Zoning & Development Constraints



This map is to be used for planning purposes only, not for legal boundary interpretation. Any information depicted on this map is assumed to be accurate as of the date of printing, and may be subject to change at any time as more detailed and accurate information becomes available.

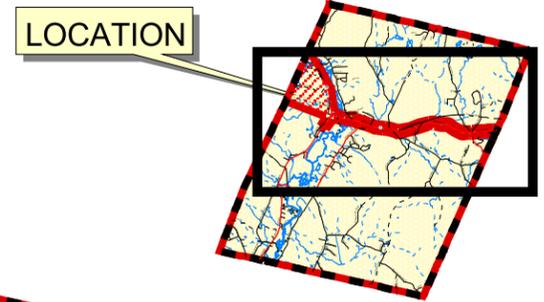
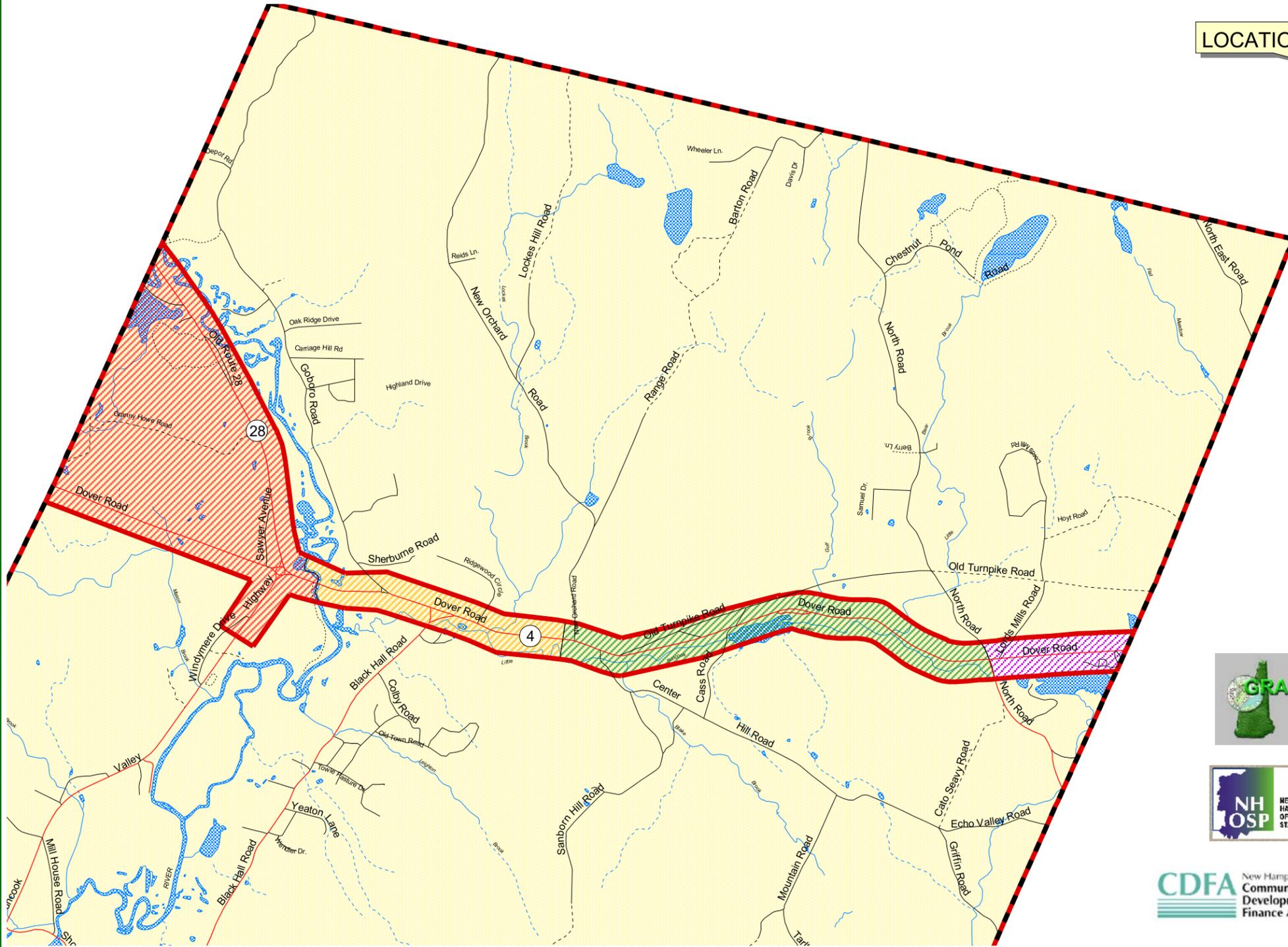
Data sources:
digital USGS Quadrangle series,
digital information developed by the CNHRPC
and by the NH GRANIT System



This map prepared by the
CENTRAL NH REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
28 Commercial Street
Concord, NH 03301
www.cnhrpc.org

TOWN OF EPSOM New Hampshire

PROPOSED COMMERCIAL ZONING



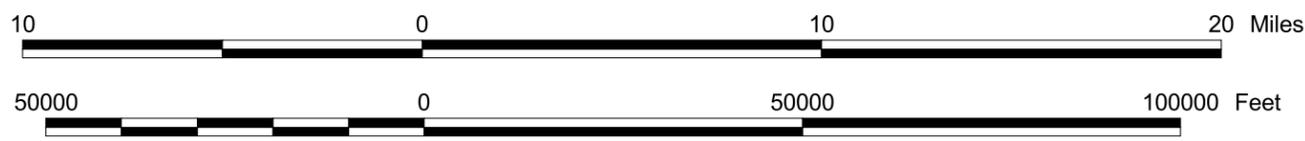
Legend: Zoning & Development Constraints

- Flexible Commercial
 - Gateway Transition Zone
 - Light Industrial/Commercial
 - Commercial / Residential Zone
 - Agriculture / Residential Zone
-
- Rivers and Streams
 - Intermittent Streams
 - Water Bodies
 - Class I Interstate Highways
 - Class II State Highways
 - Class V Town Maintained Roads
 - Class VI Unmaintained Roads or Trails
 - Private Roads
 - Discontinued Roads
 - Discontinued Roads Subject to Gates & Bars
 - Political Boundary



This map is to be used for planning purposes only, not for legal boundary interpretation. Any information depicted on this map is assumed to be accurate as of the date of printing, and may be subject to change at any time as more detailed and accurate information becomes available.

Data sources: digital USGS Quadrangle series, digital information developed by the CNHRPC and by the NH GRANIT System



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CHAPTER IV
TRANSPORTATION

Introduction

A safe and efficient transportation network is an essential component for the development of a prosperous community. Over the past several years, development trends in Epsom have been largely influenced by Route 4 and Route 28. It is likely that these roadways will continue to play a major role in the future development of Epsom and the central New Hampshire region.

Planning for future transportation needs should be carried out in a manner that not only accommodates anticipated future growth, but also will help insure that development will occur in a responsible manner. Through comprehensive planning and construction of identified roadway improvements, the Town will develop a transportation network that will foster economic development and meet the needs of the community for the foreseeable future.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an inventory and assessment of Epsom's transportation network, detail sources of funding for projects, identify new alternative modes of transport for the Town's population, and provide policy recommendations to improve the existing transportation network and achieve community transportation goals.

Key findings in this chapter:

- ◆ Epsom contains 71 miles of roadway. Of that total, the Town maintains 55 miles.
- ◆ Strip development along Routes 4 and 28 are a significant threat to the efficiency and safety of the local and regional transportation network.
- ◆ The vast majority of roadways in Epsom are in fair to poor condition. A comprehensive road improvement plan needs to be developed to schedule short and long term improvements.
- ◆ According to the 2001 Master Plan over the next 10 years, Epsom will need to appropriate approximately \$4,129,000 to complete short-term road reconstruction and many of these projects have not been completed. Should the Town choose to pay for these improvements on a cash basis, it is estimated that the Town will have to raise an average of \$310,000 per year from 2007 until 2017 above funding received from NHDOT. This will have an impact of roughly \$2 on the tax rate. Currently, the Town appropriates \$80,000 per year for road maintenance.
- ◆ For the 2001 Master Plan, Epsom residents strongly desire more pedestrian amenities on major roadways. In 2007, 85% indicated a desire for "walkable" development in town. Over the next twenty years it is anticipated that \$5,600,000 will be needed to make desired pedestrian improvements. With support from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, the Town could get grants for 80% of the cost of these projects, thus reducing

the Town's cost to roughly \$1,200,000 million dollars over the next twenty years, or about \$60,000 per year.

- ◆ During the period of 1997 to 2005, 949 accidents occurred in Epsom, resulting in 338 injuries and 5 deaths.
- ◆ Based upon the results of the community survey from for the 2001 Master Plan, a majority of Epsom residents support the concept of a Route 4 Bypass.

Residents Opinions and Needs

As this Master Plan update is focused update of the 2001 Master Plan, the resident and opinion surveys conducted at that time are part of this current update. In addition, a focused survey and visioning session was part of the 2007 effort to determine if public sentiment had changed since the 2001 Master Plan. Based upon public input received during visioning sessions held in the spring of 1999 and October 2007, Epsom residents consider the current condition of the transportation network to be in need of improvement. Residents favor the construction of bicycle and walking paths, as well as sidewalks along major collector and arterial roads in the community.

Residents and community leaders are concerned about the negative impacts of increasing strip development along Route 4. Consequently, there is a strong desire to control growth along that roadway. The visioning sessions also made it clear that residents enjoy their scenic roads, but want to improve all paved roads to current Town Highway Standards. Overall, residents felt that safe, efficient roadways are important to the community, and that the community should make wise investments in roadway planning and improvements. Figures IV-1 through IV-5 note the results of the community survey questions related to transportation issues.

Figure IV-1: 2001 Community Survey Respondents Opinions Regarding the Condition of Town Roads

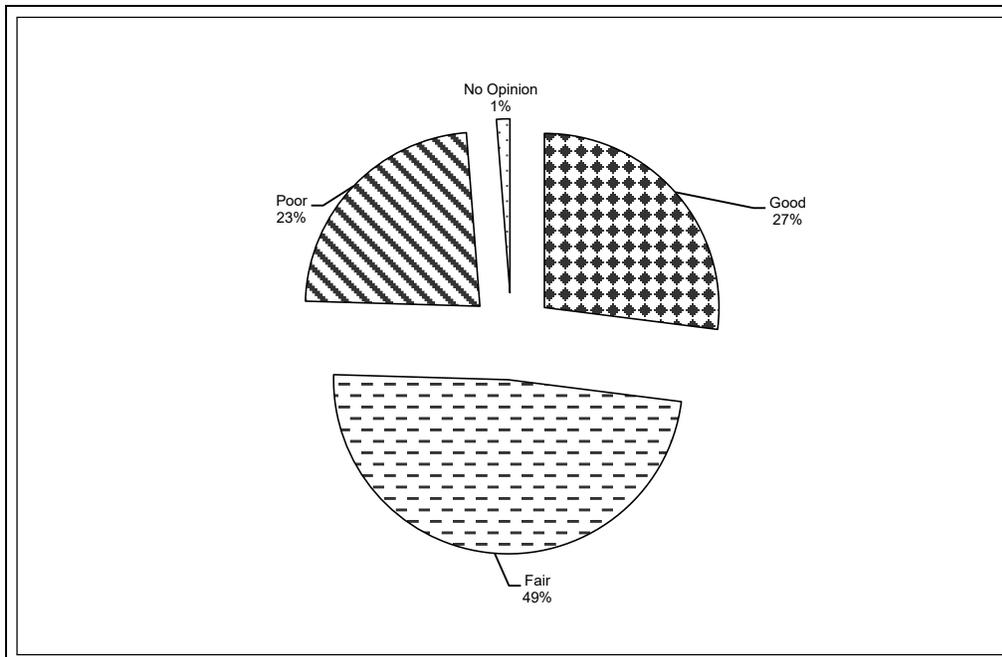


Figure IV-2: 2001 Master Plan Resident's Opinions Regarding Constructing Route 4 Bypass

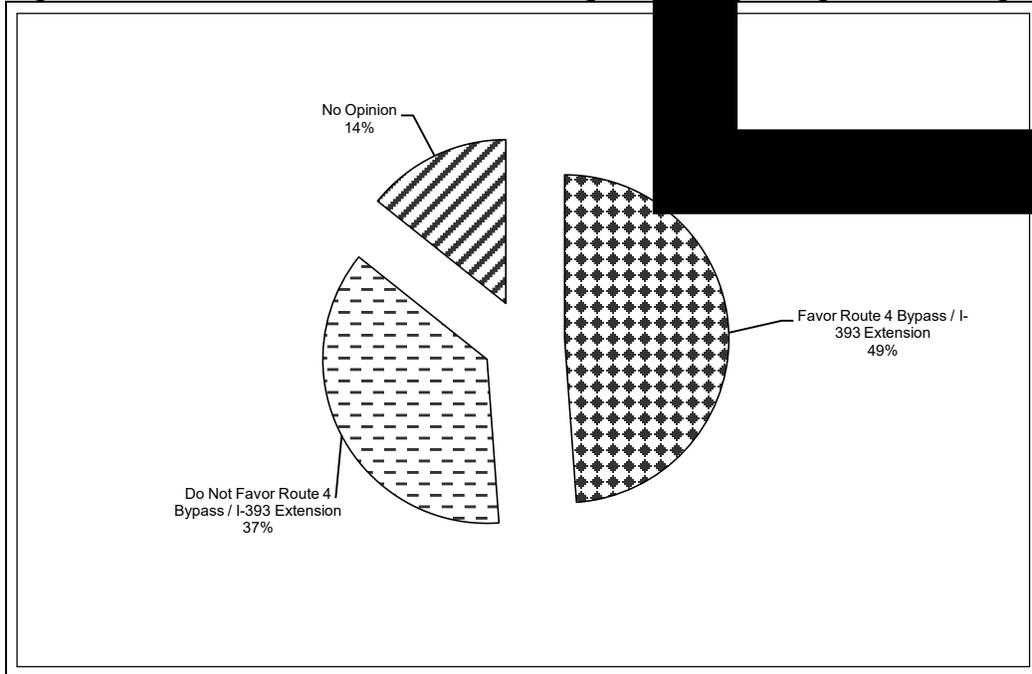


Figure IV-3: 2001 Master Plan Resident's Opinions Regarding How Much the Town Should Spend on Road Improvements

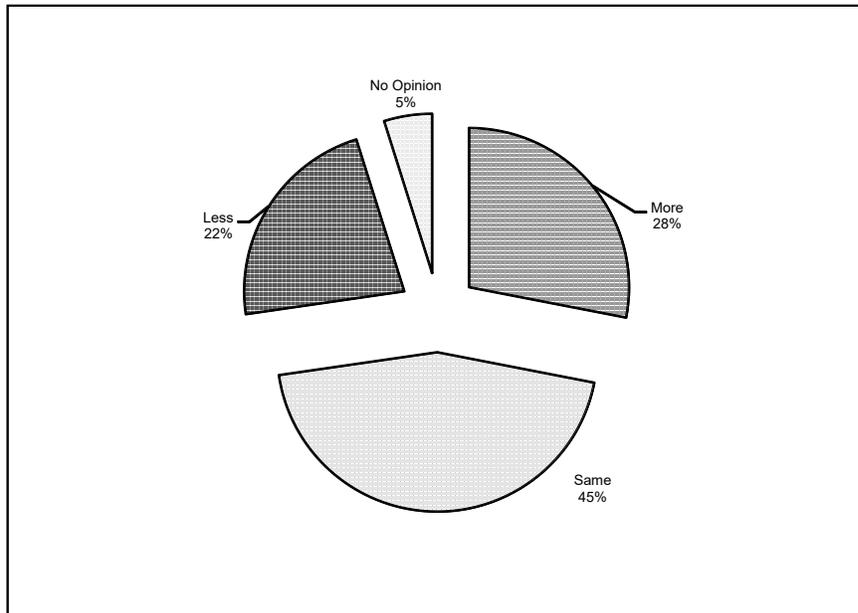


Figure IV-4: 2007 Resident Opinions on “Walkable” Development

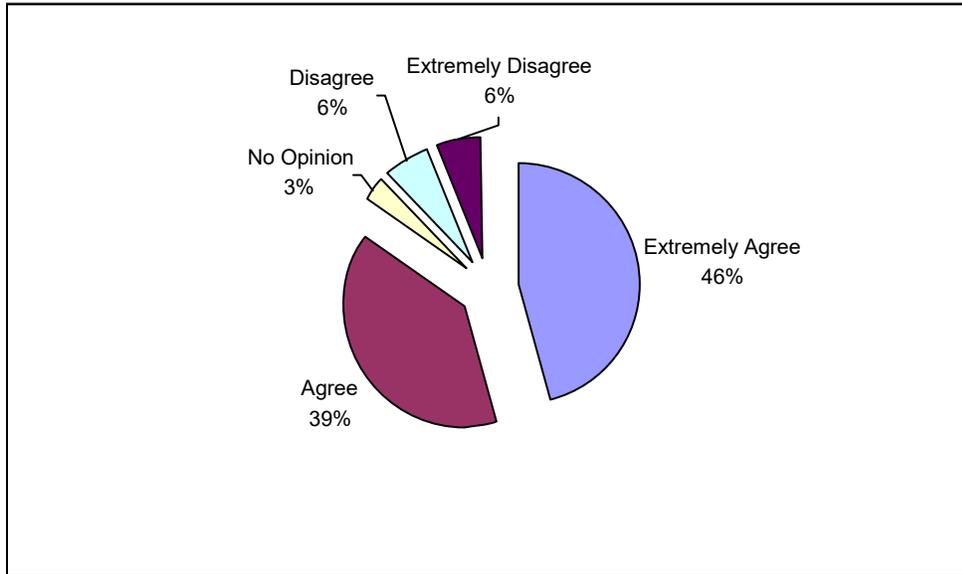
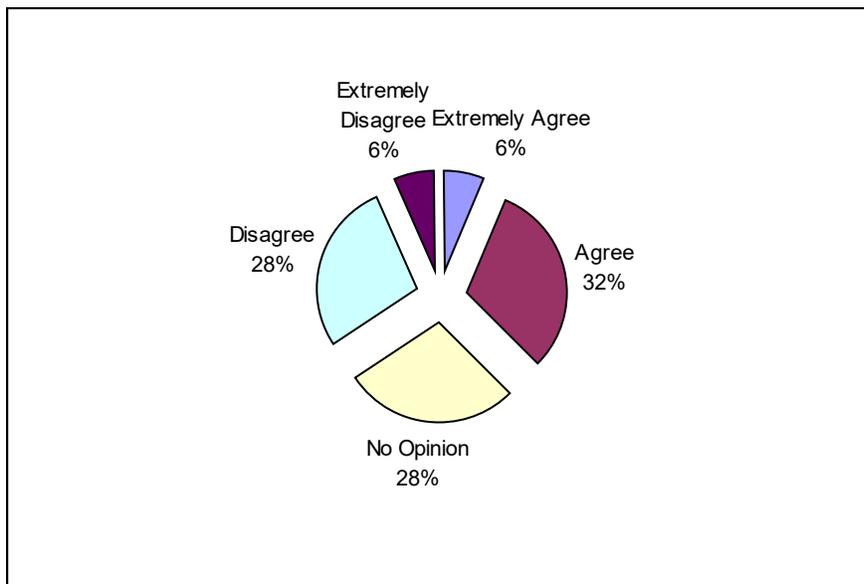


Figure IV-5: 2007 Resident Opinions on Roads & Bridge safety in Epsom



Functional Highway Classifications

One method by which public roadways are classified, relevant to long range planning of roadway improvements, is on the basis of primary function, type of service, or the roadway’s relation to the community transportation system as a whole. These divisions are used to determine roadway design standards and locate funds that may be used for needed roadway improvements. In order

to be eligible for some types of improvement funds, highways must be a higher level of functional class. The five basic functional classifications are described below:

- ◆ *Principal Arterial*: Principal arterial roadways form the basic framework of the State roadway system. They primarily function as the main routes for interstate commerce and traffic. In addition, they also link major geographic and urban areas to economic districts of the State. Ideally, access to these roads by abutting parcels is not permitted. Route 4 is a principal arterial roadway.
- ◆ *Minor Arterial*: These roadways serve as long distance traffic movements, and are secondary to primary arterial in that minor arterial primarily serve as links between major population areas, or between distinct geographic and economic regions. Route 28 is classified as minor arterial roadway.
- ◆ *Major Collectors*: These roadways differ from arterial due to size and general service area. Collectors serve traffic in a specific area, whereas as arterials generally serve traffic moving through an area. Thus, average trip lengths on collectors are shorter than trips on arterial. Furthermore, collectors gather traffic from local roads and streets and distribute them to arterial. Route 107 is classified as a major collector roadway.
- ◆ *Minor Collector*: These roads provide access to smaller communities within a geographic area or economic region. They may link locally important trip generators, such as shopping centers to surrounding rural areas. They also serve as links between two or more major collectors. North Road is designated as minor collector.
- ◆ *Local Roads*: These roads and streets are used primarily to provide access to adjacent properties. These roads have numerous turning movements in and out of abutting driveways and curb cuts. Town maintained neighborhood streets such as New Rye Road, New Orchard Road and River Road are Class V roads.

State Aid Highway Classification

Another system used to classify roadways in New Hampshire is the State Aid Highway Classification System. This system was created under the requirement set forth by RSA 229-231 to determine the responsibility for the reconstruction and maintenance of roadways located in the State. This system is also used to determine the eligibility of roads for State funding. This classification system is broken into six categories (Class I through Class VI highways).

- ◆ *Class I, Trunk Line Highways*: This classification consists of all existing and proposed highways on the primary state system, except all portions of such highways within the compact sections of communities, providing said sections are Class I highways. Route 4 and Route 28 are Class I highways.
- ◆ *Class II, State Aid Highways*: This classification consists of all existing and proposed highways on the secondary state systems, except those in compact sections of cities and towns. All sections of these roadways must be improved to the satisfaction of NHDOT Commissioner and are maintained and reconstructed by the State. The Town must maintain all unimproved sections of these roadways, where no state or federal monies have been expended, until they are improved to NHDOT satisfaction. All bridges maintained with state or federal funds shall be maintained by the state, while all other bridges shall be the responsibility of the municipality. Black Hall Road and Short Falls Road are Class II highways.
- ◆ *Class III, Recreational Roads*: This designation is assigned to all roads leading to, and within, state reservations designated by the NH legislature. The NHDOT assumes all responsibility for construction and maintenance. Epsom has no Class III roadways.
- ◆ *Class IV, Urban Highways*: This designation is assigned to all highways within the compact areas of municipalities listed in R.A. 229:5, V. The compact section of any city or town shall be the territory within such city or town where the frontage on any highway, in the opinion of the DOT Commissioner, is mainly occupied by dwellings or buildings where business is conducted, throughout the year. No highway reclassification from Class I or II to Class IV shall take effect until all rehabilitation needed to return the highway surface to reputable condition has been completed by the State. Epsom has no Class IV highways.
- ◆ *Class V, Rural Highways*: This classification consists of all traveled highways which the town or city has the duty to maintain regularly. Goboro Road, New Rye Road, and New Orchard Road are Class V highways.

- ◆ Class VI, Unmaintained Highways: Roads under this category consist of all other public ways, including highways subject to gates and bars, and highways not maintained in suitable condition for travel for more than 5 years. Class VI roadways in Epsom include portions of Range Road and Waldo Road.

Figure IV-6: Town of Epsom, NH, State Aid Classification Road Mileage, 2003

Road Classification	Description	Miles	% of Total miles
Class I	Trunk Line Highway	11.5	15.8%
Class II	State Aid Highways	4	5.5%
Class III	Recreational Roads	0	0%
Class IV	Urban Highways	0	0%
Class V	Town Maintained Highways	47	64.6%
Class VI	Unmaintained Highways	10.3	14.2%
Total		72.8	100%

Source: NHDOT, Classified Road Mileage Summary Report, 2003

Highway Capacity

Utilizing observed traffic data, it is possible to evaluate the performance of highway facilities through the use of highway capacity analysis. The main focus of this analysis technique is the estimation of the maximum amount of traffic that can be accommodated by a given roadway or facility. Not only does this method provide tools for analysis and improvement of existing facilities, it also provides for guidance for planning and design of future improvements to said roadways.

Level of Service (LOS) is a term that denotes the type of congestion that occurs along a roadway or an intersection for a given period of time, generally 1-hour peak conditions. This is a qualitative measure of the combined effect of a number of factors, including roadway geometrics, travel delay, freedom to maneuver, and safety. Level of service categories are discussed below:

- ◆ Level of Service A represents free flow with operating speeds of 60 miles per hour or higher being attainable, where permitted by the roadway design and speed limit. Individual users are virtually unaffected by the presence of other vehicles in the traffic stream. About 75% of passing maneuvers can be accomplished with little or no delay.
- ◆ Level of Service B is a stable range of flow, but the presence of other motorists in the traffic stream becomes noticeable. Freedom to select desired speeds is relatively uninhibited. This LOS is not typical for urbanized areas.
- ◆ Level of Service C is also in the range of stable flow, but denotes the beginning of noticeable increases in congestion. High operating speeds are still possible, but some traffic congestion occurs do to slowing and turning traffic. Level of C is still a desirable level of service.

- ◆ Level of Service D represents high density, stable flow. The speed and freedom of movement is restricted and motorists feel some inconvenience and below average comfort. Delay is experienced up to 75% of the time. Small increases in traffic flow will cause operational problems at a LOS-D.
- ◆ Level of Service E represents operating conditions near or at capacity level. All speeds are low but uniform. Freedom of maneuverability is severely limited, and is accomplished by forcing other vehicles to yield. Congestion and delay levels are high.
- ◆ Level of Service F is a forced or breakdown of flow with unpredictable characteristics. This is the least desirable level of service.

Level of Service (LOS) is often an overlooked aspect of transportation planning for rural areas in the central New Hampshire region. Most roadways outside of urban areas do not have a determined LOS. In Epsom, most municipal roadways have a high level of service; however, Route 4 has a LOS of E and F (very high congestion and forced flow) and Route 28 has a LOS of C and D, thus indicating that the road is becoming congested. Conditions on these important roadways should be monitored and efforts should be made to preserve or improve the LOS of each road in the future. Possible ways to improve the LOS of these roads include shared access between developments, limits on curb cuts, or creation of parallel roadways to serve businesses. The State has designated the location of on Route 4 from the Chichester Town line to the Fire Station.

Current Traffic Conditions

Since the 1980s, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation has conducted annual or semi annual traffic counts on State roadways in an effort to gauge use of roadways by hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly increments. As of 2006, NHDOT and CNHRPC monitored traffic at 40 locations in Epsom (with 2005 being an exception as no counts were conducted). Most major roads in the community are monitored on a staggered basis, generally in 3-year increments. Regular monitoring of sites during peak months is critical in the planning process, as accurate projections are required for logical transportation and land use planning. Unfortunately, little multiple-year traffic counts for local roadways are available, thus trends for traffic on some roads could not be established.

Due to gaps in traffic count data, trends could only be developed for 15 of the 40 traffic-monitoring locations in Epsom. In general, ten of the fifteen locations have experienced an increase in average daily trips (ADT). The largest increase in volume per day measured on State roads in Epsom was on Route 28, north of US 4, US 202, and NH 9, which experienced a 42% percent increase in daily traffic volume from 1998 to 2006. The largest increase of trips on a local road occurred on New Orchard Road at US 4. Traffic counting locations which have experienced a decrease in usage NH 28 (northbound and southbound) and US 4 (westbound) at the traffic circle, as well as NH 28 south of US 4, 202, and NH 9 as well as Short Falls Road over the Suncook River.

This data should be utilized to begin to identify corridors that may become threatened in the future by current development trends. In locations where traffic has increased significantly, land use trends and access management policies should be closely examined and modified to best maintain and promote an efficient transportation network.

Figure IV-7: Traffic Volumes on Major Roadways, 1998 – 2006

	NH DOT Counter ID	Roadway	Location on Roadway	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Net % Change	
149050	Epsom	NH 28	Pembroke TL				7200			7900	No Data		9.7	
149051	Epsom	US 4 & 202 & NH 9	West of NH 107	13000			15000			15000				15.4
149053	Epsom	US 4 EB	W. of Traffic Circle				12261			13333				8.7
149054	Epsom	NH 28 NB	S. of Traffic Circle				4920			4486				-8.8
149055	Epsom	US 4 WB	E. of Traffic Circle				14343			13333				-7.0
149056	Epsom	NH 28 SB	N of Traffic Circle				6329			5731				-9.5
149057	Epsom	NH 28	North of US 4 & US 202 & NH 9		6900			10000		9800				42.0
149059	Epsom	NH 28	South of US 4 & US 202 & NH 9				9000			8500				-5.6
149060	Epsom	Short Falls Rd.	Over Suncook River				2000		1300	1400				-30
149061	Epsom	Black Hall Rd.	Over Little Suncook River			2200			1900	2500				13.6
149062	Epsom	US 4 & 202 & NH 9	Over Suncook River			16000	18000			18000				12.5
149063	Epsom	Center Hill Rd.	Over Blakes Brook			660			630	830				25.8
149503	Epsom	New Orchard Rd.	At US 4				592						838	41.6
149507	Epsom	Swamp Rd.	E. of New Rye Rd.			352			393					11.6
149520	Epsom	North Rd.	North of US4						990	1212			22.4	

Source: NHDOT and CNHRPC

Accident Analysis

One of the most obvious methods of identifying where transportation improvements are needed is to analyze the location, frequency, and type of accidents that occur at various locations in the community. For the period of 1997 to 2005, a total of 949 accidents occurred in Epsom. Of that total, 338 persons were injured, and another 5 were killed. Of the total number of accidents during that time period, approximately 45.6% occurred on Route 4/Dover Road 24.2% occurred on Route 28/Suncook Valley Road.

In addition to problematic roadways, many accidents have been generated in parking lots of businesses located in Epsom. The most problematic parking lots are the Epsom Shoppes plaza and Evans Express Mart. It is most likely that a major factor in accidents caused at the Evans Express Mart is the continuous curb cut (undefined driveway) along the Traffic Circle. Undefined driveways often confuse drivers and contribute to accidents. The Epsom Shoppes location could be due to the proximity of the site's driveway in relation to the traffic circle. One possible solution to reducing the number of accidents at the circle could include installation of yield signs.

Figure IV-8: Epsom, NH Accident Analysis, 1997 – 2005

	Total Accidents	Total Injuries	Total Fatalities	% of Total	% Injured	% Fatal
RT 4/Dover Rd	433	162	0	45.6	37.4	0
RT 28/Suncook Valley	230	72	2	24.2	31.3	0.9
Epsom Traffic Circle	41	29	0	4.3	70.7	0
North Road	38	31	0	4	81.6	0
Black Hall Road	27	6	2	2.8	22.2	7.4
Goboro Road	19	0	0	2	0	0
N. Pembroke Rd	14	8	0	1.5	57.1	0
Short Falls Road	11	0	0	1.2	0	0
Epsom Shoppes	10	2	0	1.05	20	0
New Orchard	10	0	0	1.05	0	0
Evans Express Mart	9	0	0	0.9	0	0
Other Locations	107	28	1	11.3	26.2	0.9
Total	949	338	5	100	35.6	0.5

Source: NHDOT

Dangerous Intersections

Dangerous intersections are a major source of accidents in communities. Overall, it was the consensus of the transportation subcommittee during the 2001 Master Plan, that Epsom has few dangerous intersections. However, three intersections have been identified as being dangerous. These intersections are described in Figure IV-9. Of the three, the intersection of Short Falls Road and Route 28 South has been determined to be the most dangerous due to the volume of traffic on each roadway and the poor line of sight towards the south for motorists pulling onto Route 28. Possible solutions for improving the sight distance at the intersection are limited due

to the presence of a cemetery at the intersection. Therefore, it is recommended that the Town work with NHDOT to identify solutions to improve or relocate the intersection in the future.

Figure IV-9: Dangerous Intersections

Location of Dangerous Intersection	Deficiency
Short Falls Road & Route 28 South	Site Distance
Mountain Road & Mount Delight Road	90 Degree Corner
Mount Delight Road	Bend in Road North of Waldo Road

Access Management

Access management has become an increasingly important issue for new commercial and large multifamily developments in rural communities. Access management attempts to do the following:

- Limit the number of places vehicles are turning and entering the roadway
- Reduce deceleration in travel lanes, thus promoting efficiency
- Remove turning vehicles from travel lanes.

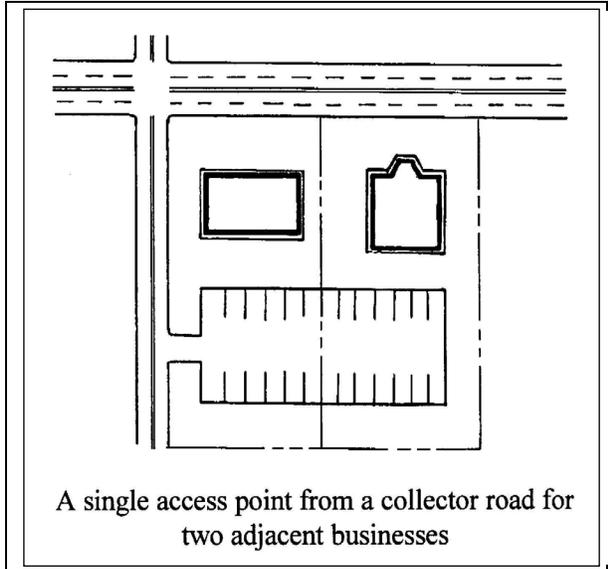
By accomplishing these major goals, access management prevents roadways from becoming snarled with congestion, thus helping to ensure roadways will meet needs for years to come.

Access Management and Routes 4 & 28

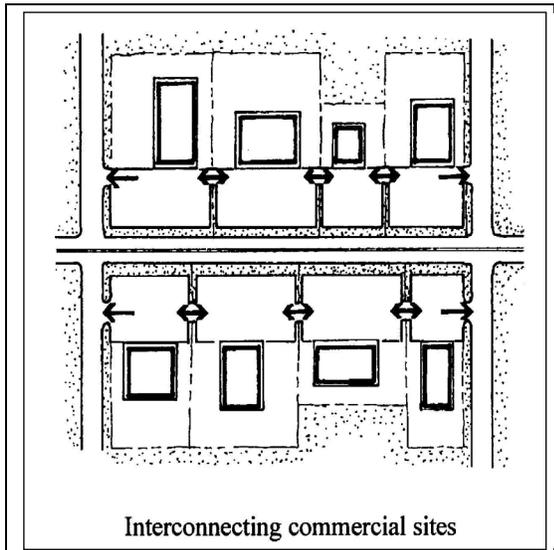
Routes 4 and 28 are considered to be prime commercial and industrial land in Epsom. Currently, the land within those important road corridors is zoned for commercial development. However, as the greater Concord area continues to be developed, pressure on Route 4 and Route 28 will continue to increase. Therefore a balance needs to be established to help meet both the economic and transportation needs of the community regarding these important transportation corridors

The Epsom Site Plan Regulations, adopted in 1979, contain very few requirements pertaining to access management of commercial sites. It was recommended in the 2001 Master Plan that the Epsom Planning Board include the following in the Site Plan Review Regulations, and is also recommended with this master plan update:

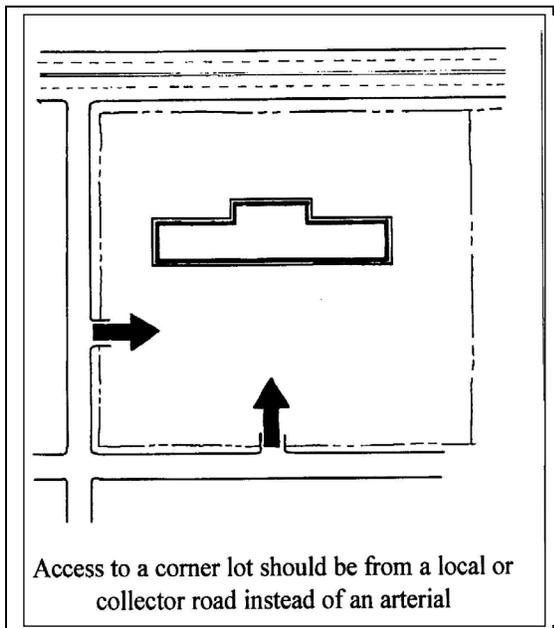
1. **SHARED ACCESS POINTS:** The Planning Board should require all new site plans on heavily traveled roadways to have shared access points with abutting parcels. This will reduce the number of driveways (curb cuts) on major roadways, and improve traffic movement and safety conditions.



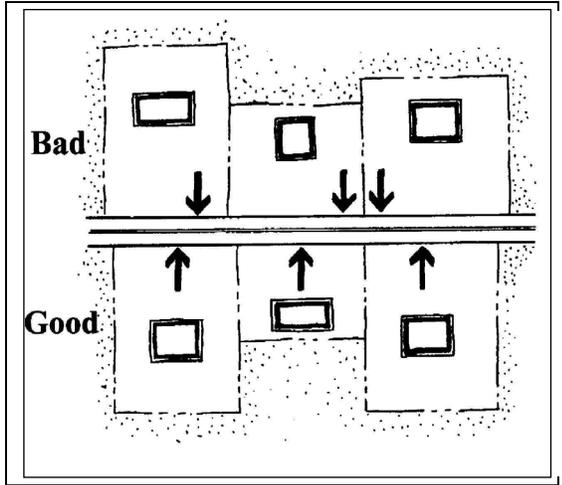
2. **INTERCONNECT SITES:** The Town should also require developers to provide rights-of-way to connect commercial and multifamily sites, thus creating parallel access roads along major roadways, which will help to reduce congestion, and slow the need to expand highway capacity.



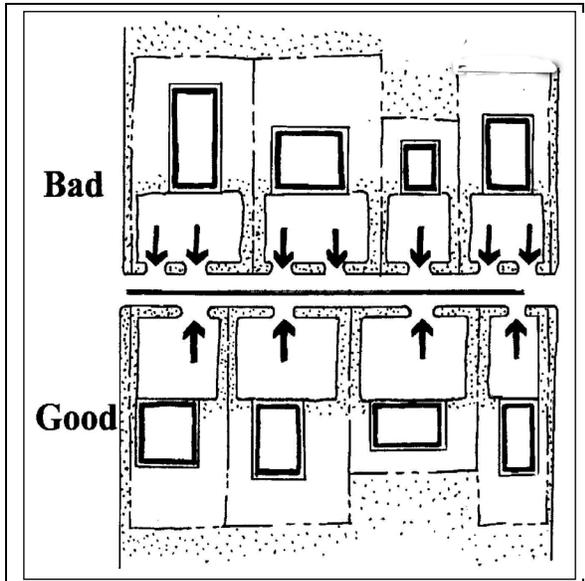
3. MINIMUM DRIVEWAY THROAT LENGTHS: The Town should also define a minimum driveway throat length for commercial and large multifamily developments in order to help better define internal traffic movements at those sites.
4. MEDIANS AND TURN MOVEMENT RESTRICTIONS: The Town should also require medians to be installed, or limit turn movements to right-enter and right-exit only at some sites (especially on Route 4 west of traffic circle) to prevent traffic from exiting a site and crossing multiple lanes of traffic. Vehicles crossing several lanes of high-speed traffic create serious safety concerns.
5. CORNER LOT ACCESS POINTS: The Planning Board should adopt an amendment to the Site Plan Review Regulations to require that all corner lots fronting a major road to be accessed from the adjacent local or collector road, not the major roadway. Again, this will reduce congestion and improve safety.



6. DISTANCE BETWEEN DRIVEWAYS: The Planning Board should also set a minimum distance between commercial and multifamily driveways on major roadways in order to better stream line turning movements and improve safety.



7. NUMBER OF DRIVEWAYS PER LOT: The Planning Board should limit the number of driveways for parcels fronting major collector or arterial roadways. Furthermore, continuous, undefined driveways should be prohibited (such as those located along the Traffic Circle as indicated above), as such driveways often confuse drivers and contribute to accidents.



8. **SIGHT DISTANCES:** For all access points, the Planning Board should require the following American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards be applied:

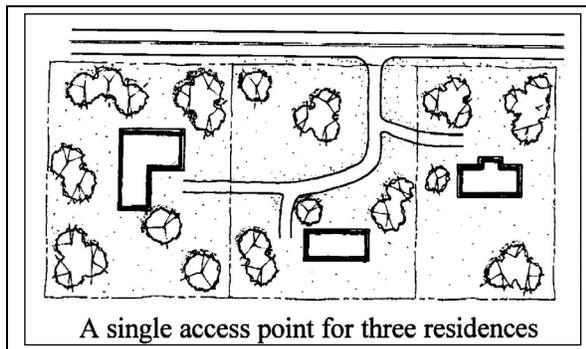
Type of Road	Posted Speed Limit or Typical Speed of Traffic	Minimal Safe Sight Distance
Minor Roads	30 mph or lower	200 feet
Through Roads	31 to 40 mph	275 feet
Through Roads	41 to 50 mph	350 feet
Major Roads	51 to 60 mph	475 feet

Source: American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO)

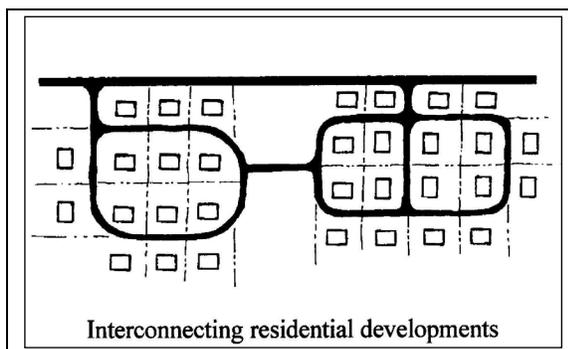
Subdivision Regulations and Access Management

As with the Site Plan Review Regulations, the Planning Board should amend the subdivision regulations to allow, or require the following

1. **SHARED DRIVEWAYS:** For subdivisions on major roadways, the Planning Board should require developers to construct shared driveways. This would improve traffic flow and safety conditions of the roadway. The Planning Board, when reviewing developments proposing shared driveways, should require all proper easement and maintenance agreements to be incorporated into the deed of each parcel.



2. **CONNECT ADJACENT ROADWAYS:** The Planning Board should require developers to design subdivisions to connect with other public roadways in other subdivisions.



3. **REQUIRE APPROPRIATE EXACTIONS:** The Planning Board should require all proposed developments to provide all warranted right-of-way, drainage, paving, widening, traffic signaling, and other applicable roadway improvements to existing roadways in proportion to the size, scale, and impact of the proposed development.

Recent State and Local Road Improvements

State Improvements

During the mid 1990's, the State made several major improvements to Route 4. These improvements included widening of the highway, installation of turning lanes, construction of sidewalks from the Traffic Circle to Black Hall Road, limitation of curb cuts, as well as the installation of traffic signals at Goboro and Black Hall Road. This series of improvements also included the replacement the bridges over the Suncook River and extension of the climbing lane on the western portion of the road near the Chichester town line.

Local Improvements

Since 1990, the Town has made several incremental improvements to many local roadways throughout the community. Typical improvements include replacement of culverts, installation of drainage ditching, filling of potholes, crack sealing, installation of traffic signs, and installation of pavement shims. Short-term temporary improvement projects completed since 1990 include:

- Resurfaced Sawyer Avenue (1998);
- Shim for North Road, patching Mr. Delight, New Rye, Center Hill, New Orchard, Goboro and Locke's Hill (2003);
- Reconstruction for parts of New Rye Road, Center Hill Road, Schoolhouse Hill, Swamp Road; shims on New Orchard, Swamp Road, and River Road (2004);
- Reconstruction for Jug City Road; ditching and tree removal of Old Turnpike Road; joint reconstruction of Old Buck Street(2005); and
- Finishing New Rye Road, Jug City Road, Mt. Delight Road; reclaimed Old Dover and Old Turnpike road after floods.

Because of the lack of funding appropriated by the Town for highway maintenance, few major or long-term improvements have been constructed over the past 10 years.

Epsom Related Projects in the State 10 Year Plan

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a 10-year plan that details all State funded transportation projects that will occur over the upcoming decade. The STIP is comprehensive program that involves municipalities, regional planning commissions, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, the Governor's Advisory Council on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT), the Governor and Legislature of New Hampshire, and the federal government. Projects that are included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program are derived, in part, from project suggestions made by individual municipalities and regional planning commissions. Each regional planning commission within New Hampshire prepares a TIP every two years based on input from local municipalities, NHDOT, and each planning commission's Transportation Advisory Committees (TAC). The NHDOT then takes the regional TIPs and incorporates the projects with the highest level of support into the 10 Year STIP, adding their own input and specific projects. The 10-year STIP then becomes the transportation project guide for the upcoming years.

At the present time, Epsom has no projects in the State Transportation Improvement Program. However, within the next 10 to 15 years, it is expected that additional improvements to Route 4 will have to be constructed. Anticipated improvements include construction of sidewalks to Center Hill Road, installation of traffic signals at the intersections of New Orchard, Center Hill, and North Roads. It is also likely that turn lanes will have to be constructed for New Orchard and Center Hill Roads.

Epsom Bridge Network

In total, Epsom contains 15 bridges at various locations throughout the community. Many bridges are located on heavily traveled roadways, thus making them important not only to local motorists, but also important for the regional transportation network. On occasion, the NHDOT and municipal officials conduct surveys of existing bridges within each community to determine the structural integrity and functional capacity of those structures. As of 2006, there were two bridges with structural or functional problems in Epsom. Both are owned by the Town of Epsom and are located at Cass Road over the Little Suncook River.

The majority of bridges in Epsom were constructed primarily during the period of 1930 to 1941. The two deficient bridges in the community were constructed in 1940. Fortunately, the deficient bridges in Epsom have light amounts of traffic traveling over them, thus reducing the amount of risk associated with the use of each bridge. Despite the amount of traffic using these structures, the Town should work with the NHDOT and appropriate funds to improve all deficient bridges. Please see figure IV-11 for more information regarding bridges in Epsom. Given the age of the bridges in town, Epsom is fortunate that there are only two deficient bridges, but the aging bridges need attention to prevent deterioration.

Figure IV-11: Epsom Bridge Network, 2006

Bridge Location	Feature Crossed	Bridge ID #	Year Constructed	Owner	Deficiencies	Functional Class	Length	Year of ADT	Average Daily Trips
Black Hall Road	Suncook River	63093	1950	State of NH	None	Local	129	1993	900
RT 4	Suncook River	86127	1971	State of NH	None	Principal Arterial	84	1993	15,000
RT 4	Suncook River	88126	1996	State of NH	None	Principal Arterial	101	1992	15,680
Black Hall Road	Little Suncook River	97122	1924	State of NH	None	Local	41	1993	1,600
RT 4	Lockes Brook	104123	1941	State of NH	None	Principal Arterial	12	1994	11,000
Center Hill Rd	Little Suncook River	117120	1978	Town of Epsom	None	Local	39	1993	520
Center Hill Rd	Blakes Brook	118116	1930	Town of Epsom	None	Local	22	1993	520
Cass Rd	Little Suncook River	128120	1940	Town of Epsom	Structurally	Local	26	1987	115
Cass Rd	Little Suncook River	128121	1940	Town of Epsom	Structurally	Local	28	1987	115
RT 4	Gulf Brook	134125	1941	State of NH	None	Principal Arterial	18	1994	11,000
Old Turnpike Road	Gulf Brook	134127	1930	Town of Epsom	None	Local	48	1985	100
RT 4	Little Bear Brook	145122	1933	State of NH	None	Principal Arterial	13	1994	11,000
RT 107	Little Suncook River	153118	1933	State of NH	None	Major Collector	20	1993	1,800
Echo Valley Road	Griffin Brook	156103	1986	Town of Epsom	None	Local	15	1987	110
RT 107	Griffin Brook	160110	1933	State of NH	None	Major Collector	16	1993	1,800

Source: NHDOT Mini Bridge List, 1998, NHDOT Municipal Redlist Bridge Summary & NHDOT 2006 State Owned Redlist Bridge Summary

Pedestrian Amenities

Pedestrian facilities, such as sidewalk and bicycle paths, are critical features for roadways with high volumes of traffic or high speed limits. The primary purpose of sidewalks and bicycle paths is to improve safety for pedestrians by separating them from the travel lanes of roadways. In addition to this purpose, sidewalks can also serve as a source of recreation for residents, serve to beautify an area, or stimulate economic activity in urban and village settings.

Epsom presently contains a limited pedestrian network. To date, sidewalks have only been constructed on both sides of Route 4 from the traffic circle to Black Hall Road. These sidewalks, constructed in mid 1990's, are very attractive and are in good condition. However, they are not plowed or maintained during the winter months. Furthermore, the current sidewalks do not extend into neighborhoods, and therefore are somewhat underutilized. In order to maximize the use of existing sidewalks, new sidewalks should be constructed to help create a pedestrian network that serves neighborhoods along Route 4 and other major roadways.

Town residents and officials strongly favor the creation of a network of bicycle paths, walking paths, and sidewalks to promote pedestrian safety as well as provide for recreational activity. According to the community survey, residents feel that sidewalks should be constructed along Black Hall Road, Route 4, and Route 28. Furthermore, as Epsom develops over the next several years, traffic on major collector roads will increase significantly. Therefore, sidewalks should be constructed on all major collector roads as development warrants. Figure IV-12 summarizes locations in Epsom, as well as the rationale and approximate cost of construction for building sidewalks in Epsom. However, as Epsom invests in sidewalks, the Town should also appropriate resources for hiring additional employees and purchasing of equipment to maintain those facilities.

Figure IV-12: Short-term and Long-term Sidewalk Needs

	Type of Facility Needed	Project Time Horizon	Priority	Rationale	Road Length (Feet)	Cost per Foot, 2000	Estimated Cost, 2000	Town Share (80% Funded by NH DOT)*
Black Hall Road (Entire Length)	Sidewalk with granite curbing and hot-top surface, with shoulders	Immediate (Within next 5 years)	High	Safety concerns for children walking to Epsom Central School	11,500	\$75 per Linear Foot	\$862,500	\$172,500
Goboro Road (Entire Length)	Expanded Roadway Shoulder or Bicycle Path	Short Term (5 to 10 years)	Moderate	High concentration of homes, safety for pedestrians	13,300	\$35 per Linear Foot	\$465,500	\$93,100
North Road (Entire Length)	Expanded Roadway Shoulder or Bicycle Path	Short Term (5 to 10 years)	Moderate	Speed on Roadway, no shoulder for pedestrians	14,700	\$35 per Linear Foot	\$514,500	\$102,900
New Rye Road (Entire Length)	Expanded Roadway Shoulder or Bicycle Path	Short Term (5 to 10 years)	Moderate	Pedestrian amenities will be necessary in long term to do anticipated future development	10,900	\$35 per Linear Foot	\$381,500	\$76,300
New Orchard Road (Entire Length)	Expanded Roadway Shoulder or Bicycle Path	Short Term (5 to 10 years)	Moderate	Pedestrian amenities will be necessary in long term to do anticipated future development	13,300	\$35 per Linear Foot	\$465,500	\$93,100
Swamp Road (Entire Length)	Expanded Roadway Shoulder or Bicycle Path	Long-term (10 to 20 years)	Moderate	Pedestrian amenities will be necessary in long term to do anticipated future development	8,500	\$35 per Linear Foot	\$297,500	\$59,500
Center Hill Road (Entire Length)	Expanded Roadway Shoulder or Bicycle Path	Long-term (10 to 20 years)	Moderate	Pedestrian amenities will be necessary in long term to do anticipated future development	8,300	\$35 per Linear Foot	\$290,500	\$58,100
Mount Delight Road (Entire Length)	Expanded Roadway Shoulder or Bicycle Path	Long-term (10 to 20 years)	Moderate	Pedestrian amenities will be necessary in long term to do anticipated future development	7,300	\$35 per Linear Foot	\$255,500	\$51,100
Route 107 (to Deerfield town line)	Expanded Roadway Shoulder or Bicycle Path	Long-term (10 to 20 years)	Moderate	Pedestrian amenities will be necessary in long term to do anticipated future development	4,200	\$35 per Linear Foot	\$147,000	\$29,400
Route 4 (East to Old Turnpike Road)	Sidewalk, Expanded Roadway Shoulder, or Bicycle Path	Long-term (10 to 20 years)	Moderate	High volume of traffic, speed of traffic, connect existing sidewalks to town facilities	4,500	\$75 per Linear Foot	\$337,500	\$67,500
Route 28 (Entire Length)	Expanded Roadway Shoulder or Bicycle Path	Long-term (10 to 20 years)	Moderate	High volume of traffic, speed of traffic	31,700	\$35 per Linear Foot	\$1,109,500	\$221,900
River Road (Entire Length)	Expanded Roadway Shoulder or Bicycle Path	Long-term (10 to 20 years)	Moderate	Pedestrian amenities will be necessary in long term to do anticipated future development	10,400	\$35 per Linear Foot	\$364,000	\$72,800
Old Turnpike Road (Entire Length)	Expanded Roadway Shoulder or Bicycle Path	Long-term (10 to 20 years)	Moderate	Remove pedestrians from Route 4, connect North Road to existing sidewalks	8,200	\$35 per Linear Foot	\$287,000	\$57,400
North Pembroke Road (Entire Length)	Expanded Roadway Shoulder or Bicycle Path	Long-term (10 to 20 years)	Moderate	High volume of pedestrians	5,100	\$35 per Linear Foot	\$178,500	\$35,700
Total					151,900		\$5,956,500	\$1,191,300
					(28.8 Miles)		\$297,830(Cost over 20 years without Interest)	\$59,565 (Cost over 20 years without Interest)

**Funding from NHDOT is not dependent upon STIP process, no funds are guaranteed*

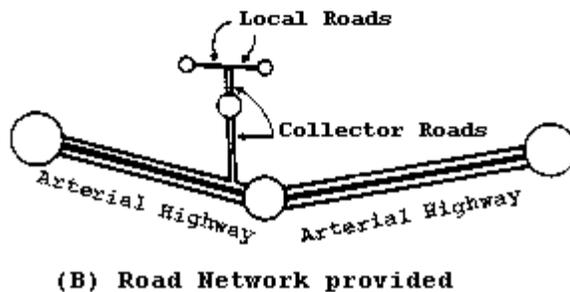
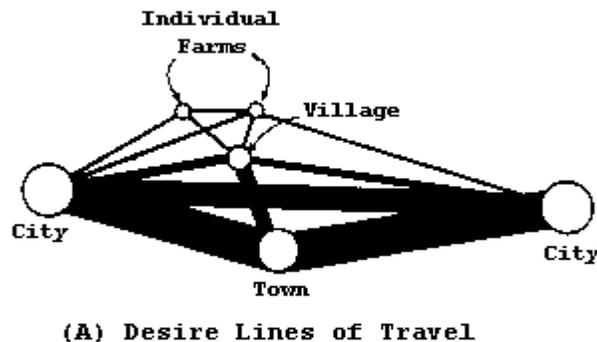
Town Maintained Roadways and Town Roadway Improvement Plan

Functional Roadway Classification

Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes, or systems, according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Basic to this process is the recognition that individual roads and streets do not serve travel independently in any major way. Rather, most travel involves movement through a network of roads. It becomes necessary then to determine how this travel can be channelized within the network in a logical and efficient manner. Functional classification defines the nature of this channelization process by defining the part that any particular road or street should play in serving the flow of trips through a highway network.

A schematic illustration of this basic idea is provided in Figure II-1. In the upper diagram, lines of travel desire are shown as straight lines connecting trip origins and destinations. Relative widths of lines indicate relative amounts of travel desire.

Figure II-1
Channelization of Trips



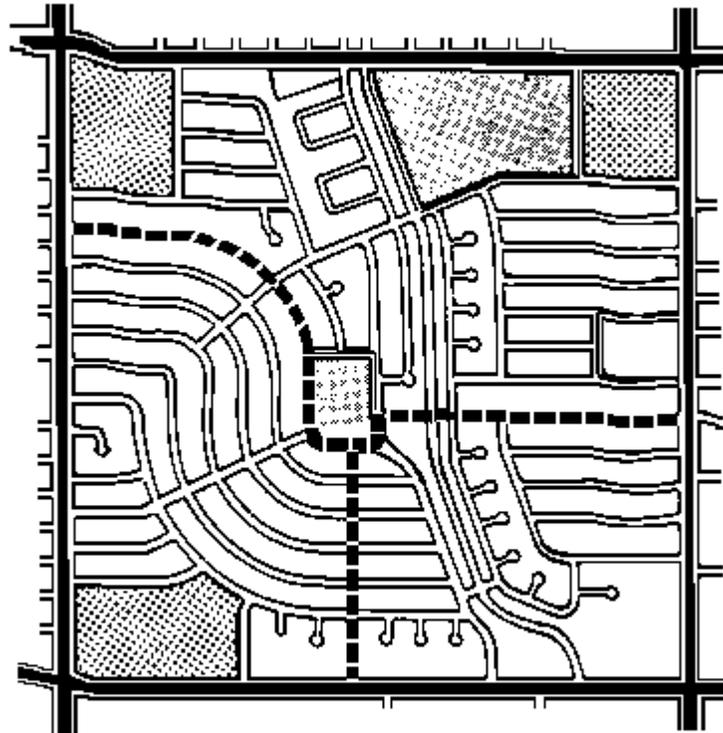
Relative sizes of circles indicate relative trip generating or attracting power of the places shown. Since it is impractical to provide direct-line connections for every desire line, trips must be

channelized on a limited road network in a logical and efficient manner. This can be done as shown in the lower diagram of Figure II-1. Note that the heavy travel movements are directly served or nearly so; and that the lesser ones are channeled into somewhat indirect paths. The facilities shown in the diagram have been labeled local, collector and arterial; terms which are descriptive of their functional relationships. Note particularly that this hierarchy of functional types relates directly to the hierarchy of travel distances which they serve.

A more complete (though still schematic) illustration of a functionally classified rural network is shown in Figure II-2. Since the cities and larger towns generate and attract a large proportion of the relatively longer trips, the arterial highways generally provide direct service for such travel. The intermediate functional category, the collectors, serves small towns directly, connects them to the arterial network, and collects traffic from the bottom-level system of local roads, which serves individual farms and other rural land uses.

Although the above example has a rural setting, the same basic concepts apply in urban areas as well. A similar hierarchy of systems can be defined; however, because of the high intensity of land use and travel throughout an urban area, specific travel generation centers are more difficult to identify. In urban areas additional considerations, such as spacing, become more important in defining a logical and efficient network. A schematic illustration of a functionally classified urban street network is shown in Figure II-3.

Figure II-3
Schematic of a Portion
of an
Urban Street Network



Legend

<p>— — — Arterial street</p> <p>· · · · · Commercial</p>	<p>- - - - - Collector street</p> <p>× × × × × Public</p>
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Allied to the idea of traffic channelization is the dual role the highway network plays in providing (1) access to property, and (2) travel mobility. Access is a fixed requirement, necessary at both ends of any trip. Mobility, along the path of such trips, can be provided at varying levels, usually referred to as "level of service." It can incorporate a wide range of elements (e.g., riding comfort and freedom from speed changes) but the most basic is operating speed or trip travel time.

It was pointed out in the discussion of Figure II-1 that the concept of traffic channelization leads logically not only to a functional hierarchy of systems, but also to a parallel hierarchy of relative travel distances served by those systems. This hierarchy of travel distances can be related logically to a desirable functional specialization in meeting the access and mobility requirements. Local facilities emphasize the land access function. Arterials emphasize a high level of mobility for through movement. Collectors offer a compromise between both functions. This is illustrated conceptually in Figure II-4.

Functional classification can be applied in planning highway system development, determining the jurisdictional responsibility for particular systems, and in fiscal planning. For Epsom, a functional classification could help to identify what existing capacities are, what the need to be, and help drive the content of a CIP or a Comprehensive Road Improvement Plan.

Comprehensive Road Improvement Plan

At the time of the 2001 Master Plan update, Epsom maintained approximately 55 miles of roads. Of that total, roughly 32 miles were gravel, 8 miles were bituminous hot top, and the remaining 15 miles were “farmers patch” surface. For the most part, many of these roads are in need of improvement ranging from minor resurfacing to major reconstruction. According to the Road Agent, roads especially in need of major improvement include North Road, Goboro Road, New Rye Road, and New Orchard Road.

Currently, the Road Agent and Board of Selectmen, prioritize the order of road repairs and improvements based upon field observations and traffic usage. However, for the 2001 Master Plan residents criticized this process, as it does not involve public input, feedback of other Town Departments and entities, such as the Fire and Police Departments, which have a vested interest in having a good road network. Also, there is no long range plan or vision for reconstructing town roads.

In order to better plan short term and long term road improvements and elevate citizen involvement in determining which roads are repaired, the Town should take action to create a “Road Improvement Advisory Committee”. This entity would serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committees and would be responsible for working with the Road Agent to develop a comprehensive road improvement plan. Ideally, this committee should consist of representatives from the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, and the general public from different areas of Town, as well as the Road Agent and a consulting engineer to assist with the technical aspects associated with needed improvements.

The benefits of a comprehensive road improvement plan would be numerous. First, road improvements will be better coordinated with the activities of other municipal boards and departments, thus preventing duplication of improvements and subsequent costs. Second, a road improvement plan with public involvement will help to identify specific improvements which the public feels are necessary, thus increasing the probability that funding for road improvements will be appropriated at Town Meeting. Thirdly, a road improvement plan will help the Town spread road projects over several years, thus helping to avoid “bunching” of projects which typically results in large spikes in the tax rate to pay for such projects. Fourth, a comprehensive road improvement plan will also assist the Planning Board in determining when proposed developments are premature and scattered, thus helping the Board when negotiating road exactions from developers to help offset the cost of road improvements. Lastly, by creating a road improvement plan, road improvements would no longer be piecemeal. This change would build public confidence regarding proposed road improvements and would increase the likelihood that proposed projects would be supported by the taxpayers.

Short Term Road Improvement Needs - 2007 to 2010

Based upon the results of the community survey for the 2001 Master Plan, the community visioning sessions, and input from Town Officials, it is the consensus of the community that the Town should concentrate its resources on making significant long-lasting improvements to major collector roads. Such roads where major improvements should be made include North Road, New Rye Road, Center Hill Road, New Orchard Road, Goboro Road, Swamp Road, River Road, and Mount Delight Road. Using preliminary estimates, it is anticipated that roughly 4.1 million dollars will be needed over the next ten years to make necessary improvements to the 11.29 miles of major collector roads in Epsom. The 2001 Master Plan outlined needed improvements, estimated cost of improvements, as well as possible funding sources.

Funding of these road improvements can be achieved in a variety of ways. Typically, communities employ a combination of bonds, grants, capital reserve funds, and cash to finance improvements. Based upon preliminary estimates for the 2001 Master Plan, a potential capital improvement strategy was outlined. In all, it was estimated that the Town will have to raise approximately \$310,000 per year over a 10-year period should the Town choose to finance improvements with cash and capital reserve funds.

Long Term Road Improvements - 2010 and Beyond

Because no methodical evaluation of the Town's local road network has been conducted; Town officials were reluctant to identify any specific local road improvements for the 2001 Master Plan. In the long term, it is anticipated that the majority of Town accepted subdivision roads are going to require various types of improvements, ranging from crack sealing and shimming to complete reconstruction. To better plan long-term improvements, the Town should engage a qualified engineering firm to evaluate subdivision roads and identify and help Town Officials better schedule long-term improvements.

Community leaders also noted that, in the long-term, it is likely that additional widening of Route 4 from Black Hall Road to Center Hill Road will be needed. It is likely that traffic signals will be needed at the intersection of Route 4 and Center Hill Road and the intersection of Route 4 and New Orchard Road. In order to promote efficiency and reduce the number of traffic signals, it is recommended that the intersection of New Orchard Road and Route 4 be relocated to align with the intersection of Center Hill Road to create a four-way intersection. This could improve safety and necessitate the installation of only one set of traffic signals and associated turn lanes.

In the long-term, it is also expected that traffic signals will have to be installed at the intersection of Route 107 and Route 4. It is also recommended that the Cass Road bridge which crosses Little Suncook River be reconstructed.

Private Roads

Epsom has few private roads. Over the past several years, the Highway Department has had very few requests for assuming maintenance of these roads. Because Epsom has limited resources and cannot adequately maintain its existing public road network, it is recommended that the

Town discourage accepting winter or summer maintenance of existing private roads. Additionally, the Town should discourage newly created private roads during the subdivision process.

Gravel and Scenic Roadways

A major component of a Town’s rural character are its gravel and scenic roads. These roads help to retain a sense of history and rural quality that residents have indicated a strong desire to maintain in Epsom.

The Town of Epsom has a mix of paved and gravel roads on which to travel. This diversity allows Epsom to retain its historic past while, to some extent, acknowledging growth and infrastructure needs.

Epsom has several gravel roads. The preservation of gravel roads will help to ensure that the Town honors its history and original design. The following list is of roads in Epsom that are unmaintained or gravel, or portions thereof are.

Unmaintained Roads

Lane Road	Poor Town Road	Nash Lane
Tarlton Road	Old Mountain Road	Kettle Rock Road
Sanborn Hill Road	Caleb Seavy Road	Old Turnpike Road
Hoyt Road	Chestnut Pond Road	Range Road
Barton Road	Lockes Hill Road	

In New Hampshire, communities have the ability to protect the character of specific scenic roads by enacting the provisions of RSA 231:157 at annual Town Meeting. Any Class IV, V, or VI highway can be designated a Scenic Road using the procedure in RSA 231:157. Ten people who are either Town voters, or who own land abutting the road (even though not voters) may petition. The voters of the Town may, at any annual or special town meeting, by vote designate the road as a Scenic Road. A town may rescind its designation of a Scenic Road using the same procedure.

The effect that Scenic Road designation does have is to legally require a hearing, review, and written permission by the Planning Board before the Town, or a public utility, can remove (or agree to the removal of) stone walls, or can cut and remove trees with a circumference of 15 inches, at 4 feet from the ground. However, this Planning Board requirement is full of exceptions. The Planning Board can be bypassed - and only Selectmen permission is needed - if the Highway Agent wishes to cut trees that have been declared a "nuisance" under RSA 231:145-146, or which, in the Highway Superintendent's opinion "pose an imminent threat." Moreover a public utility can cut the trees for the "prompt restoration of service" without anybody's permission (RSA 231:158, II). The Scenic Road law does not prohibit landowners from the cutting of trees or removal of stone walls (RSA 231:158, IV).

In recognition of the fact that State law itself is not very stringent, the New Hampshire Legislature added RSA 231:158, V, in 1991, which gives a town broad power to impose scenic road regulations that are different from, or in addition to, those contained in the State law. These additional regulations could include giving protection to smaller trees or by inserting criteria for the planning board to use in deciding whether to grant permission. Though some critics of the law believe it to be too weak, RSA 231:157 remains one of the few techniques available for the preservation of culturally important and scenic roads.

Currently, only Sanborn Hill Road is designated as a scenic road under RSA 231:157. The 2001 Master Plan Transportation Subcommittee did identify roadways with potential to be designated as scenic roads because of the presence of tree lined stonewalls or general rural character. These roads include Center Hill Road, Mountain Road, Swamp Road, Mount Delight Road, Mill House Road, Route 107 (Route 4 to Deerfield), and Lockes Hill Road. To continue to preserve this important part of Epsom's identity, the Planning Board, working with the Conservation Commission, should continue to identify roads which scenic attributes and designate as scenic roads them under RSA 231:157. The Planning Board, when reviewing new development along these roadways, should seek easements and deed restrictions to ensure that stonewalls and large trees are not destroyed during the development process.

Route 4 Bypass / 393 Extension

During the early 1990's, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation completed a draft feasibility study for the extension of Interstate 393 from Concord to the Spaulding Turnpike to Dover. In all, more than 60 different alternatives were identified for new road corridors and improvements to existing roadways. The complexity of these alternative solutions ranged from minor improvements to the current road network to construction of several bypasses or a full-fledged four-lane freeway. However, concerns from several of seacoast area communities regarding the perceived social, economic, and environmental impacts of the proposed alternatives eventually forced the State to indefinitely abandon the project. As traffic volumes increase, it is likely that the project will someday come to fruition, though NHDOT has no plans for any construction at the current time.

Of the 60 different alternatives, about 10 separate corridor alternatives developed directly impacted Epsom. It is also important to note that several of the corridor proposals ran to the north of Epsom, through Pittsfield.

Though it is believed that a Route 4 Bypass or Interstate 393 extension is inevitable, alternatives are still very preliminary and no timetable for such improvements has been established. Because it might be several decades before Epsom is faced with concrete proposals regarding extension of Interstate 393 or construction of a Route 4 Bypass, it is impossible for community leaders and residents to support any alternative corridors as of the date of this document. Because of this circumstance, it is recommend that the Town meet with NHDOT regularly to discuss the project during the planning process in order to develop alternatives that minimize the impact of existing residential developments, wetlands, and cultural and historic sites in Epsom.

Route 4 and 28 Issues and Concerns

Construction of a Route 4 bypass is expected to not occur for many years. Town Officials believe that additional widening of Route 4 east will likely occur in Epsom before any bypass is constructed. Specifically, Town officials believe that this widening will be located between Black Hall and the westerly end of Old Turnpike Road. Town officials feel that this improvement will be necessary for two reasons. First, the Town expects that traffic will steadily increase over the next several years, thus worsening the condition of that segment of Route 4 East. Second, it is expected that development of land feeding into North Road, New Orchard Road, and Center Hill Road will be substantial after the Town improves those roadways in the near future. Over the long term, this will put additional pressure on those intersections thus warranting the installation of traffic signals and turning lanes. If such widening occurs, it is recommended that the intersection of New Orchard Road and Route 4 be aligned with Center Hill Road to create a 4-way intersection. This will improve traffic flow and reduce the need for signaling two intersections which are less than 800 feet apart.

Traffic Circle Issues

The Epsom Traffic Circle is an important piece of not only Epsom's transportation infrastructure but also the region's as well. The traffic circle is an intersection of a major north/south highway (NH 28) and a major east/west highway (US 4 & 202; NH 9). Both the east/west and north/south carry large amounts of traffic across the region, all of which converges at the traffic circle.

In addition to the amounts of commuting traffic meeting at one central location, there are a number of businesses situated along the traffic circle. Each business contains access to the various roads, and in some cases, direct access to the traffic circle itself (or close to it). The result is large amounts of traffic trying to negotiate its way through the circle and beyond, while other traffic streams are attempting to visit the various businesses located along or close to the traffic circle.

For years, debate regarding the functional use of the Traffic Circle has been on going among residents and Town Officials. Spurred on by delays caused during peak traffic hours of the day, it has been suggested by some residents that a signalized intersection, as opposed to the traffic circle, would be more desirable. It was the consensus of the 2001 Master Plan Transportation Subcommittee that a traffic circle, not signals, is more efficient at the intersection of Routes 4 and 28. It is recommended that signals not be installed to replace the circle in the future, but explore ways to upgrade and improve the existing situation.

Regional and Interstate Transportation: Air, Rail, and Bus Transportation

Airports /Airfields

Epsom currently contains no municipal or privately owned airfields. Commercial passenger air service is via the Manchester Airport. The municipal airport in Concord is for freight and private airplanes only.

Railways

During the 19th Century, an active rail line ran through Epsom along the Suncook River to Barnstead. However, the rail line was discontinued in 1933 and subsequently sold to private citizens. Today, no rail lines exist in the community. Major railroad freight corridors and stations within reasonable proximity to Epsom are located in Bow and Concord. No passenger rail terminals are located within reasonable proximity to Epsom.

Bus Service

Bus service to a variety of destinations through New England is available at the Concord Coach Line Bus Station in Concord. However, no bus service is currently available in Epsom even though residents desire such service. Because of this circumstance, community leaders should meet with NH DOT, Concord Coach, and other parties to try to develop bus service from Concord along Route 4.

Public Transportation

Because of the relatively small population and sparse development of Epsom, no in-town public transportation system is provided. Furthermore, there is no regional public transportation to connect Epsom with abutting communities. Those residents who desire to go to Manchester, Hooksett, the Lakes Region, or Concord must rely on their cars or other private means of transportation.

Because Epsom is located at the crossroads of two major highways in the State, Epsom officials feel that it may be appropriate to develop a NHDOT “Park and Ride” or “Ride Share” facility. Town leaders feel that this could help reduce congestion on major roadways as well as reduce air pollution. Such a facility should be located near the traffic circle as commuter services such as gas stations, convenient stores, and fast food restaurants are prevalent.

Funding Sources for Transportation Improvements

Financing of road improvements can be difficult to accomplish in small communities with limited resources. Historically, Epsom has appropriated approximately \$80,000 per year for reconstruction or rehabilitation of roadways. As noted by Town officials, that amount is inadequate to meet the current and long-term highway needs of the community.

The summary below details funding sources and options offered by the Federal Government and the State of New Hampshire. The Town should review and use these options whenever possible to reduce the burden on taxpayers for financing of local transportation improvements.

Federal Programs and Resources (Administered by NHDOT)

- ❖ **Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)**: SAFETEA as it is called governs surface transportation spending through 2010. The funding is for highways and highway safety. SAFETEA replaced the previously

elapsed Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). The emphasis is on targeted funding for projects such as improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment – as well as laying the groundwork for addressing future challenges.

❖ **Transportation Enhancement Funds (TE)**: Transportation Enhancements Program (TE) is another viable source for improving roads in communities. Funding for the TE program is slightly more than \$3 million dollars annually. Like CMAQ, these funds are provided in an 80/20 match, with the State paying for the majority of the project cost. Typical examples of projects eligible for TE funds include:

- Facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians;
- Safety and education activities for bicyclists and pedestrians;
- Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites;
- Scenic or historic highway programs;
- Landscaping and other scenic beautification;
- Historic preservation;
- Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures of facilities;
- Preservation of abandoned railway corridors;
- Control and removal of outdoor advertising;
- Archaeological planning and research;
- Some types of environmental mitigation; and,
- Establishment of transportation museums.

❖ **Safe Routes to School**: The Safe Routes to Schools Program (SRTS) is a Federal-Aid program of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Program is developed to create safe, accountable, flexible and efficient walking and bicycling conditions for kids living close to school. The SRTS Program is funded at \$612 million over five Federal fiscal years and is to be administered by State Departments of Transportation (DOTs). The state of New Hampshire gets \$1 Million per year and any school can apply for the funding. In order to obtain the funding, each school is required to follow the application process established by the NHDOT.

The Program provides funds to the states to substantially improve the ability of primary and middle school students to walk and bicycle to school safely. The stated purposes of the program are to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities:

- to walk and bicycle to school;
- to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and
- to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity (approximately 2 miles) of primary and middle schools (Grades K-8).

The purpose of the Federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is to address these issues head on. At its heart, the SRTS Program empowers communities to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity once again. The program makes funding

available for a wide variety of programs and projects, from building safer street crossings to establishing programs that encourage children and their parents to walk and bicycle safely to school.

- ❖ **Federal Aid Bridge Replacement Funds:** These funds are available for the replacement or rehabilitation of bridges of town owned bridges over 20 feet in length. Matching funds are required and applications for funding are processed through the NHDOT municipal highways engineer.

State Funding Sources

- ❖ **Highway Block Grants:** Annually, the State apportions funds to all cities and towns for the construction and maintenance of Class IV and V roadways. Apportionment “A” funds comprise not less than 12% of the State Highway budget and are allocated based upon one-half the total road mileage and one-half the total population as the municipality bears to the state total. Apportionment “B” funds are allocated in the sum of \$117 per mile of Class V road in the community. Block grant payment schedules are as follows: 30% in July, 30% in October, 20% in January, and 20% in April. Any unused funds may be carried over to the next fiscal year. Currently, Epsom receives approximately \$65,000 per year in highway block grants from the State.
- ❖ **State Bridge Aid:** This program helps to supplement the cost to communities of bridge construction on Class II and V roads in the State. Funds are allocated by NHDOT in the order in which applications for assistance are received. The amount of aid a community may receive is based upon equalized assessed valuation and varies from two-thirds to seven-eighths of the total cost of the project.
- ❖ **Town Bridge Aid:** Like the State Bridge Aid program, this program also helps communities construct or reconstruct bridges on Class V roads. The amount of aid is also based upon equalized assessed valuation and ranges from one-half to seven-eighths of the total cost of the project. All bridges constructed with these funds must be designed to support a load of at least 15 tons. As mandated by State Law, all bridges constructed with these funds on Class II roads must be maintained by the State, while all bridges constructed on Class V roads must be maintained by the Town. Any community that fails to maintain bridges installed under this program shall be forced to pay the entire cost of maintenance plus 10% to the State Treasurer under RSA 85.

Local Sources of Transportation Improvement Funds

- ❖ **Local Option Fee for Transportation Improvements:** NH RSA 261:153 VI (a) grants municipalities the ability to institute a surcharge on all motor vehicle registrations for the purpose of a funding the construction or reconstruction of roads, bridges, public parking areas, sidewalks, and bicycle paths. Funds generated under this law may also be used as matching funds for state projects. The maximum amount of the surcharge permitted by law is \$5. Base upon the number of motor vehicles registered in Epsom in 1999, this could yield \$31,685 annually in additional funding without increasing property taxes.

- ❖ **Development Exactions:** Exactions are contributions of money or construction of infrastructure by a developer to improve roadways and other transportation needs as directly related to a proposed development. Common exactions include widening of roads, installation of drainage structures, paving, gifts of rights-of-way, and installation of traffic signals. Often confused with impact fees, exactions are collected by the Planning Board at the time of site plan or subdivision approval.

- ❖ **Impact Fees:** Authorized by RSA 674:21, communities can adopt impact fee programs to offset the costs of expanding services and facilities communities must absorb when a new home or commercial unit is constructed in town. Unlike exactions, impact fees are uniform fees administered by the building inspector and are collected for general impacts of the development, as opposed to exaction which are administered by the planning board and are collect for specific impacts unique to new site plans or subdivisions on Town roads. The amount of an impact fee is developed through a series of calculations. Impact fees are charged to new homes or commercial structures at the time a building permit is issued. When considering implementing an impact fee ordinance, it is important to understand that the impact fee system is adopted by amending the zoning ordinance. The law also requires that communities adopting impact fees must have a Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Lastly, State law also stipulates that all impact fees collect by a community must be used within 6 years from the date they were collected, or else they must be refunded to the current property owners of the structure for which the fee was initially collected.

- ❖ **Capital Reserve Funds:** A popular method to set money aside for future road improvements, RSA 35V mandates that such accounts must be created by a warrant article at town meeting. The same warrant article should also stipulate how much money will be appropriated to open the fund as well as identify what Town entity will be the agent to expend the funds. Once established, communities typically appropriate more funds annually to replenish the fund or be saved and thus earn interest that will be put towards large projects or expenditures in the future.

Summary and Recommendations

Epsom is a community that desires to have a comprehensive, well-maintained, and efficient transportation network. The community wants to promote walking trails and sidewalks, reconstruct town roads that are in poor condition, and wants to limit the impact of new growth on important roadways. As Epsom continues to develop, additional pressures will be put on the community transportation network. Thus, the following implementation steps are recommended.

Recommendation: Functional Road Classification System: The Town of Epsom should develop a functional road classification system. A local functional classification system for roads is a process that evaluates the roads in the town and groups them into classes, or “systems”, according to the services they are intended to provide. Most travel, whether in a city or a region, involves movement through a network of roads. Functional classification defines the nature of this movement or “channelization process” by defining the role that any particular road plays in serving the flow of trips through the highway network. The problem of long dead-end roads can be analyzed and studied through the development of this system.

Recommendation: Establish a Road Improvement Plan

The Town should create a Road Improvement Plan to better plan and schedule short and long term road improvements. The plan should correspond with a Town Capital Improvement Program and be updated annually. Projects that should be included in this plan include sidewalk construction, road resurfacing, bridge reconstruction projects, and road reconstruction projects. Roads that should be a priority in the plan include Goboro Road, New Orchard Road, Black Hall Road, New Rye Road, and North Road.

Recommendation: Enact Provisions of RSA 261:153 to Implement \$5 Transportation Surcharge on Motor Vehicle Registrations to Fund Road Improvements

To provide additional funding of transportation improvements, the Town should enact the local option provided by RSA 261:153. This would implement a surcharge of \$5 on each motor vehicle registration that could be used exclusively for road, bridge, sidewalk, and bicycle path construction. It is estimated that this could generate an additional \$31,685 for the Town annually.

Recommendation: Take Action to Make Major Improvements to Town Roads

The Town should explore the various financing options available, including grants, impact fees, bonding, and cash to finance short and long-term road improvements. Furthermore, it is recommended that the Town appropriate approximately \$300,000 to \$350,000 per year to help finance major road improvements identified in this chapter.

Recommendation: Construct Sidewalks and Bicycle Paths along Major Local Collector Roadways

The Town should explore the various financing options available, including grants, impact fees, bonding, and cash to finance the construction of pedestrian infrastructure including sidewalks and bicycle paths along busy roadways in Epsom as highlighted in this chapter. At least \$60,000 per year should be allocated in the fund to help offset the cost of short term and long term sidewalk projects over the next 20 years. Furthermore, the Town should also actively pursue funding allocated by CMAQ and TE through the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to help offset the costs of sidewalk and bicycle path construction.

Recommendation: Revise Site Plan Regulations to Promote Access Management

In order to preserve and improve the functional capacity of major roadways in Epsom, the Planning Board should revise the site plan review regulations to include access management regulations as described in this chapter.

Recommendation: Revise Zoning Ordinance to Promote Access Management

Epsom should craft zoning amendments to promote commercial development in nodes along major roadways, as opposed to encouraging strip development. Furthermore, land between commercial nodes on heavily traveled roadways, such as Route 4 and Route 28, should be zoned to have large lot sizes (5-10 acres) and much larger frontage requirements.

Recommendation: Identify Projects for the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan

Each year, the State of New Hampshire receives millions of dollars in Federal Transportation Funding assistance. The Planning Board, working with the Board of Selectmen, Road Agent, and the proposed Roads Commission, should identify projects eligible for state and federal funds. These projects should be submitted to Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission during the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan process.

Recommendation: Require Road Exactions for Developments on Substandard Roads

The Planning Board should require exactions from all developers proposing new subdivisions of site plans on substandard roadways. Common exactions include contributions of land for rights-of-way, drainage improvements, road realignments and widening, paving, installation of signals, or monetary contributions in lieu of such improvements.

Recommendation: Continue to Participate in CNHRPC Annual Traffic Count Data

It is likely that traffic usage will be an important consideration in scheduling major road improvements. Therefore, the Road Agent, Board of Selectmen, and Planning Board should jointly identify locations where traffic counting should be conducted in the future.

Recommendation: Open a Dialog with NHDOT Regarding Long Range Plans for Routes 4 and 28

The Board of Selectmen and Planning Board should establish a working relationship with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to identify the most favorable and least impacting locations for the possible development a Route 4 Bypass / Interstate 393 Extension through Epsom.

Recommendation: Regularly Review the Feasibility of Instituting a Transportation Impact Fee for all New Commercial and Residential Units

The Planning Board, with a Capital Improvement Plan, should study the feasibility of instituting a road improvement impact fee for all homes and commercial structures constructed in the community. Such a system will help defray the cost of general road improvements.

Recommendation: Designation and Protection of Scenic Roads

The Planning Board, working with the Conservation Commission, Road Agent, and Selectmen, should identify additional scenic roads and craft warrant articles to enroll these roads in the scenic roads program as established by NH RSA 231:157. Furthermore, the Planning Board should also amend the zoning ordinance to minimize additional development along gravel and scenic roads in order to protect those culturally important resources.

Recommendation: Solicit Outside Professionals for Plan Reviews to Determine Traffic Impacts of Development

The Planning Board should utilize CNHRPC and other consultants to review development proposals to determine what the impact of a development could be on the Town's transportation networks. The Board should also note that the financial costs of such reviews can, and should be borne by an applicant.

Recommendation: Establish Impact Fees in Transportation Infrastructure Improvement Costs

Impact fees are common ways that communities ensure that developers pay their fair share of infrastructure expansion costs. Exactions can be sought for specific infrastructure costs, while impact fees must be based upon a current CIP and Master Plan. An impact fee must be part of the zoning ordinance and the methodology must be clearly defined therein. The Town of Epsom should work with CNHRPC to develop an impact fee schedule.

TOWN OF EPSOM New Hampshire

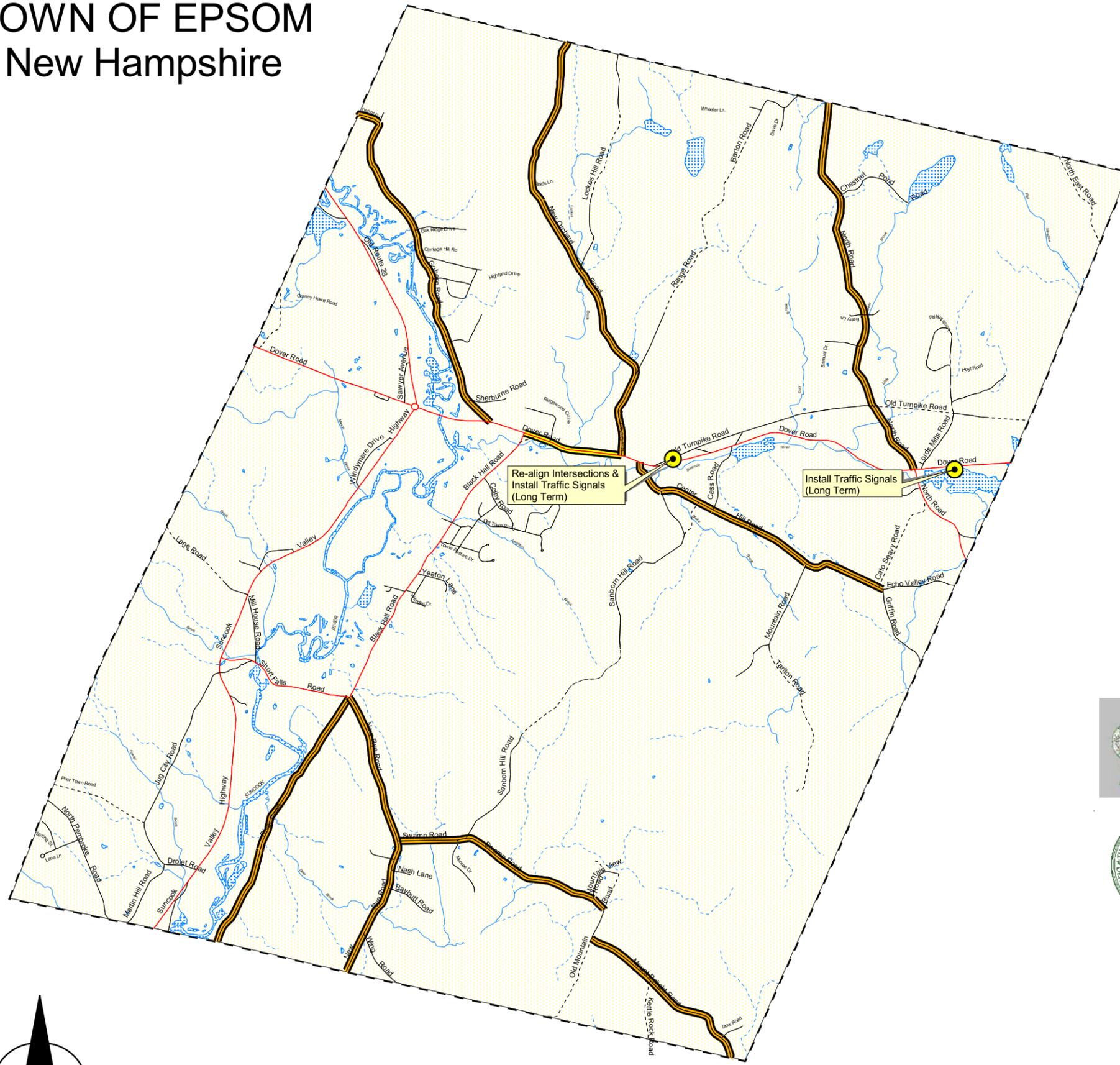
SHORT AND LONG TERM TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS



LEGEND

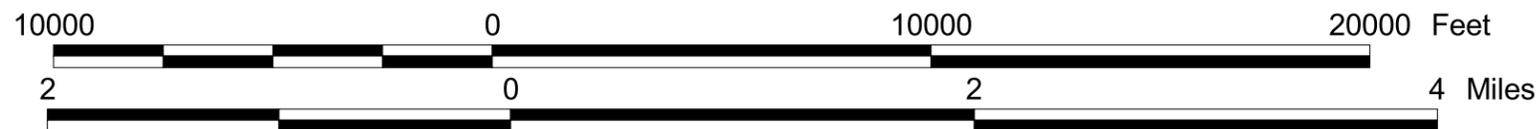
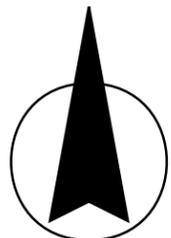
-  Short-term Road Improvements (5 to 10 years)
-  Long-term Road Improvements (10 years +)

-  Class I Interstate Highways
-  Class II State Highways
-  Class V Town Maintained Roads
-  Class VI Unmaintained Roads or Trails
-  Private Roads
-  Discontinued Roads
-  Discontinued Roads Subject to Gates & Bars
-  Water Bodies
-  Rivers and Streams
-  Intermittent Streams
-  Political Boundary



This map is to be used for planning purposes only, not for legal boundary interpretation. Any information depicted on this map is assumed to be accurate as of the date of printing, and may be subject to change at any time as more detailed and accurate information becomes available.

Data sources:
digital USGS Quadrangle series,
digital information developed by the CNHRPC
and by the NH GRANIT System



Central New Hampshire
Regional Planning Commission
28 Commercial Street
Concord, NH 03301

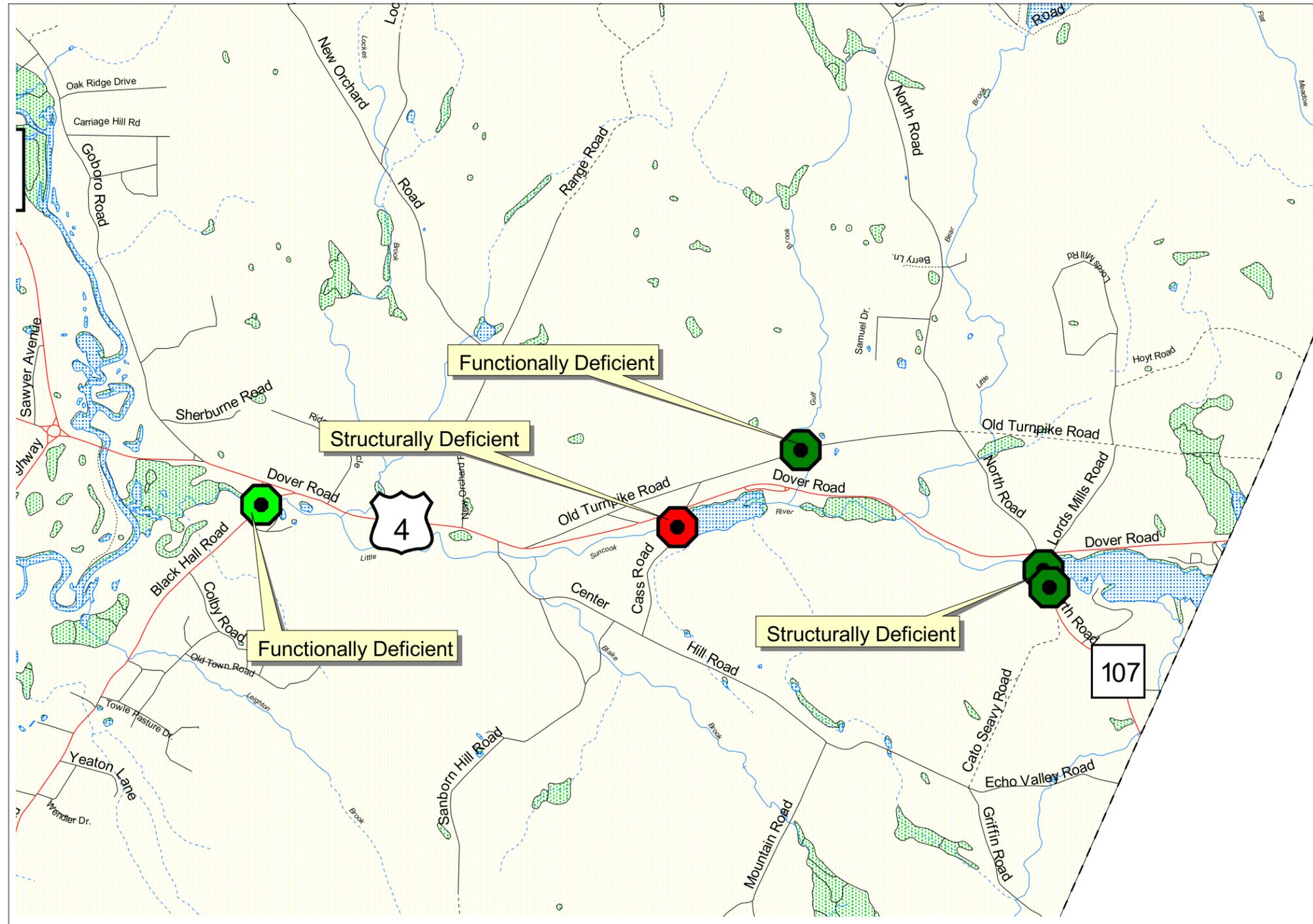
phone (603) 226-6020
web www.cnhrpc.org



TOWN OF EPSOM New Hampshire



DEFICIENT BRIDGES CHANGES SINCE 2001

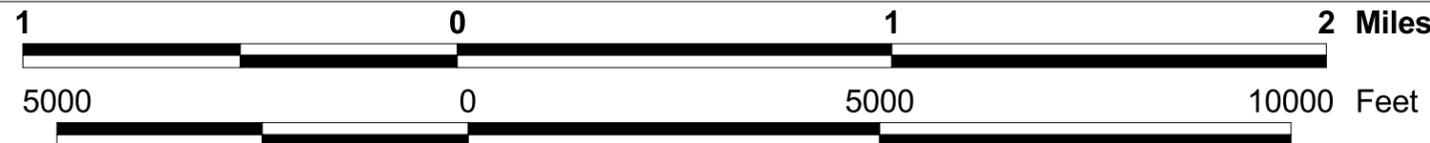


- Town owned bridge added to List
- Town owned bridge Removed from List
- State owned bridge Removed from List

- Class I Interstate Highways
- Class II State Highways
- Class V Town Maintained Roads
- Class VI Unmaintained Roads or Trails
- Private Roads
- Discontinued Roads
- Discontinued Roads Subject to Gates & Bars
- Rivers and Streams
- Intermittent Streams
- Water Bodies
- Wetlands
- Political Boundary

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CHAPTER V

EXISTING & FUTURE LAND USE

Introduction

Increased population growth, evolving housing needs, as well as changing social and economic trends discussed throughout this plan have had a direct impact on the landscape of the community. Because land is a finite resource, thoughtful use of land is a critical issue for all communities. How a community uses its land base has a direct impact on aesthetics, community character, transportation infrastructure, housing affordability, as well as the tax base.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and explore land use trends in Epsom, discuss how regulations impact such trends, as well as offer recommendations as to what regulatory steps should be taken in the future to meet the growing housing and economic needs of the community.

Key Findings in this Chapter

- ◆ Epsom residents have a strong desire to preserve the rural character of the community.
- ◆ Epsom's total land area is 22,152 acres, or 34.6 square miles, thus qualifying it as the eleventh (11) largest community of the twenty (20) communities in the central New Hampshire region.
- ◆ Epsom adopted zoning in 1969. The original zoning scheme of the community included a residential / commercial zone and rural / agricultural zone. Since its inception in 1969, this scheme has had a few changes, including the adoption of a Residential Light Commercial (RLC) zone a few years ago.
- ◆ Approximately 1,260 acres of land is zoned for commercial uses. This comprises 5.7 percent of the community. Much of this land area is not developable due to wetlands, floodplains, and conservation lands.
- ◆ The current commercial zoning scheme promotes strip development along Route 4 and portions of Route 28. In the long-term, this strategy is likely to cause increase traffic congestion and reduce the functional use of these important roadways.

Residents Opinions and Needs

Public participation is important in the planning process. In order to get as much input as possible from the community, two visioning sessions and a community wide survey were conducted in 1999. Over 50 individuals attend each visioning session and a 33% response rate was achieved for the community survey. In 2007, another survey and visioning session were done to see if residents opinions have changed much since 2001.

The following is a summary of opinions expressed by residents during visioning sessions and survey responses.

Visioning Session

Visioning session participants in 2007 and 1999 expressed that Epsom is an attractive place to work and live because the community is a “scenic place to live with many open spaces” and retains a “deep sense of history.” Epsom is a “caring” and “rural” community, with opportunities to “hunt and fish” as well as “walk in the woods.” The town is in close proximity to larger cities for employment and shopping needs.

For the 2001 Master Plan, visioning participants also cited several weaknesses existing in the community. The group expressed that “strip development and sprawl” was threatening the community character and straining the municipal infrastructure. It was also expressed that such development is not desirable or appropriate for Epsom. Further, it was noted that the community should encourage “aesthetically pleasing” commercial development that is more consistent with its rural character. Participants stated that commercial development should have a traditional appearance. The 2007 survey and visioning session echoed much of this sentiment, and in particular the desire for “aesthetically pleasing” development and the need to protect rural character.

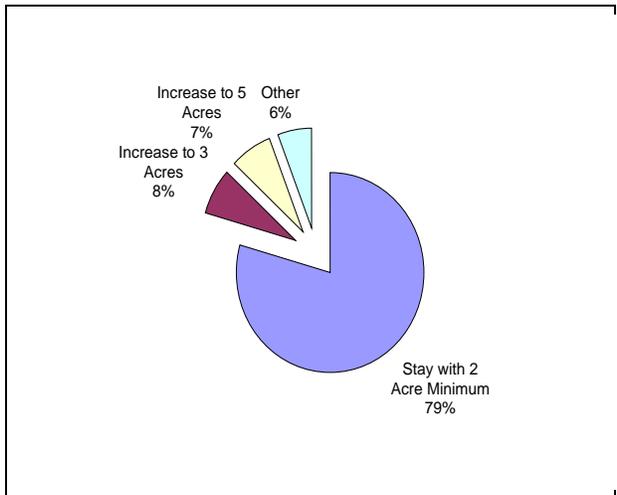
Above all, visioning session participants noted that Epsom wants to preserve its “rural atmosphere” as the community grows. The notion of “a small town” is important to the community, and the group noted that “cluster development should be encouraged to create neighborhoods with open space, as opposed to residential and commercial strip development”; also echoed in 2007. The 2001 Master Plan group also reinforced the prevalent community desire to separate “heavy industrial uses from housing developments.” The importance of the Current Use Taxation Program was noted and it was stressed that open spaces should not be over-assessed in order to maintain the rural atmosphere of Epsom. For the 2001 Master Plan, it was determined that Route 28 contains good opportunities for commercial and light industrial development. The group felt that Route 4 should be reserved for small scale, less impacting businesses, in order to have a minimal impact on traffic flow. The group in 2001 believed that light industrial uses would be most appropriate for the area north of the Traffic Circle. Proper sign regulations should be developed for this area to improve aesthetics and traffic movement. The group felt that agriculture should not be completely removed from the main roadways, as agriculture is part of Epsom’s community character and should be promoted to those travelling through the community.

Community Survey Responses

A total of three (3) questions on the survey related to land use issues for the 2001 Master Plan. The following is an overview of responses.

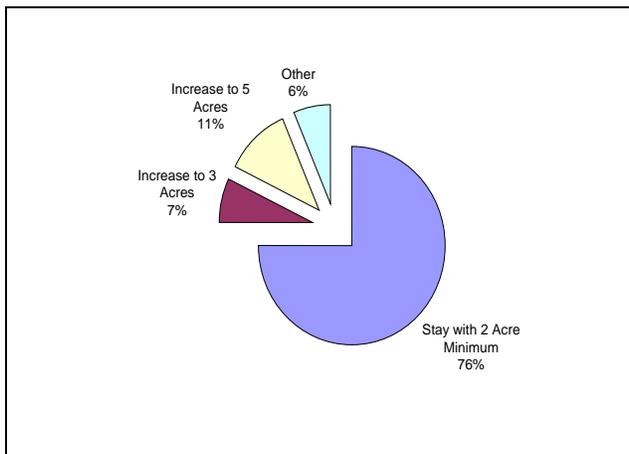
With respect to lot sizes, a majority of residents indicated that the Town should continue to require a 2-acre minimum lot size for both residential and commercial land uses.

Figure V-1: 2001 Master Plan Survey Respondents Opinion on Minimum Lot Size for Residential Land Uses



As was the case with residential lot sizes, residents also indicated that they strongly desire staying with 2-acre lot sizes for commercial land uses.

Figure V-2: 2001 Master Plan Survey Respondents Opinions Regarding Minimum Lot Size for Commercial Land Uses



With respect to developing an autonomous commercial zone, resident's opinions were mixed.

Figure V-3: 2001 Master Plan Residents Opinions as to if the Town Should Establish a Separate Commercial Zone

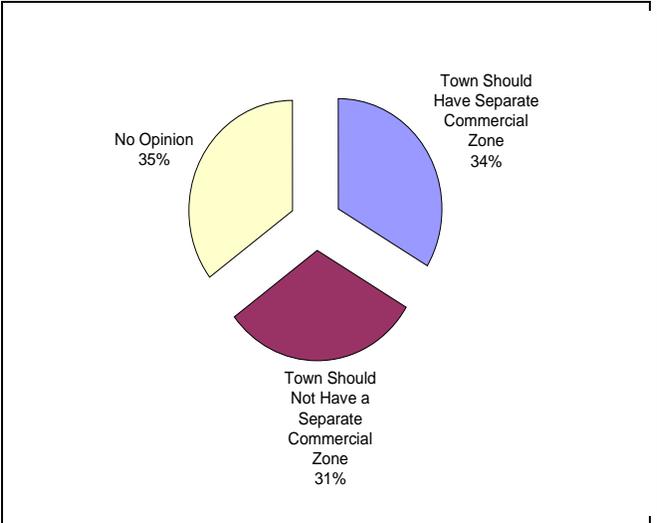


Figure V-4: 2007 Master Plan Resident's Opinion Rural Character being an asset to life in Epsom

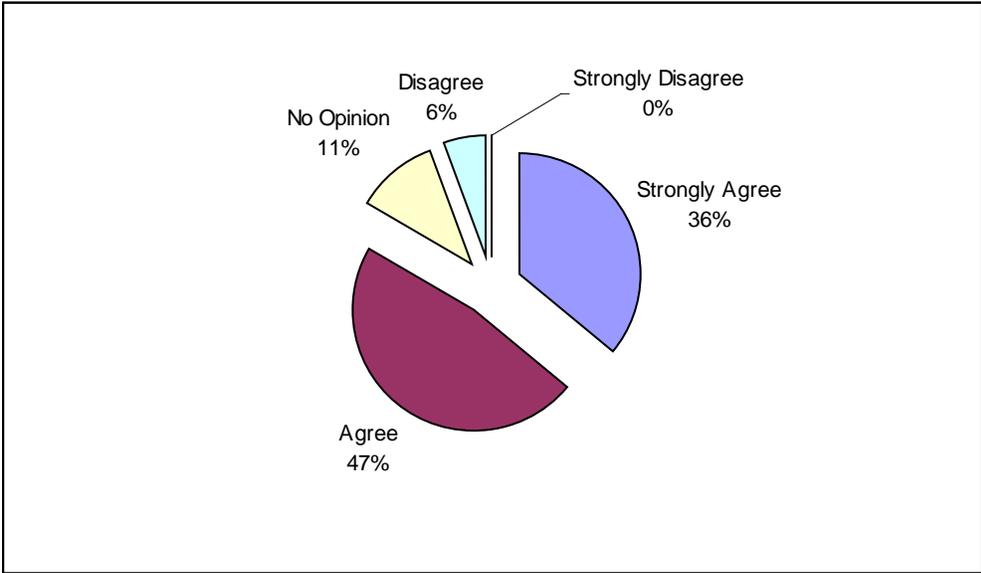
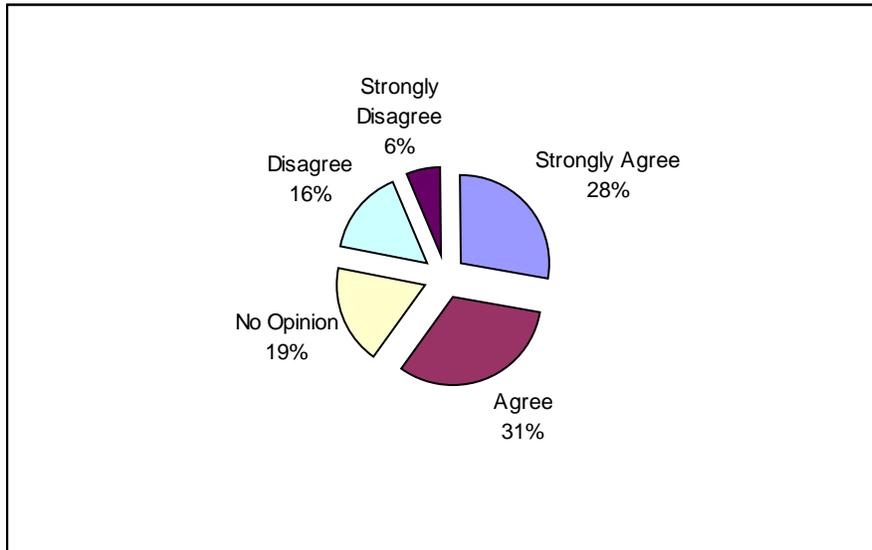


Figure V-5: 2007 Master Plan Residents Opinion Should the Town expand Commercial and Industrial Zones



Historic Land Use Trends

Epsom has a total land area of 22,152 acres, or 34.6 square miles, thus making it the eleventh largest community in the central New Hampshire region. Since its creation in 1727, Epsom has been generally considered an agricultural community. Its scenic ridge lines, fertile fields, and productive forested areas have helped the community create its identity. With the advent of the industrial revolution in the early part of the nineteenth century, more intense development formed along portions of the Suncook and Little Suncook Rivers. Creation of a municipal water district in these areas has helped preserve this development.

From the mid-nineteenth century to the present day, Epsom's land use pattern has remained relatively unchanged. Along the major roadways, such as Route 4, Route 28, and Black Hall Roads, more dense residential and commercial development has occurred. Away from the major transportation corridors, low scale residential development and agricultural uses have remained dominant. The Town is dominated by single family homes located on individual lots, generally 2 acres or more in size. Traditionally, commercial development has been located on Routes 4 and 28, while areas away from these main corridors have been relegated to residential uses and home occupations.

Existing Land Use

Existing land use patterns have not changed much since the 2001 Master Plan. As such, the land use patterns from that master plan would seem to still be applicable. The existing land use pattern in Epsom is typical of many rural communities in New Hampshire; commercial land uses are located along heavily traveled regional roadways while the majority of residential development is located in the back lands of the community.

The following table is a summary of the current composition of land uses in Epsom.

Figure V-6: Summary of Acreage used by Land Use Category

Land Use Category	Total Acreage	Percent of Total Area of Town
Agricultural	1,408	6.4%
Commercial	277	1.3%
Industrial	95	0.4%
Public	156	0.7%
Residential	3,003	13.6%
Conservation	878	4.0%
Vacant	16,335	73.7%
TOTAL	22,152	100.0%

Source: CNHRPC Geographic Information System (GIS)

Agriculture: In total, agricultural uses comprise 6.4% of the total land area in Epsom. Like residential development, agricultural uses are scattered throughout the community. However, the majority of larger farming operations are located along Route 28 South, Center Hill Road, New Orchard Road, and Sanborn Hill Road.

Residential Land Use: As noted on Map III-1, residential development is scattered throughout the community, generally along major collector roadways. High concentrations of residential development are located along Black Hall Road, New Rye Road, Center Hill Road, Goboro Road, New Orchard Road, and the southern part of Route 28 South.

Commercial Land Use: Commercial development has generally occurred near the Traffic Circle, and limited sections of Routes 4 and 28. The majority of this development consists of retail uses, restaurants, and other service sector businesses.

Industrial Land Use: Industrial development is very limited in Epsom. Only 2 major sites exist in the community. These are located on Route 28 North, Old Turnpike Road, and Route 4 East.

Conservation Lands: As noted in the Conservation and Natural Resources, conservation lands are important resources. Most conservation parcels in Epsom are located in the eastern portion of the community in the vicinity of Fort Mountain and the Little Suncook River.

Development Pattern, 1990 - 1998

Subdivision Activity:

During the period of 1990 through 1998, a total of 23 subdivisions were approved in Epsom. Of that total, four were major subdivisions consisting of three or more lots. The largest development consisted of 11 new lots on New Orchard Road. Outside of this, the typical subdivision in the community consisted of creating one or two new lots along existing road frontage. Again, this is common among rural communities. As compared to abutting communities, Epsom had less subdivision activity than most other abutting communities for the 8 years between 1990 and 1998. Comparatively, for the 8 years between 1998 and 2006, there were a total of 214 new lots created. This would represent a 269% increase in subdivision activity. Epsom's pace of development has increased.

Figure V-7: Number of New Lots Created 1990 - 1998

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total Number of Lots
Allenstown	N/A	0								
Chichester	N/A	103								
Deerfield	N/A	0								
Epsom	4	11	0	13	1	18	2	1	8	58
Northwood	N/A	0								
Pembroke	27	14	1	5	0	39	18	4	6	114
Pittsfield	18	2	4	2	4	11	4	8	5	58

Source: Epsom Planning Board Records, 1990-1998, CNHRPC

Figure V-8: Number of Acres Subdivided

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Allenstown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Chichester	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1816
Deerfield	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Epsom	19	22	2	41	6	68	5	11	29	203
Northwood	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Pembroke	340	235.5	3	16	0	261	272	60	143	1330.5
Pittsfield	354.5	12.5	38	n/a	67	37	144	62.3	45	760.3

Source: CNHRPC Development Trends Study, 1990-1998

Non-residential Site Plan Activity

Between 1990 and 1998, ten (10) major non-residential site plan applications were approved. Applications included a Wendy's Fast Food Restaurant, a self-storage facility, a home heating oil company, and a professional office for a cable company. The majority of applications approved between 1990 and 1998 were located on near the Traffic Circle or on Route 4 West. Additionally, between 1998 and 2006 there were a total of seven (7) site plan approvals granted. As there was less site plan activity compared to subdivision activity during that period, it would appear that Epsom has more of a "bedroom community" feel.

Building Permit Activity: During the period of 2001 through 2006, Epsom issued a combined 166 residential and commercial building permits. As compared to abutting communities, this was the highest quantity of permits issued, second only to Pembroke.

Figure V-9: Comparison of Building Permit Activity in Epsom and Abutting Communities, 2001-2006

Number of Building Permits Issued							
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total # of Permits
Allenstown	11	26	NA	18	24	33	112
Chichester	31	19	17	14	NA	14	95
Deerfield	NA						
Epsom	39	NA	35	46	46	NA	166
Northwood	NA						
Pembroke	51	56	64	115	86	NA	372

Source: Town Reports.

Existing Zoning Scheme

Zoning serves as the major land use regulatory power municipalities can use to shape the character of the community. Epsom adopted zoning on September 15, 1969. The original ordinance created a basic regulatory scheme whereby two zoning districts were created; the residential/agricultural (R/A) zone and the residential/commercial (R/C) zone. In 2002 a “Residential/Light Commercial zone was created (RLC). Since 1969, the zoning scheme of the community has seen a few changes with the exception of creating the RLC zone.

Residential / Commercial (R/C) District

The RC district includes Route 4 west of the Epsom Traffic Circle, Route 4 east of Center Hill Road and Route 28 south of the Epsom Traffic Circle to a line perpendicular to Route 28 at the southern boundary of tax map lot U-11-25. The zone is on both sides of the roads enumerated and has a depth of five hundred (500) feet from the edge of the public right of way.

Permitted uses within the R/C Zone includes retail uses, personal/consumer service establishments, funeral homes, professional/office space, bed and breakfasts, hotels, communications towers, single family, duplex, home occupations, day cares, and churches. Uses allowed by special exception include sexually oriented businesses, restaurants, drive in restaurants, membership clubs, junkyards, repair service, movie theaters, outdoor amusement/recreation, planned business development, multifamily, cluster residential, gravel pits, processing facilities, construction, manufacturing, laundry/dry cleaning, bus terminals, wholesale/distribution, open storage research facilities, schools.

In the thirty (30) years since the R/C District was established, a broad mix of land uses have been developed in the zone. Though attempting to develop mixed uses, the permitted uses within the district were too broad, thus creating conflicts between uses. This, combined with increased development of single family homes in some locations, has led to some significant land use conflicts. Such conflicts serve to decrease property values and quality of life for residents living

in homes that abut commercial developments. Please see the future land use section of this chapter for specific strategies to reduce conflicts in these areas of the community.

Residential / Agricultural (R/A) District

The residential / agricultural district contains approximately 20,888 acres, or 94.3% of the community. This district consists of all land away from Routes 4, as well as portions of Route 28. This district is dominated by single-family homes, manufactured housing, agricultural, and open space uses.

The R/A zoning district is much more restrictive with respect to permitted uses than the R/C zone. Only three (3) types of land uses are permitted by right. These uses are single family homes, duplexes, and home occupations. Numerous other uses, including bed and breakfasts, hotels, day care centers, and gravel excavations, are permitted by special exception.

This simplistic zoning scheme, utilized in the community for more than thirty (30) years, has created land use conflicts between residential and commercial development.

Residential / Light Commercial (RLC) District

The RLC District includes the area on both sides of Route 4 to a depth of five hundred (500) feet from the edge of the public roadway, beginning at the intersection of the Suncook River and Route 4 running easterly to a line drawn perpendicular to Route 4 across the same road from the western point of its intersection with Center Hill Road. Also, the area along Route 28 South of the boundary with the R/C zone to the Pembroke town line. This zone includes the area to a distance of five hundred (500) feet from the edge of Route 28 to the west and the westerly shore of the Suncook River to the east.

Permitted uses in the RLC Zone include retail, personal/consumer service funeral parlors, professional/business, bed and breakfasts, hotels, communications towers single family, duplex, home occupation, day care, churches. Uses allowed by special exception include restaurants, drive in restaurants, membership clubs, business repair, movie theaters, outdoor amusement/recreation, planned business developments, multifamily, cluster residential, gravel pits, bus terminals, research facility, and schools.

The RLC district was created as a result of recommendations from the 2001 Master Plan. At this point, it is too early to tell what effect the district has had on the community. As the years pass, the impact of the RLC district will become clearer.

Overview of Specific Zoning Regulations

Cluster Development: The existing cluster subdivision ordinance needs to be rewritten to better protect land and create usable open space as intended by this type of development.

Telecommunications Facility Ordinance: Construction of telecommunications facilities across the State has sharply increased in recent years. In response to this trend, numerous communities

have adopted telecommunications ordinances. In March 2000, Epsom adopted its own telecommunications ordinance. The ordinance established an overlay district within the existing R/C Zone or any point within 1,000 feet of the R/C Zone with the exception of that portion of the district located south of the traffic circle. Telecommunication facilities are permitted by special exception. The maximum height of such facilities is 20 feet above the average surrounding tree canopy height as measured within a two hundred (200) foot radius of the proposed facility, not to exceed ninety (90) feet; the Planning Board also has the authority to grant special exceptions to the height limitations.

Though the current ordinance helped to establish basic performance standards for telecommunication facilities, changing technologies and trends in the industry have necessitated the need to periodically review local telecommunication regulations. In the future, the Town should consider amending this ordinance to be current with technological changes. Specific issues the Town should review are as follows:

- ◆ Review the area of the current district: If the height of permitted towers is reduced, it may become necessary to expand the size of the district or reduce setbacks between towers to ensure that adequate opportunity for the development of towers still exists. Also, the Town should consider broadening the district to include all or selected Town owned properties. By encouraging siting of towers on town owned properties, the Town could use leasing of easements of town property as a new revenue source. Leasing of sites for towers can generate substantial revenue.

Used Automobile Dealerships: In recent years, the number of used automobile dealerships has increased dramatically in the community. Though not completely undesirable in the community, the aesthetics of most of these establishments can do little to foster the character of the community. In some cases, landscaping is not provided, and travel trailers are used as offices for these sites. In order to allow these uses, but preserve the character of the community and minimize negative impacts on abutting properties, the following performance standards should be included in the zoning ordinance:

- ◆ Require proper landscaping, buffering, and screening;
- ◆ Require that vehicles cannot be displayed in road rights-of-way.

Industrial and Commercial Uses: Large scale commercial and industrial developments can have negative impacts on the community, ranging from increased traffic to reducing the aesthetic appeal of the community.

The existing zoning and site plan review regulations do not contain any performance standards related to the aesthetic, environmental, or traffic impact of commercial and industrial developments. In the future, it is recommended that such performance standards be included in the Zoning Ordinance and Site Plan Review Regulations. Performance standards (first outlined in the 2001 Master Plan and recommended as part of this plan) that should be specifically included are as follows:

- ◆ **Minimum Landscaping and Screening Performance Standards:** The intent of these standards would be to preserve and enhance the aesthetic qualities of the community by establishing landscaping and design standards, which are proportionate to the intensity of proposed land use(s). The enactment of these design standards and incentive bonuses would accomplish the following:
1. Diminish adverse impacts of structures, lighting glare, noise, wind, and odors, which may result from permitting widely varying land uses on adjacent parcels;
 2. Ensure that each tract of land has an adequate buffer from other properties in order to preserve property values and improve aesthetic values of properties;
 3. Promote aesthetically pleasing development, consistent with the character of the Town;
 4. Promote an aesthetically pleasing relationship of scale between buildings and their natural surroundings;
 5. Redefine the character, image, and identity of the commercial areas of the community by promoting tree lined streets through the planting of native trees, installation of underground utilities, and designing of monument or pedestal signage as opposed to pole signage.

Landscaping should be required to be installed along all visible portions of the perimeter of a structure, parking area, as well as a front, side, and rear lot lines where vegetation has been removed or existing natural state of said areas does not screen the view of parking and loading areas, storage areas, dumpsters, or the structures on the site. Suggested landscape standards are as follows:

- ✓ **Structure Landscape Strip:** A Structure Landscape Strip should be provided along the perimeter of all structures with a foot print greater than 50 square feet in size visible from abutting properties or the public right of way. The Planning Board shall approve planting materials and densities. Minimum width of said strip should be ten (10) feet.
- ✓ **Street Landscape Strip:** To promote the aesthetic quality of tree-lined streets, street landscape strip should be required in all commercial and industrial subdivisions and site plans. This landscape strip should be a fifteen foot (15') wide strip running parallel with the lot frontage along any public right-of-way and shall be continuous along the entire length of said right-of-way, except in areas reserved for approved curb cuts. Plantings in these areas should consist of a minimum of 1 indigenous shade tree for every twenty-five (25) feet of right-of-way frontage. Should the Town implement such a requirement, it is recommended that the size of the trees to be planted within this area shall be a

minimum of two and a half inches (2 ½") in caliper at the time of planting. Branching height of Street Trees shall not be less than seven feet (7') above grade when planted.

- ✓ **Side and Rear Landscape Strips:** Side and Rear Landscape Strips should be required of developments to promote proper visual separation and adequate buffering between adjoining properties. Parking areas, driveways, and buildings shall not be located within any required Side and Rear Landscape Strip. The suggested minimum required width of these Side and Rear Landscape Strips should be ten (10) feet. Any regulations adopted should require plantings to be constructed so as to provide a dense visual four-season screen by using one or a combination of techniques including walls, fencing, plantings, and berms.

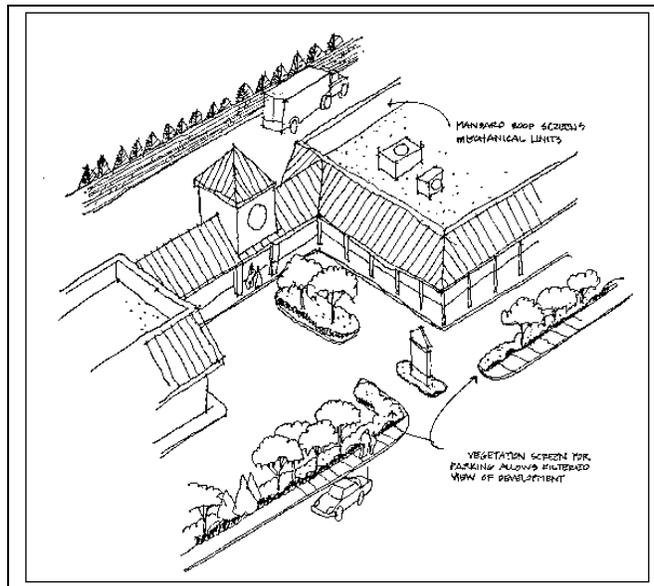
- ◆ **Exterior Building Facade Performance Standards:** To protect the aesthetic character of the community and to improve the quality of development constructed, the Town should consider instituting architectural design standards in the Zoning Ordinance and Site Plan review regulations. Example performance standards, which would be included in such a set of regulations, could include:
 1. No exterior building surface visible from a public right-of-way or abutting residential property shall be constructed of any material except face brick, stone, stucco, architecturally treated concrete, cast in place or precast panels, decorative block, glass, clapboards, vinyl siding, metal or a combination thereof. Metal may be used on a maximum of twenty (20) percent of the visible exterior building surface.
 2. Subtle, neutral colors should be required on larger and plain buildings, such as warehouse style or “big box retail centers”. Paint colors shall relate to natural material colors found on buildings such as brick, stucco, stone, or ceramic tile and existing elements such as signs or awnings. Contrasting colors, and accent architectural details, should be required (i.e. cupolas, windows, shutters, etc.)
 3. Buildings should be required to relate vertical, horizontal, or non-directional facade characteristics of new buildings to the predominant direction expression of nearby buildings constructed under these standards.
 4. Roof form is an important visual element and can have a significant impact on a building’s appearance. Land use regulations should require that new roof forms relate to the roof forms of adjacent structures where appropriate, by duplicating the shape, pitch, and materials. A pitched roof should be provided for structures with a building footprint of 5,000 square feet or less in order to have new development better fit with the rural and residential character of the community. Common roof forms should be required to be duplicated on the primary structure whenever possible. For structures with a footprint larger than 5,000 square feet, flat roofs should be permitted, provided that mansard

roof is employed. Please refer to graphics below for more detail regarding common roof form and mansard roofs.

Common Roof Form Graphic



Mansard Roof Graphic for Structures with footprints of 5,000 square feet and Larger



5. To ensure the development of commercial and industrial structures are consistent with, and improve the architectural character of the Town, varied offsets, roof heights and forms, and window placement should be incorporated into all new structures, or additions to existing structures. Please refer to the sample graphic for more detail.

Varied Offsets, Roof Heights, and Window Graphic



The Town should require that all rooftop mechanical equipment be screened from view with either building walls or roof forms. All sides visible to the public and abutters should have screen materials. Screening materials that should be required should be the same material as used for building cladding.

- ◆ **Screening Performance Requirements:** An important aspect of commercial and industrial development design, as screening can help preserve property values of abutting parcels, and also reduce the overall aesthetic impact of such developments. When developing performance standards related to screening, the following issues should be included:

1. **Ground Level Mechanical Equipment:** The Site Plan Review regulations should require that ground level view of all mechanical equipment with a foot print of fifty (50) square feet or greater be fully screened from contiguous properties and adjacent streets. Screening should be accomplished by architecturally integrating the equipment into the principle structure or by surrounding it with opaque materials compatible with the principal structure. Screening materials shall be designed for low maintenance and long life and shall be kept in a state of good repair. Signs should not be used for the purpose of screening mechanical equipment. Landscape plantings, in lieu of man-made enclosures architecturally consistent with the principle structure on the site, should be permitted to screen mechanical equipment, provided that plantings are placed at regular intervals so as to maximize the overall density of the landscape screen.
2. **Exterior Storage Screening:** In the Site Plan Review Regulations, the Planning Board should stipulate that all materials and equipment be stored within a building or fully screened so as not to be visible from adjoining properties. It should be required that no exterior storage shall be visible from any street. Exterior storage areas should be screened for the entire height and width of aggregate storage area on all sides by opaque materials architecturally compatible

with the principal structure. It should be required that screens be constructed of materials designed for low maintenance and long life.

3. Refuse Storage Areas: Site Plan Review Regulations should stipulate that all waste material be kept in an enclosed building or properly contained in a closed container designed for such purposes. Furthermore, all exterior trash containers shall be screened on each side and shall not be visible from any street. Screening should be accomplished by means of an opaque structure, earthen berm, or landscaping at least eight (8) feet in height and shall be architecturally compatible with the principal structure.
- ◆ **Parking Performance Requirements**: The Town should also consider revising parking requirements in the Site Plan Review Regulations to include provisions for the following aspects of parking lot design:
1. Consideration of Pedestrian Circulation: Parking area designs shall adequately consider pedestrian circulation to and from parking spaces and shall maximize opportunities for safe maneuvering of all vehicles.
 2. Setbacks: In the Zoning Ordinance, parking areas should not be permitted to be located less than ten (10) feet from a rear or side lot line, provided that the parking area is screened from adjacent properties by fencing, plantings, or earthen berm, or combination thereof at least eight (8) feet in height.
 3. Parking Landscape Strips: The Site Plan Review Regulations should stipulate that parking areas visible from adjacent public roadways should employ landscaping strips to soften the appearance of parking areas. Plantings located at the end of parking lot isles, or near driveways, should be required to have a maximum height of 24" at maturity in order to maintain adequate sight distance and visibility.
 4. Interior Pavement Landscape Strips: The Planning Board should consider requiring interior pavement landscape strips to break up large expanses of pavement, provide summer shade on pavement areas and reduce wind velocity across exposed surface areas. Islands and planting strips should be planted with indigenous shade trees, evergreen shrubs, and deciduous shrubs.
 5. Alternative Pavement Materials: Where appropriate, the Site Plan Review Regulations should encourage the use of alternative pavement materials other than asphalt and concrete. Encouraged materials include brick, crushed stone, pea stone, stamped concrete, cobblestone, and other similar materials. For parking lots utilizing alternative surface treatments, a paved apron at least 30' in length, shall be constructed where parking areas access paved roadways. Allowing the use of such materials will preserve the rural character of the community and add to the aesthetic appeal of smaller commercial developments.
 6. Shared Parking Incentive Bonuses: The Planning Board, via the Site Plan Review

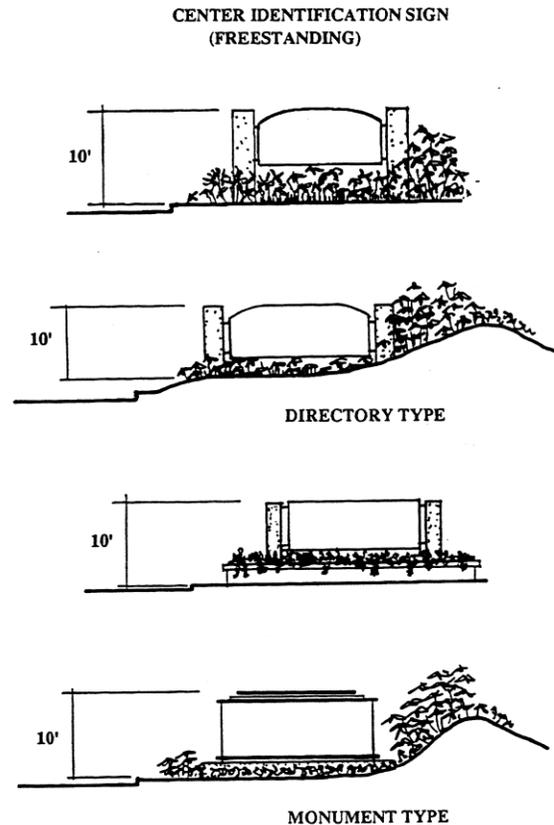
Regulations, should consider adopting provisions that would allow for shared parking between separate lots. Such a requirement would allow the Planning Board, when feasible, to reduce parking requirements for each land, provided that the peak parking demand of each land use does not occur during the same time periods.

7. Rights-of-way to abutting parcels: To reduce congestion of streets and traffic safety hazards, the Planning Board, through the Site Plan Review Regulations, should require all developments, at time of subdivision or site plan review, provide rights-of-way to abutting parcels for future connection of sites.

- a. **Signage Requirements**: Signage can have a significant impact on the character of a community. In the future, the Planning Board should review the current sign ordinance and consider instituting the following sample changes:

1. Permit only wall signs or free standing monument style signs.
2. Limit the maximum height of signs to eight feet above grade;
3. Animated, moving, flashing, noise making, and painted wall signs should not be permitted. Wall signs above the eave line should not be permitted.
4. Free standing or monument style signs shall be constructed of carved or painted wood, stone, or other masonry products.
5. For free standing signs, require a "Signage Landscape Strip" be constructed to re-establish ground cover where disturbed by sign installation and to screen the foundation of monument or pedestal signs without blocking the view of signage information.
6. Require that freestanding monument signs or directory signs be placed perpendicular to approaching vehicular traffic.
7. Require Freestanding monument signs be designed to generally conform with and be limited to styles presented below:

Sample Design Requirements for Freestanding Monument Signs



8. Wall and eave line signs should be required to be designed to be compatible with the predominant visual elements of the building and emphasize architectural elements of the building's facade.

9. Design of signs should be required to establish a visual continuity with adjacent building facades and should be oriented to emphasize pedestrian visibility.

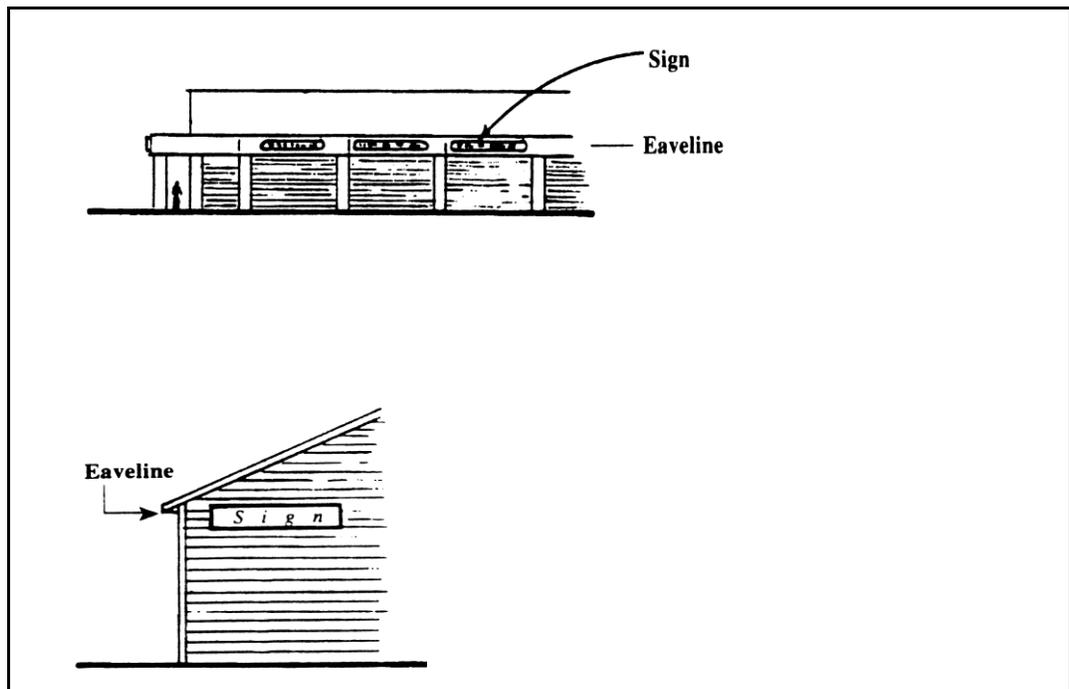
10. Wall and eave line signs should be limited to a maximum letter height of 20 inches. The letter area, as it relates to the overall sign background area, shall be in proportion. The height of all letters, logos, and insignias on wall and eave line signs for multi-tenant buildings shall not exceed one (1) foot. In general, letters should not be permitted to occupy more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the sign panel area.

11. In the case of buildings with multiple business tenants, only one (1) sign per tenant should be permitted. All signs at a multi-tenant commercial or industrial structure shall be complementary to each other as follows:

- ✓ Letter size and style of text;
- ✓ Sign support method;
- ✓ Sign area configuration;
- ✓ Sign shape and proportion;
- ✓ Construction materials (text and background surfaces); and
- ✓ The use of back lit, individually cut, letter signs should be encouraged.

12. In the case of multi-tenant buildings, all wall and eave line signs for each business should not be permitted to exceed twenty-four (24) square feet. The letter area, as it relates to the overall sign background area, shall be in proportion. In general, letters shall not occupy more than seventy-five percent (75%) of the sign panel area. Wall and eave line signs should be located at the same height as the eave line in accordance with examples included below:

Location for Wall and Eave line Signs



- ◆ **Lighting Standards:** Lighting is also a critical component of commercial and industrial site design. Often, site designs employ excessive amounts of lighting, thus having negative impacts on abutting properties. Also, excessive lighting acts as a form of signage, and should not be permitted. It is recommended that the Town consider enacting specific performance standards regarding lighting for commercial and industrial sites. Performance standards the Town should consider adopting are as follows:
 1. Any lighting used to illuminate an off-street parking area, sign, or other structure, should be required to be arranged to deflect light away from any adjoining properties or from the public streets. Direct or sky-reflected glare should not be permitted.
 2. In order to minimize glare and other adverse effects associated with exterior lighting, all exterior lighting fixtures shall be of a design that provides for luminaire cutoffs with a total cutoff at an angle of seventy- five degrees from the vertical. Further, all fixtures shall be positioned and/or installed in such a fashion as to prevent unwanted incidental illumination of abutting properties and streets. Any light or combination of lights which cast light on a public street shall not exceed one (1) foot-candle (meter reading) as measured from the centerline of said street. Any light or combination of lights, which cast light on residential property shall not exceed 0.1 foot candles (meter reading) as measured from said property.
 3. Bare light bulbs should not be permitted in view of adjacent property or public right-of-way.
 4. The Zoning Ordinance and/or Site Plan Review Regulations should stipulate that all lighting fixtures be compatible to the architectural design of the proposed structures and abutting land uses.
 5. The Planning Board should require a detailed lighting plan for all site plans. Such plans should be required to incorporate standards and techniques included in the *Vermont Lighting Manual*.

- ◆ **Environmental Performance Standards:** Environmental performance standards should be developed in order to protect the long term environmental quality and overall vitality of commercial and industrial districts. The variety of permitted uses, taken together with often intensive land use patterns and an inventory of environmental resources, necessitates environmental performance standards. Specific environmental performance standards that the Town should consider adopting should include standards related to odors, noise, wetlands, steep slopes, and ground water supplies. Sample environmental performance standards are provided below:

1. Performance Standards Related to Nuisance Odors: Uses and activities which produce continuous, regular, or frequent odors and/ or emissions, detectable beyond the boundary of the property from which the odor originates, shall be prohibited, in whole or in part, if the odor or emission in question is a known health risk or danger or if the Planning Board judges such odor or emission to be harmful to the rights of others to enjoy their property(s).

2. Performance Standards Related to Noise: The Performance Standards governing noise are intended to ensure that the rights of property owners, as well as the overall health and general welfare of the community, are not diminished by unreasonable noise levels generated by commercial and industrial uses. Specific items that should be included in noise performance standards should include:
 - ✓ The maximum permissible sound level produced by any continuous, regular, or frequent source of sound or noise, produced by any permitted use or activity.
 - ✓ Methods for measuring noise levels.
 - ✓ Provisions allowing the use of Sound or Noise Abatement techniques.
 - ✓ An inventory of Activities and Devices Exempt from Noise Performance Standards.

3. Performance Standards Related to Vibration: Heavy industrial operations can sometimes create significant vibrations that can have a negative impact on abutting properties. When developing performance standards, the Town should consider implementing standards related to vibration in the Zoning Ordinance. Earthborne vibrations generally should not be permitted to exceed those listed below, as measured at the property should not exceed the displacement contained in the following table:

Figure V-11: Vibration Performance Standards

Frequency in Cycles per Second	Displacement in Inches
0 to 10	0.001
10 to 20	0.0008
20 to 30	0.0005
30 to 40	0.0004
40 and Over	0.0003

Future Land Use

Preservation of the community's rural character, while providing reasonable opportunities for expansion of the commercial tax base and housing is important for the future of Epsom. The following proposals are to serve as a general guide to assist the community in making future zoning changes.

The existing zoning scheme, as it relates to commercial and industrial development, may not be conducive to the long term expansion of the tax base, preservation of important regional roadways, or the rural character of the community. Furthermore, the existing zoning scheme of the community allows for residential and light industrial uses to be located next to each other creates conflict, lowers property values of residential property, and reduces the quality of life of residents living on properties abutting intense commercial and industrial development.

In order to provide opportunities for future economic growth and to protect the rural character and natural resources of the community, the following zoning changes are recommended. Please refer to Map III-3 for more detail regarding the location of these changes.

Commercial / Industrial Land Use Changes

- ◆ **Create a "Gateway Transition District" between Center Hill Road and North Road:** Because much of the land along Route 4 between Center Hill Road and North Road is constrained by wetlands or is not developable due to scenic easements held by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation, it is recommended that this land be rezoned to a "gateway transition zone". By doing so, this land area will be re-classified from Residential / Commercial, thus commercial uses would no longer be permitted uses in this area. By rezoning this portion of the community, the unique scenic qualities in this area would be further protected and the image of the Town would be enhanced.

Possible permitted uses in this district would be limited forestry, agricultural, recreation, and limited residential uses, with the requirement of those properties abutting Route 4 would have to maintain a setback of 100' from Route 4.

- ◆ **Rezone land north of Route 4, between North Road and the Northwood Town Line, to create a Lake Shore Commercial District:** Land between North Road and the Northwood town line is characterized by light commercial and retail uses, as well as a marina. The majority of the property within this area is under used. Because of the presence of these businesses and the high traffic volume along Route 4, it is unlikely that other types of development besides commercial would be viable. Also, because of the close proximity to Northwood Lake, it is recommended that fairly non-intensive land uses be developed in this area. When rezoning this area, incentives should also be included from removal of some of the blight located within this part of the community. Because of the presence of Route 4, larger lots and frontage requirements should be employed in this area. A suggested minimum lot size of 3 acres should be employed. However, if developers are willing to share access points, lot areas and frontage requirements should be reduced. Specific landscaping and architectural requirements should also be mandated in the zoning ordinance.

Residential Land Use Changes

- ◆ **Rezone Land Around Northwood Lake to "Lake Shore Residential":** As is the case with many communities in New Hampshire with large lakes, Northwood Lake has served as a seasonal tourist draw to the area for generations. As such, the development pattern around the lake was created long before zoning was implemented in the community. Because of

this, lots along the lake are typically very small and are often irregularly shaped. Street frontages of lots in this area are, on average, 50 to 100 feet. Most lots abutting the lake also have limited frontages along the Lake itself, generally ranging from small rights-of-way with less than 10' of frontage to lots with several hundred feet of frontage. On average, the typical frontage on the lake is less than 100 feet.

As more homes in this area are converted from seasonal to year round use, it is likely that some lots may be merged. However, by and large, it is suspected that most lots will remain as they currently are. Thus, it is recommended that land near the lake be rezoned to make such properties conforming. It is recommended that a minimum lot area of .5 acres be established, provided that water and on site sewage disposal can be provided. Setbacks should also be reduced in order to allow maximum use of smaller lots. The Town should also consider a minimum frontage on the lake and roads of 100'. Lastly, within this district, the town should require any seasonal properties that are being converted to year-round use, that septic systems be upgraded to handle more intense use.

- ◆ **Rezone Land near Black Hall and Goboro Road to recreate "Rural Residential District":** Development along Black Hall Road is more "suburban" than other locations in the community. Single family, multifamily dwellings, small mobile home parks, as well as public uses such as Epsom Central School and Webster Park characterize the area. Public water is available in this area.

This area of town is also characterized by lot sizes generally in the range of 1 to 2 acres. Also, there are several large parcels in this area of town which, because of soil conditions, location, and the presence of town water, are prime for residential development. In order to preserve the character of this area of the community, while maximizing the development potential of this area, it is recommended that the Town rezone this area to create a new zoning district. Because of the presence of public water and good soils, the minimum lot area should be reduced to 1 acre. Also, as noted in the Housing Chapter of this plan, performance standards for town house condominiums and other high quality multifamily development should be created for this area of the community.

For a summary of proposed zoning changes, please see Figure V-12.

Figure V-12: Summary of Proposed Re-Zoning

Name of Proposed Zoning District	Minimum Proposed Lot Area	Minimum Road Frontage	Minimum Shoreline Frontage	Front Setback	Rear Setback	Side Setback	Wetlands / Surface Water Setback	Maximum Impervious Surface	Sample of Permitted Uses
Light Office Conversion District	1 acre	200'	Not Applicable	Use ratio base on height of proposed structures	Use ratio base on height of proposed structures	Use ratio base on height of proposed structures	75'	30% of Gross Lot Area	Professional Offices, Single family homes, duplexes
Gateway Transition Zone	5 acres	300'	Not Applicable	100'	15'	15'	75'	20% Gross Lot Area	Agriculture, Forestry, Single Family Dwellings
Lake Shore Commercial District	1 acre along local streets, 3 acres along Route 4	100' along local streets, 300' along Route 4	Not Applicable	Use ratio base on height of proposed structures	Use ratio base on height of proposed structures	Use ratio base on height of proposed structures	75'	20% Gross Lot Area	Small scale commercial and retail uses
Lake Shore Residential District	.5 acre	100'	100'	15'	15'	10'	75'	20% Gross Lot Area	Single Family Homes, Water based commercial / recreational facilities by Special Exception
Rural / Residential District	1 acre	200'	Not Applicable	30'	20'	20'	75'	20% Gross Lot Area	Institutional Uses, Single Family & Multifamily Dwellings, Condominiums, Agriculture

Other Future Land Use Options

In addition to traditional zoning techniques, the feasibility of using the following innovative land use tools, as permitted by RSA 674:21, should be reviewed.

Performance Zoning: When revising the zoning regulations, the Town should consider implementing performance zoning for commercial, industrial, and multifamily developments. Performance zoning establishes both the standards that must be met by development, as well as the process that determines the impact development would have on the physical, social, economic, and environmental conditions in the community.

Performance standards establish definite measurements that determine whether the effects of a particular use will be within permissible levels. Performance standards commonly employed include standards related to noise, vibration, smoke, odor, illumination, signs, ground water, road impact (i.e. number of trips generated by a use), landscaping, multifamily and commercial building aesthetics, and school impact. Communities that have adopted performance standards for commercial and industrial development include the towns of Bow and Bedford, New Hampshire.

When revising the zoning scheme of the community relative to commercial and industrial uses, the Town should establish performance standards for such developments. Such standards will help to make development less obnoxious and preserve the character of the community.

Incentive bonuses: Often employed as part of a performance zoning ordinance, incentives encourage developers to build projects above and beyond base line standards included in the zoning ordinance. Incentive zoning is a voluntary exchange of development incentives for public benefits between a community and a developer. There are three basic categories of incentive bonuses: (1) intensity incentives, (2) use incentives, and (3) inclusionary incentives.

Intensity incentives allow developers a greater or more intensive use of the property. Such incentives usually allow developers to construct more units on a property, have greater amounts of impervious surface, or more square footage for commercial buildings. A typical example of an incentive usually included in this type of ordinance could be density bonus in exchange for setting aside open space in a development for public use, construction of trails, or construction of recreational facilities.

Land use incentives permit mixing of uses in a development or provide for unspecified uses. For example, a convenience store may be permitted in a housing development, or residential units may be allowed as part of a retail development. In exchange for such benefits, developers are usually required to provide the town with construction of public infrastructure, such as parks, boat ramps, swimming areas, recreational facilities, pedestrian infrastructure, public parking spaces, or open space.

Lastly, inclusionary incentives (also known as inclusionary zoning) help implement public policy goals to expand housing for low income or elderly segments of the population. The inclusion of a specified number of affordable housing units or elderly units is tied to a development incentive. For example, in exchange for constructing elderly units as part of a traditional subdivision or condominium development, a developer could be permitted to increase his overall density from one (1) unit per acre to two (2) units per acre.

Soil Based Lot Sizing: Soil based lot sizing first gained attention in New Hampshire in the early 1990's with the publishing of Model Subdivision Regulations for Soil-Based Lot Size, June, 1991, by the Rockingham County Conservation District. The theory behind soil based lot sizing is to encourage development patterns that can be supported by soils in the community. For example, areas with well drained soils require a smaller minimum lot size, and those with more development restrictions, such as steep slopes and short depth to restrictive features, such as ground water or ledge, are required to have a larger lot size.

Steep Slopes: As the community continues to grow in the future, more desirable development locations, such as those with less restrictive soils and more gentle slopes will be developed. As this happens, more development pressure will be focused towards locations that are more costly and difficult to develop. Areas with steep slopes are such locations where development pressures will be focused and where protections will be needed to preserve those important resources. Reasons to protect areas with steep slopes are as follows:

- ◆ To promote public safety. It is well documented that Fire Fighting apparatus have difficulty climbing steep slopes. This increases response times and endangers the public.
- ◆ To minimize flooding, landslides, mudslides, and erosion.
- ◆ To minimize soil instability and siltation of seasonal and year round streams and wetlands.
- ◆ To preserve natural drainage ways.
- ◆ To protect rare and critical environments, wildlife, fragile soils, and unique geologic features.
- ◆ To protect and preserve the scenic character of hillside areas.

As noted in the 2001 Master Plan Conservation and Natural Resources Chapter of this Plan, Epsom contains approximately 3,560 acres of land with steep slopes in excess of 15% or more. This represents nearly 16% of the total land area in the community. In the future, the Town should enact regulations to protect steeper areas of the community. Issues that should be included in any slope regulations are as follows:

- ◆ Minimum lot size: This can either be a fixed size regardless of slope, or be based on a sliding scale (i.e. the steeper a lot, the greater the minimum lot size must be). An example sliding scale is provided below:

Figure V-13: Zoning Per Slope

Percent Average Cross Slope	Minimum Lot Area
15% - 20%	2 Acres
20% - 25%	2 Acres
25% - 30%	2 Acres
30% - 35%	3 Acres
35% - 40%	5 Acres
40% to 50%	10 Acres
50% and Greater	15 Acres

Source: Adapted from "The Zoning Report", Vol. 10, No 6, June 5, 1992

- ◆ Grading Restrictions: Grading of slopes 25% or greater should not be permitted.
- ◆ Roadway Placement and Designed: Flexible standards should be incorporated to allow for separation of roadway lands to accommodate steep slopes.
- ◆ Slope easements should be required for all new subdivisions.

For more information regarding steep slopes, please refer to the Conservation and Natural Resources Chapter of this Plan.

Innovative Land use Controls: Beginning in 1981, the New Hampshire State Legislature gave municipalities another tool for dealing with growth and land use issues. RSA 674:21 list Innovative Land Use Controls as including (but not limited to) the following:

- Timed incentives
- Phased development
- Intensity and use incentive
- Transfer of density and development rights
- Planned unit development
- Cluster development
- Impact zoning
- Performance standards
- Flexible and discretionary zoning
- Environmental characteristics zoning
- Inclusionary zoning
- Accessory dwelling unit standards
- Impact fees
- Village plan alternative subdivision

Innovative land use controls are a way for communities to employ various methods for deal with growth. Epsom would have to adopt the provisions of an innovative land use control at town meeting in order to employ a particular tool. The Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission can assist the Town in researching or adopting any of the innovative land use controls.

Summary and Recommendations

Sound land use policies are critical for the protection of community character, preservation of natural resources, economic stability of the community, protection of public health, as well as preservation and enhancement of quality of life.

Historically, Epsom has regulated land use in the community with a simplistic approach. However, increases in population, development pressures, and changing economic needs of the community have shown that more dynamic land use regulations are now needed.

Epsom desires to attract quality non-residential development, protect sensitive environmental features, as well as provide opportunities for all types of housing development. The community also wants to preserve its rural character.

Recommendation: Zone by Lot Line

The current zoning scheme in Epsom is based on broad overlay districts. For example, the boundary of the R/C zone is defined as 500' from the edge of right-of-way of Route 4. This serves to divide lots into two or more zoning districts, thus creating confusion and conflicts. When rezoning occurs in the future, it is recommended that the Town define districts by lot line, as opposed to the current method of measurements off the centerline of roadways. By doing so, the likelihood that some parcels will be divided into multiple zones will be minimized, thus reducing confusion in the long run.

Recommendation: Continuously examine land use trends and take appropriate action to maintain a logical and orderly development pattern

The Town should continuously examine land use trends and development patterns to ensure that the character of the community is preserved and enhanced.

Recommendation: Continuously Update Site Plan and Subdivision Review Regulations

The Planning Board, with assistance of professional planning staff, should continuously review and amend the site plan and subdivision review regulations to keep them current with changes in planning trends and technology.

Recommendation: Revise Cluster Development Ordinance

The Planning Board should re-write the existing cluster subdivision ordinance so as to create real incentives for developers to use the cluster approach to better protect land and create usable open space, as intended by this type of development.

Recommendation: Consider and adopt as appropriate, Innovative Land Use Controls

Innovative land use controls are great tools for towns to deal with growth. Transfer of development rights and impact fees are some options that the Town of Epsom should look into presenting at town meeting.

Recommendation: Revise Wireless Telecommunications Facility Ordinance

To further protect the character of the community, while providing reasonable opportunities for the development of wireless telecommunication facilities, the Planning Board should revise the telecommunications ordinance so it requires the use of stealth technology, incorporates the provisions of RSA K-12, encourages the use of new technologies, and reduces the maximum height of such facilities.

Recommendation: Develop Commercial and Multifamily Architectural Design Standards

To protect the scale and rural character of the community, as well as expand the taxable value of properties, the Town, in the site plan review regulations or zoning ordinance, should create specific architectural facade performance standards for multifamily and commercial/industrial structures.

TOWN OF EPSOM New Hampshire

Scale 1:50,000
1" = 4167'

MAP III-2: ZONING BASE MAP, 2000



LEGEND

Existing Zoning Scheme, 2000

-  Residential / Commercial District
-  Residential / Light Commercial District
-  Residential / Agricultural District

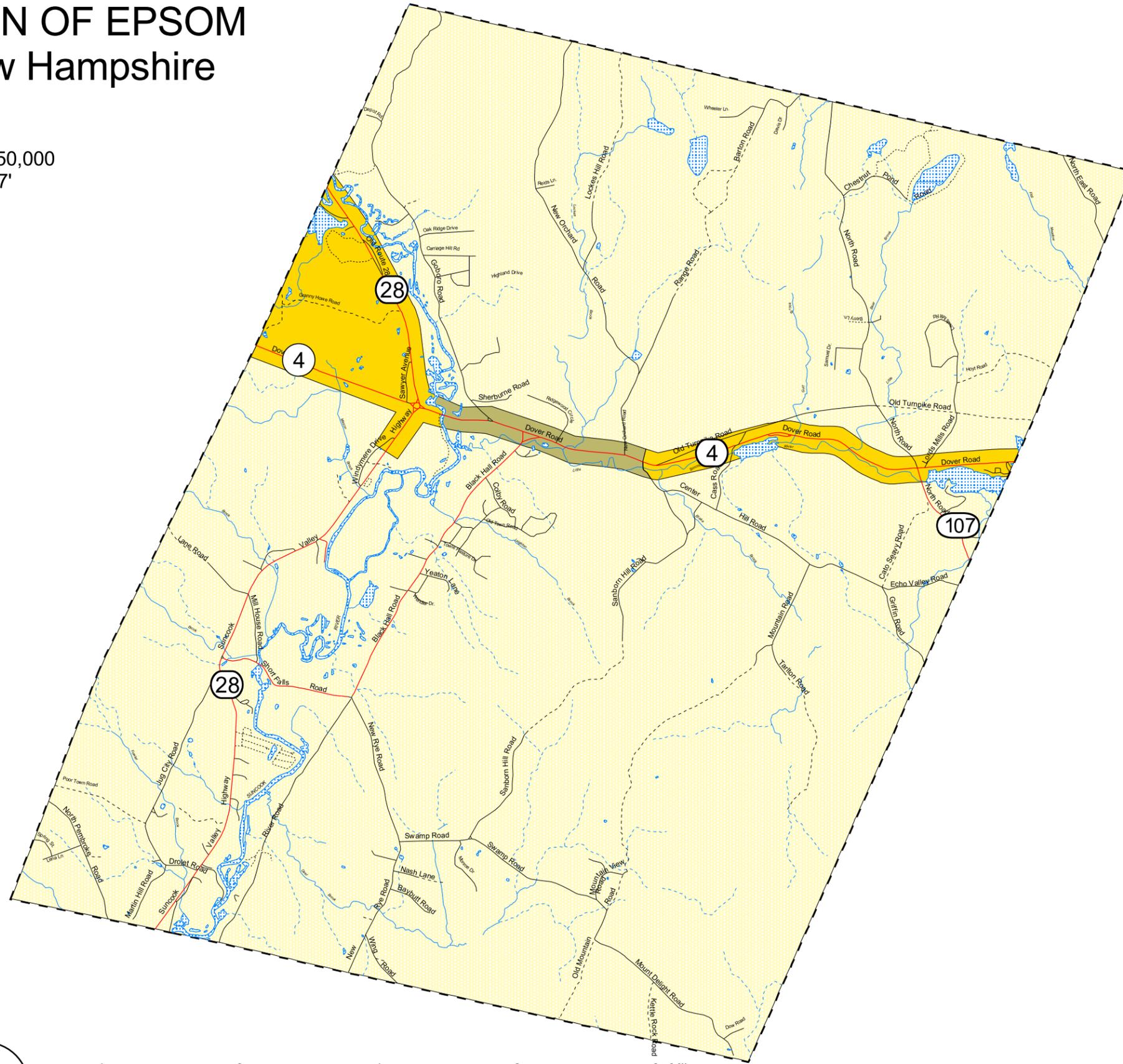
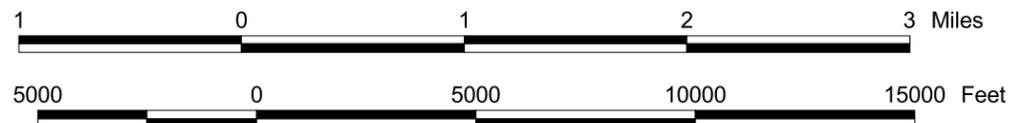
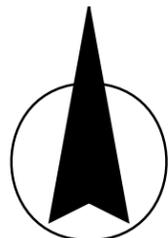
-  Class I Interstate Highways
-  Class II State Highways
-  Class V Town Maintained Roads
-  Class VI Unmaintained Roads or Trails
-  Private Roads
-  Discontinued Roads
-  Discontinued Roads Subject to Gates & Bars
-  Water Bodies
-  Rivers and Streams
-  Intermittent Streams
-  Political Boundary

This map is to be used for planning purposes only, not for legal boundary interpretation. Any information depicted on this map is assumed to be accurate as of the date of printing, and may be subject to change at any time as more detailed and accurate information becomes available.

Data sources:
digital USGS Quadrangle series,
digital information developed by the CNHRPC
and by the NH GRANIT System

Central New Hampshire
Regional Planning Commission
28 Commercial Street
Concord, NH 03301

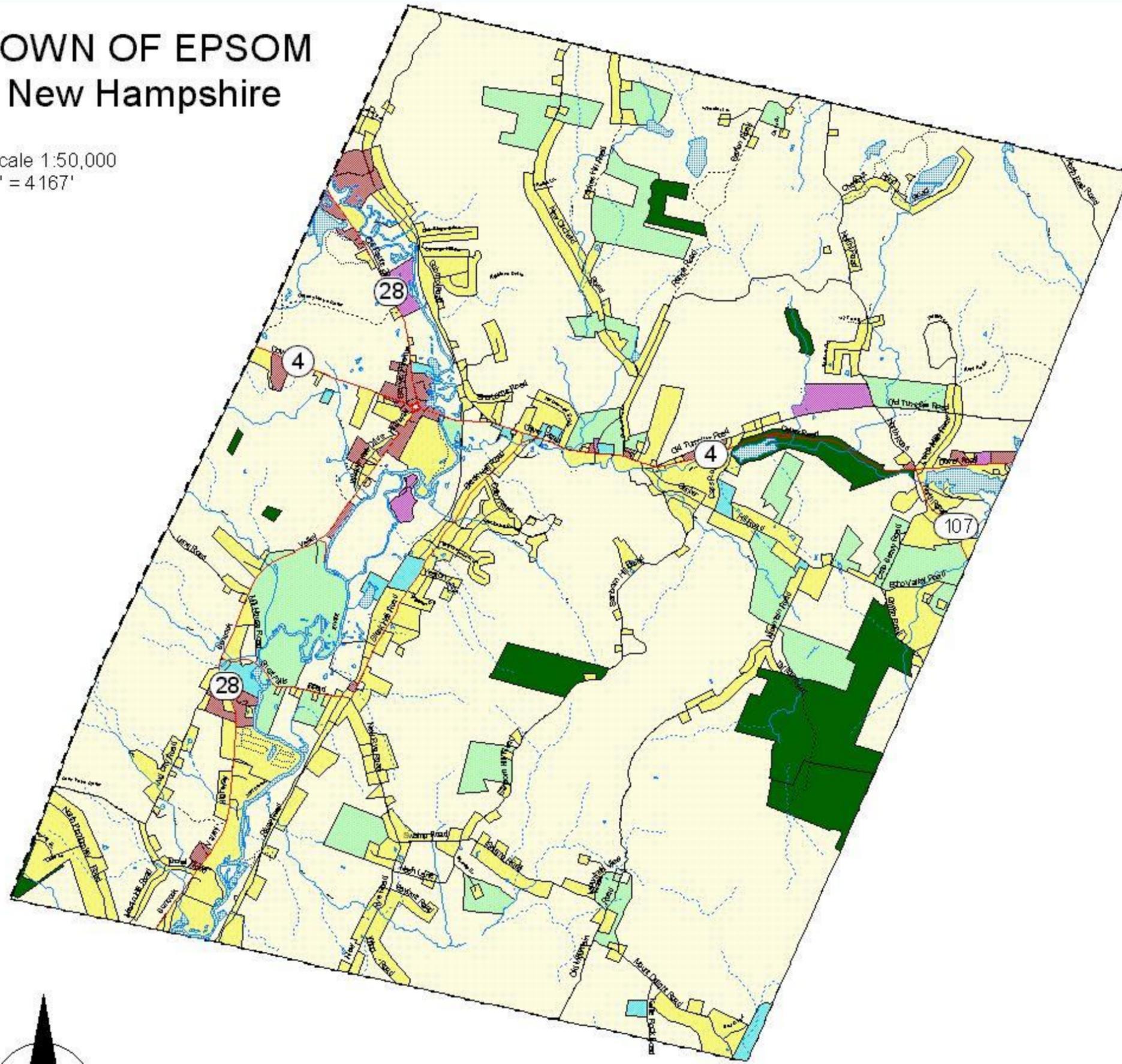
phone (603) 226-6020
web www.cnhrpc.org



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Scale 1:50,000
1" = 4167'

MAP III-1: EXISTING LAND USE



Legend

	Undeveloped Lands
	Agricultural Lands
	Commercial
	Conservation
	Industrial
	Public / Institutional
	Residential

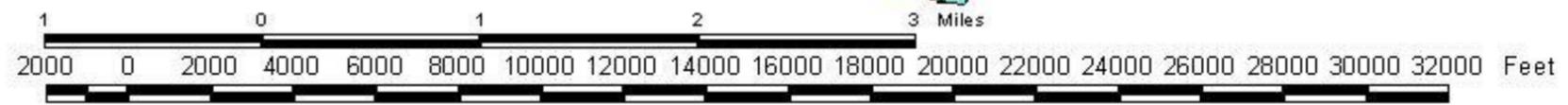
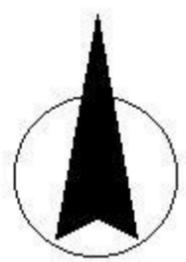
	Rivers and Streams
	Intermittent Streams
	Water Bodies
	Class I Interstate Highways
	Class II State Highways
	Class V Town Maintained Roads
	Class VI Unmaintained Roads or Trails
	Private Roads
	Discontinued Roads
	Discontinued Roads Subject to Gates & Bars
	Political Boundary



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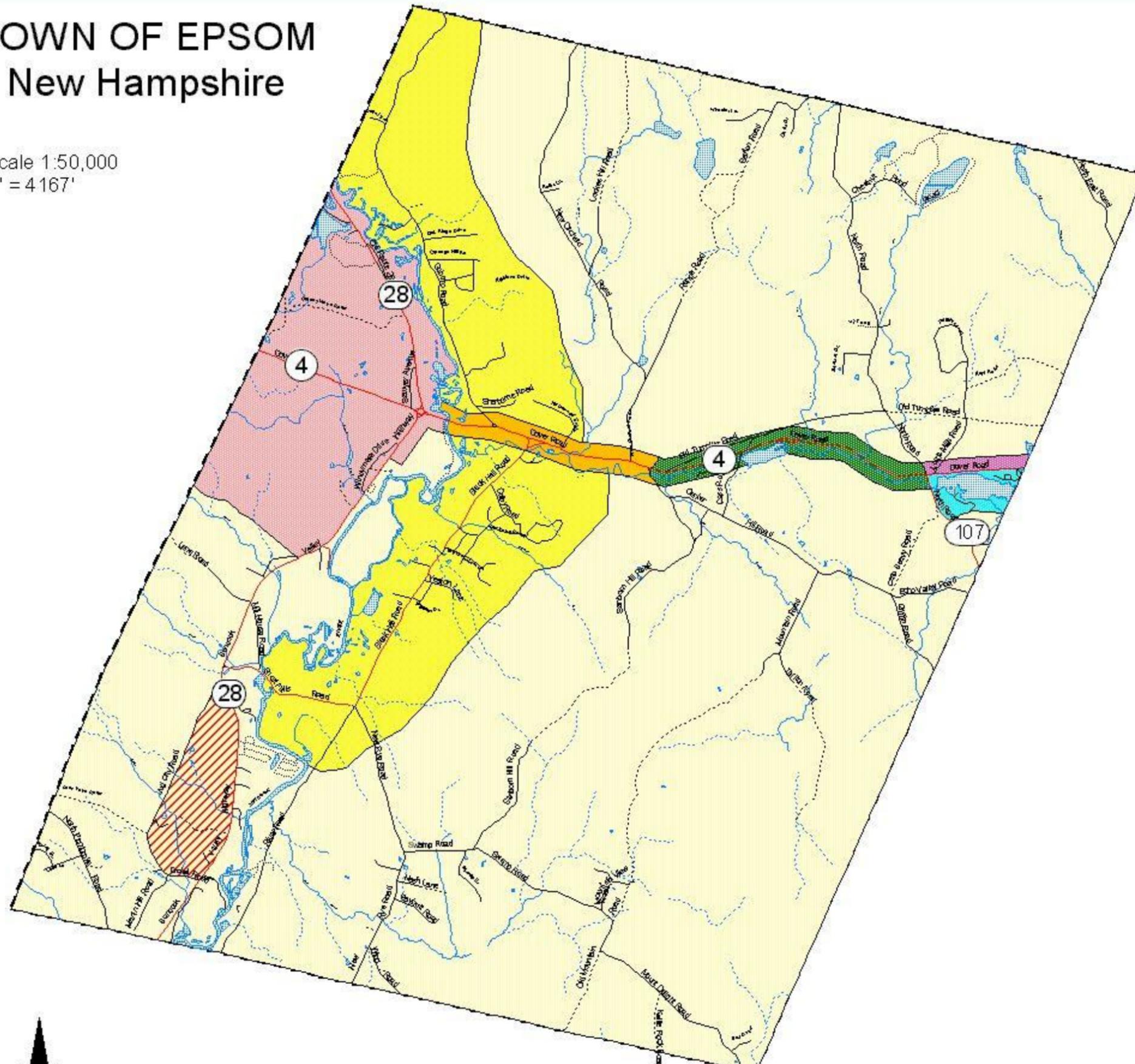


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MAP III-3: FUTURE LAND USE BASE MAP



Legend

- Light Industrial / Commercial Zone
- Light Office Conversion Zone
- Gateway Transition Zone
- Rural / Agricultural Zone
- Rural / Residential Zone
- Lake Shore Commercial Zone
- Lake Shore Residential Zone
- Future Light Industrial District

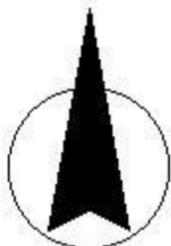
- Rivers and Streams
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- Water Bodies
- Class I Interstate Highways
- Class II State Highways
- Class V Town Maintained Roads
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Chapter VI Implementation

An implementation plan is essential to carrying out the recommendations specified in the Master Plan. In addition, it is crucial to know when the next Master Plan will be written in order to plan implementation objectives properly. The Epsom Master Plan should be rewritten in light of the 2010 US Census, and as a result, the next Master Plan should be written in 2012. As such, this implementation chapter outlines the completion of the 2010 Master Plan Recommendations under the assumption that the next master plan rewrite will take place in 2012. The implementation schedule for the 2010 Master Plan Update is as follows:

Land Use

Recommendation: Zone by Lot Line

The current zoning scheme in Epsom is based on broad overlay districts. For example, the boundary of the R/C zone is defined as 500' from the edge of right-of-way of Route 4. This serves to divide lots into two or more zoning districts, thus creating confusion and conflicts. When rezoning occurs in the future, it is recommended that the Town define districts by lot line, as opposed to the current method of measurements off the centerline of roadways. By doing so, the likelihood that some parcels will be divided into multiple zones will be minimized, thus reducing confusion in the long run.

Recommendation: Continuously examine land use trends and take appropriate action to maintain a logical and orderly development pattern

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The Planning Board, with assistance of professional planning staff, should continuously review and amend the site plan and subdivision review regulations to keep them current with changes in planning trends and technology.

Recommendation: Revise Cluster Development Ordinance

The Planning Board should re-write the existing cluster subdivision ordinance so as to create real incentives for developers to use the cluster approach to better protect land and create usable open space, as intended by this type of development.

Recommendation: Revise Wireless Telecommunications Facility Ordinance

To further protect the character of the community, while providing reasonable opportunities for the development of wireless telecommunication facilities, the Planning Board should revise the telecommunications ordinance so it requires the use of stealth technology, incorporates the provisions of RSA K-12, encourages the use of new technologies, and reduces the maximum height of such facilities.

Recommendation: Develop Commercial and Multifamily Architectural Design Standards

To protect the scale and rural character of the community, as well as expand the taxable value of properties, the Town, in the site plan review regulations or zoning ordinance, should create specific architectural facade performance standards for multifamily and commercial/industrial structures.

Economics

Recommendation: Establish a working relationship with State and Regional Economic Development Groups to work to strengthen the local economic base.

In order to help broaden the tax base with desirable businesses, the Town should establish a close relationship with the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development and the Capital Region Development Corporation. Such a relationship could help community leaders market the Town to perspective businesses that would fit with the rural character of the community.

Recommendation: Expand the Role of the Economic Development Committee.

The 2001 Master Plan recommended establishing a local Economic Development Committee, and the Town of Epsom has done that. At this point, it is recommended that the EDC work to expand it's role and further work to help grow existing businesses, establish a positive dialog with existing businesses, and serve as a voice of the business community in Town Hall. The committee should continue to consist of community leaders, developers, and business people and could work on long-term economic development issues, such as the expansion of municipal water and zoning changes. In addition, the EDC should work to establish an economic development web page to introduce prospective businesses to Epsom.

Recommendation: Replace the R/C Zone between Center Hill Road and Route 107 with a gateway transition zone to preserve the unique character of this portion of Route 4.

First recommended in the 2001 Master Plan, it is also recommended at this time that the Town should re-zone the portion of the community located from Center Hill Road to Route 107 from Residential / Commercial to a "gateway transition zone". Because much of the property located in this area is under scenic easements, it is highly unlikely that any future development will occur. However, because some property within this area is still eligible for development, the Town should reclassify this area so only uses that would complement the character of this area would be permitted. Such uses could include open space uses, forestry, agricultural, and recreational uses.

Recommendation: Continue to examine all alternatives to deliver municipal water west of the Traffic Circle.

As first recommended in the 2001 Master Plan, the Board of Selectmen, working with the Planning Board, Water District Commissioners, and local business leaders should continue to examine alternatives to extend delivery of municipal water to that portion of the community located west of the Suncook River along Routes 4 and 28. Though it is

generally accepted in the community that such an expansion is necessary to broaden the tax base, as well as continue to provide opportunities for commercial growth, little progress has been made on any expansion.

Recommendation: Adopt commercial and industrial architectural standards.

To protect the character and scale of the community, the Planning Board should adopt architectural design standards for commercial and industrial developments as recommended in the 2001 Master Plan. Such standards would require the use of neutral colors, pitched roofs, varied offsets, and specific landscaping and buffering standards. By adopting such standards, the quality of development will increase, thus improving the image and tax base for the community.

Recommendation: Establish an expedited process for the review of home-based or cottage industry businesses.

An expedited review process could help home-based businesses, cottage industries, and other small businesses to better navigate the site plan approval process. Proposals for minimal expansions or changes of use to properties that already have site plan approval or home-based business status could be a way to expedite the process for these businesses. Another option could be a review committee consisting of Police and Fire Chiefs, Town Road Agent, Code Officer, and a representative from the Planning Board. In any event, the Planning Board should look into ways to expedite the site plan process for these types of businesses.

Recommendation: Reestablish the Chamber of Commerce: Reestablishing a Chamber of Commerce is would provide an opportunity to promote Epsom's businesses (including the micro, cottage, and home-based businesses) and serve as a way to create relationships between the business community and the town, as well as among various businesses.

Population

Recommendation: Continue to monitor population growth to ensure that the Town is growing in proportion to abutting communities, and consider extending the Growth Management Ordinance at the March 2012 Town Meeting.

Because Epsom's rate of growth has exceeded that of the region and many abutting communities, and because many abutting communities have adopted growth management ordinances, the Town should monitor future growth and take action to ensure that Epsom does not absorb more growth than it can handle from abutting communities. Unregulated growth can lead to significant increases in the tax rate, as well as place strain on municipal facilities and services.

Recommendation: Continue to monitor increases in the age of the population so that housing and services can be provided to meet the needs of the population.

Population estimates from the year 2000 US Census indicate that over 24% of Epsom's population is age 55 or older. As this segment of the population ages over the next 10 to 20 years, new housing alternatives and social services will be necessary. The community should take appropriate action to ensure that such housing opportunities and services are available for this future demand.

Recommendation: Consider ways to encourage job development in Epsom to minimize commutes of residents.

As indicated by 2000 and 2004 Census Data, the majority of Epsom's residents commute to work (83%), and a large portion of those commuters drive westward to destinations like Concord. As the population is expected to grow over the next 20 years, the current average commute time of 27 minutes will only get longer with the increase in traffic created by new development. By developing more employment options within the Town of Epsom, this increase in traffic and commute to work times can be slowed. The community should consider ways to increase job opportunities at the local level.

Transportation

Recommendation: Establish a Road Improvement Plan

The Town should create a Road Improvement Plan to better plan and schedule short and long term road improvements. The plan should correspond with a Town Capital Improvement Program and be updated annually. Projects that should be included in this plan include sidewalk construction, road resurfacing, bridge reconstruction projects, and road reconstruction projects. Roads that should be a priority in the plan include Goboro Road, New Orchard Road, Black Hall Road, New Rye Road, and North Road.

Recommendation: Enact Provisions of RSA 261:153 to Implement \$5 Transportation Surcharge on Motor Vehicle Registrations to Fund Road Improvements

To provide additional funding of transportation improvements, the Town should enact the local option provided by RSA 261:153. This would implement a surcharge of \$5 on each motor vehicle registration that could be used exclusively for road, bridge, sidewalk, and bicycle path construction. It is estimated that this could generate an additional \$31,685 for the Town annually.

Recommendation: Take Action to Make Major Improvements to Town Roads

The Town should explore the various financing options available, including grants, impact fees, bonding, and cash to finance short and long-term road improvements. Furthermore, it is recommended that the Town appropriate approximately \$300,000 to \$350,000 per year to help finance major road improvements identified in this chapter.

Recommendation: Construct Sidewalks and Bicycle Paths along Major Local Collector Roadways

The Town should explore the various financing options available, including grants, impact fees, bonding, and cash to finance the construction of pedestrian infrastructure including sidewalks and bicycle paths along busy roadways in Epsom as highlighted in this chapter. At least \$60,000 per year should be allocated in the fund to help offset the cost of short term and long term sidewalk projects over the next 20 years. Furthermore, the Town should also actively pursue funding allocated by CMAQ and TE through the

Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to help offset the costs of sidewalk and bicycle path construction.

Recommendation: Revise Site Plan Regulations to Promote Access Management

In order to preserve and improve the functional capacity of major roadways in Epsom, the Planning Board should revise the site plan review regulations to include access management regulations as described in this chapter.

Recommendation: Revise Zoning Ordinance to Promote Access Management

Epsom should craft zoning amendments to promote commercial development in nodes along major roadways, as opposed to encouraging strip development. Furthermore, land between commercial nodes on heavily traveled roadways, such as Route 4 and Route 28, should be zoned to have large lot sizes (5-10 acres) and much larger frontage requirements.

Recommendation: Identify Projects for the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan

Each year, the State of New Hampshire receives millions of dollars in Federal Transportation Funding assistance. The Planning Board, working with the Board of Selectmen, Road Agent, and the proposed Roads Commission, should identify projects eligible for state and federal funds. These projects should be submitted to Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission during the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan process.

Recommendation: Require Road Exactions for Developments on Substandard Roads

The Planning Board should require exactions from all developers proposing new subdivisions of site plans on substandard roadways. Common exactions include contributions of land for rights-of-way, drainage improvements, road realignments and widening, paving, installation of signals, or monetary contributions in lieu of such improvements.

Recommendation: Continue to Participate in CNHRPC Annual Traffic Count Data

It is likely that traffic usage will be an important consideration in scheduling major road improvements. Therefore, the Road Agent, Board of Selectmen, and Planning Board should jointly identify locations where traffic counting should be conducted in the future.

Recommendation: Open a Dialog with NHDOT Regarding Long Range Plans for Routes 4 and 28

The Board of Selectmen and Planning Board should establish a working relationship with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to identify the most favorable and least impacting locations for the possible development a Route 4 Bypass / Interstate 393 Extension through Epsom.

Recommendation: Regularly Review the Feasibility of Instituting a Transportation Impact Fee for all New Commercial and Residential Units

The Planning Board, with a Capital Improvement Plan, should study the feasibility of instituting a road improvement impact fee for all homes and commercial structures constructed in the community. Such a system will help defray the cost of general road improvements.

Recommendation: Designation and Protection of Scenic Roads

The Planning Board, working with the Conservation Commission, Road Agent, and Selectmen, should identify additional scenic roads and craft warrant articles to enroll these roads in the scenic roads program as established by NH RSA 231:157. Furthermore, the Planning Board should also amend the zoning ordinance to minimize additional development along gravel and scenic roads in order to protect those culturally important resources.

Recommendation: Solicit Outside Professionals for Plan Reviews to Determine Traffic Impacts of Development

The Planning Board should utilize CNHRPC and other consultants to review development proposals to determine what the impact of a development could be on the Town's transportation networks. The Board should also note that the financial costs of such reviews can, and should be borne by an applicant.