

# 2005 MASTER PLAN



**Franklin Planning Board**  
Adopted December 2005

**FRANKLIN PLANNING BOARD MASTER PLAN ADOPTION**

**The 2005 Master Plan**

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Per the authority granted by New Hampshire State Statute (RSA 674:4) the Planning Board is responsible for the preparation and amendment or revision of the City's master plan. The 2005 Master Plan has been developed as the City's master plan to guide the development of Franklin. The 2005 Master Plan's purpose is to serve as a guide to the citizens, City Officials, Planning Board and other City Boards and Commissions when they made decisions affecting the development of Franklin.

The 2005 Master Plan has been adopted in accordance with RSA 675:6, this the 21<sup>st</sup> day of December, 2005.

Adopted and certified by the Franklin Planning Board

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Filed with the City Clerk

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Date: 4/18/06

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## I. Introduction

*“NH just keeps on growing”*

[NH Union Leader, June 17, 2005]

*“Elbow-room growing scarce: State to grow 28 percent by 2025”*

[Concord Monitor, April 10, 2005]

These are just two examples of recent headlines describing the growth and subsequent changes in land uses that will be facing communities throughout the State of New Hampshire in the near future. No portion of the state will be immune to some level of growth. Along the seacoast, Rockingham County will see close to 23% growth rates and Coos County, the northern most region of the state, will see 7 percent growth rates. Merrimack County, of which Franklin is one community, will be faced with growth rates approaching 30%. The characteristics of the state, or a specific community, that attract new residents – available land, a more rural atmosphere, historical connections, proximity to lakes and mountains, reasonable commuting distances, recreational opportunities, etc. – are the same characteristics that are threatened by unmanaged and uncontrolled growth. In Franklin, our goal is to achieve a balance so that the look and feel of the City, which life-long residents cherish and new residents seek out, is retained to the greatest extent possible.

One tool to help achieve that balance is the development of a Master Plan. In New Hampshire, State Statute RSA 674 discusses Master Plans. Section 1 indicates that it, “shall be the duty of every planning board ...to prepare and amend from time to time a master plan to guide the development of the municipality”. Section 2 outlines the purpose of a Plan: “...to set down as clearly and practically as possible the best and most appropriate future development of the area under the jurisdiction of the Planning Board, to aid the Board in designing ordinances that result in preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life and culture of New Hampshire, and to guide the board in the performance of its other duties in a manner that achieves the principle of smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection”. Lofty goals indeed, but necessary if that all-important balance is to be maintained.

The statute referenced above suggests that Master Plans should get updated every 5-10 years. Starting in the 1960’s, the City of Franklin has worked hard to keep its Master Plans updated and current; most recently plans have been prepared and adopted in 1982, 1988, 1998-2000. The combination of the anticipated new surge of growth and recent changes in a variety of state statutes dealing with land use ordinances led the Franklin Planning Board to conclude the time is right for the preparation of a new Master Plan.

In February of 2005, the Planning Board decided to undertake a series of public meetings to discuss specific sections of the Master Plan [hereinafter “the Plan”]. To that end, the Board met on the following schedule:

<b>Section</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>
The Big Picture [a.k.a. "Vision "]	April 11th
Open Space and Natural Resources	April 12th
Historic Preservation and Downtown Franklin	May 9th
Economic & Business Development	June 2nd
Land Use and Zoning	June 13th

At each meeting an overview presentation was given, followed by a discussion of the topic's historical perspective, present status, and future goals and objectives. All meetings were open to the public and input was welcomed from residents, business leaders, property owners, paid and volunteer city officials, and other concerned individuals. Each meeting was well attended, with between 35-65 people. The discussions were wide ranging, with a broad spectrum of ideas, thoughts, and concerns brought forward. Individual meetings were held with school administrators and City department heads to discuss capital projects and community facilities.

At the close of all of these meetings, the City's Planning and Zoning Administrator prepared drafts for various sections of the Plan. Review comments were solicited from the public, as well as from various board and commission members, members of the City Council, and city staff. Final drafts were prepared, reviewed and revised accordingly, and submitted to the Planning Board for review and adoption.

This plan represents a collaborative effort amongst many individuals. More importantly, it represents the thoughts and ideas of the people of Franklin. A variety of messages and common themes came through from all of the discussions that occurred over the course of the preparation of this Plan, and these will be explored in detail in the sections that follow. Three important impressions came through loud and clear. The first is that Franklin is a community that cares about its history and heritage, its neighborhoods, and its people. The second is that Franklin is a community that is truly concerned about its future and how growth and change will alter the character and face of the community. The third is that Franklin is a community that is committed towards making itself the best it can be.

A snapshot of the City is provided for in the, "Franklin at a Glance" page that follows this Introduction. This overview of the City can be used, along with the outline of the goals and objectives, as a measuring stick for the next edition of the Master Plan. A goal of the Planning Board is to have this Master Plan become a work in progress, with regular updates [hopefully every 2-3 years] so that new ideas can always be incorporated and steps can be taken to reflect changing circumstances, economies, and opportunities. The action items outlined throughout the Plan are identified as being "Short-Term" [1-3 years] or "Long-Term" [1 year and into the future]. The short-term items will almost certainly change as the Plan is reviewed and amended in the future. The long-term items could remain for many years with slight modifications due to changing circumstances.

If the interest level of the citizens of Franklin remains as high during future updates as it has been during the preparation of this 2005 Plan, then making sure the Plan honestly reflects the goals of the community will be simple. Let the work begin!

## Franklin at a Glance- Fall 2005

### Population Chart



27.7 square miles    28 Miles to Concord  
38 Miles to Manchester

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>
1970	7,292
1980	7,901
1990	8,340
2000	8,414
2010	8,740
2015	8,870
2020	9,010

**Source: 1970-2000 US Census**  
**2005-2020 NH Office of Energy and Planning (Estimates)**

#### Assessment Values:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Value</b>
2000	\$ 266,583,720
2001	\$ 268,584,450
2002	\$ 366,617,890
2003	\$ 440,149,900
2004	\$ 447,234,760
2005	\$ 562,971,730

#### Schools:

Elementary: Paul Smith School  
Rowell School  
Middle: Franklin Middle School  
High School: Franklin High School

#### Community Assets Include:

- Trestle View & Odell Parks
- Webster Lake
- Winnepesaukee Trail
- Great Gains Forest
- Veterans Memorial Ski Area
- Franklin Falls Historic District

#### Building Permits- New Single Family Homes

1997	15
1998	20
1999	25
2000	12
2001	30
2002	30
2003	52
2004	63

#### Major Employers:

<i>Company</i>	<b>Employees</b>
Webster Valve & Foundry	515
Franklin Regional Hospital	359
Polyclad Laminates, Inc.	295
Freudenberg NOK	185
Hannaford Brothers	140
Wyman Gordon Investment Castings, Inc.	91

#### Recent Development Activity:

- Seven (7) Unit “Flex” building under construction in Franklin Industrial Park.
- Planning Board approved twenty (20) lot subdivision in September 2005.
- Planning Board approval for Subdivision and Site plan for roadway and Industrial Building in Industrial Park.
- Conceptual discussions by Planning Board with developers for an eleven (11) lot subdivision and a sixty-four (64) lot cluster subdivision.
- Cooperative efforts result in the preservation of Daniel Webster Farm.

## II. Review of Previous Planning Documents

As mentioned in the Introduction, the City of Franklin has been proactive over the years in reviewing planning goals and objectives. The 2000 Master Plan and the Downtown Revitalization Strategy Plan [a.k.a. Vision 2000] are the two most current documents. To help set the stage for this 2005 Master Plan it is worthwhile to first take an overview look at the important components of each of these two earlier plans.

### A. The 2000 Master Plan

With guidance from a Master Plan Committee, and prepared with the assistance of a consulting firm, the 2000 Master Plan was a document that thoroughly explored all of the facets of the City. There were many meetings and hearings that went into the drafting of the Plan, which, in summary:

- ✓ Describes the historical components of the downtown area and surrounding neighborhoods, and promoted the preservation of the historic integrity of the area.



Trestle over the Winnepesaukee River- Picture provided by Barbara Tullis

- ✓ Acknowledges the value presented by the existing commercial and industrial base, and the advantage Franklin has relative to its' centralized location in the state, and encouraged both the completion and expansion of the Industrial Park.

- ✓ Identifies the important natural resource base [Pemigewasset, Winnepesaukee, and Merrimack Rivers, Webster Lake area, flood plains and river bottom land, other open lands and vistas] and recreational facilities [Odell Park and the Veterans Memorial Ski Area] that exist within the City, and urges funding for ongoing maintenance and improvements to all facilities.

- ✓ Notes the importance of the existing neighborhoods and the need to protect this characteristic of the community.
- ✓ Recognizes the significance of the Opera House and City Hall, the mill buildings, and the City's history to the downtown area, and promoted the preservation and protection of these features.

### B. Vision 2000



Downtown Franklin

This report focused on the core downtown area extending from “bridge-to-bridge”. It was a comprehensive document that explored strengths and shortcomings and put forward a general six-point recovery plan followed by an outline of the next steps in the revitalization process with specific action items identified. The report was funded by local financial institutions, as well as the U.S. Economic Development Administration, with administrative support coming from the Franklin Business and Industrial Development Corporation. Below are report highlights.

- Cites the sound architectural, parking and streetscape features of the downtown, but noted that improved design features should be added and improvements to municipal parking and the housing stock should be made.
- Encourages the creation of an organization to promote the downtown.
- Supports on-going funding for public facilities [including the Opera House and City Hall] and the updates to the Zoning Ordinance to help encourage business development and customer retention.
- Promotes public and private initiatives and investments to take advantage of the river resources.

Taken together, the 2000 Master Plan and the Vision 2000 lay the groundwork for a long list of action items. Without question, some of the items have been fully or partially completed. It is clear though that many items are not yet complete, with funding being a major hurdle. Some key areas of success include:

- ❑ Trestle View Park was dedicated in the fall of 2005.
- ❑ The municipal parking area on Franklin St. is scheduled for completion this fall.
- ❑ While not an official Main Street program, a new organization, Choose Franklin was created in 2004; using the Main Street format, it continues to actively promote and support the positive efforts happening in the City.
- ❑ Some streetscape improvements [trash containers and banners] have been installed.
- ❑ The Winnepesaukee River Trail opened in the fall of 2004.
- ❑ The Franklin Chamber of Commerce starts a façade improvement loan program.
- ❑ Significant improvements have been made to the Opera House, including the opening of a majority of the balcony for seating, as well as an expanded performance schedule.



Trestle View Park

The preparation of the 2005 Master Plan does not take anything away from these earlier documents. Vision 2000 continues to be an important and widely used resource in both public discussions and in providing critical support to current initiatives. Both the 2000 Master Plan and Vision 2000 are seen as contributing documents upon which we will continue to build and improve.

### III. The Big Picture [a.k.a. the Vision]

The preparation of the 2005 Master Plan got off to an excellent start on April 11, 2005, when 65 residents and concerned individuals attended the opening meeting to discuss the “Big Picture”, also referred to as the “Vision” for the City. The process of creating the Vision statements is a lot like making maple syrup. You start with a lot of material, in this case a discussion of the City’s strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities, and other assorted information and ideas generated through the public meetings, and you boil it down. The end product is a collection of vision statements, outlined below, which are painted with a broad-brush that reflects the City’s past, takes stock of the present, and provides direction to officials responsible for, and individuals involved with, policy, budgetary, and regulatory decisions that impact the City, its residents, and the land.

- ❑ Retain the small town feeling present in the City, especially as exemplified through many of the existing neighborhoods.

- ❑ Guide and manage growth so as to protect important natural resources and drinking water supplies and make sure that housing opportunities are available to all.



A Franklin Neighborhood

- ❑ Preserve and protect the historical, architectural, and cultural assets downtown and throughout the whole City, and insure that residents and visitors, both young and old, are aware of these assets.
- ❑ Encourage the retention and expansion of downtown businesses, especially in the mill buildings that front the river, and use the rivers to best serve the economic and recreation interests of the City.
- ❑ Advocate the expansion of existing, and the establishment of new, industries in the City to assist in broadening the available tax base.
- ❑ Provide adequate funding to maintain the roadways and associated infrastructure, and the City owned buildings, schools, and recreational facilities.
- ❑ Promote and emphasize, for both current and prospective residents, the positive aspects of the City.

None of the Vision statements above work alone in a vacuum. The best interests of the City will be achieved when a balance between these ideals are reached. The next 3-5 years will be challenging for the City as it works to be responsive to the needs of all of its citizens. It will be important during this timeframe that the City strike a fair and reasonable balance between competing interests, is open to new ideas, and is always ready to listen to all sides of the issue. Growth and change will happen whether or not the City lays the groundwork to manage this growth. Hopefully this Master Plan will assist in that process.

## IV. Open Space and Natural Resource Protection

As pointed out in the Introduction, current and prospective residents appreciate the combination of open space and natural resources in a community. In New Hampshire this is particularly true since the state takes obvious and great pride in the lakes, hills and mountains, wetlands, forests, rivers and streams, and farmlands that have shaped its history and form the future of the land and its people. In Franklin, all of the residents who attended the April 12, 2005



The Merrimack River

meeting on open space and resource protection voiced similar pride and echoed the need to protect and manage these resources. The attendees also recognized that Franklin is blessed with an abundance of natural resource wealth with the location of three major rivers in the City –the Pemigewasset and the Winnepesaukee, which join to form the Merrimack. These waterways have tremendous recreational potential, as well as economic potential for the downtown, as discussed in other sections of this plan. The topics raised at this meeting are easily grouped into the sections discussed below.

### A. Open Space Protection

Protected open space lands are important as they serve to provide wildlife habitat, protect and enhance ground water quality, manage floodwaters, and provide recreational opportunities for area residents. The City, State, and Federal governments currently own some valuable properties:



Webster Farm- South Main Street

the City's Great Gains Forest [700 acres]; the State's Webster Lake Conservation Investment Program land [143.5 acres]; and, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Pemigewasset River Flood Control property [over 1200 acres]. All are critical components of the overall resource base.

When working to protect additional open space land two important factors need to be kept in mind. First, successful efforts often rely upon cooperative efforts between local, state and federal governments, the citizens and taxpayers of a community, and sometimes non-profit organizations.

Second, efforts should be made to layer the benefits of a given parcel of land [for example, protecting drinking water supplies and critical wildlife habitat] given the fact that paying fair market value is sometimes necessary and multiple benefits make it easier to obtain grant money. It should also be noted that a large percentage of Franklin's protected open space is located in West Franklin; more could be done to protect land on the east side of the City.

### B. Open Space Management

A key message voiced by many participants at the April meeting was the need to provide for better stewardship of city-owned property, whether or not it was protected open space. Cited as an example of what the City is doing well is the successful forest management program in the Great Gains Forest. The selective cutting throughout the 700 acres creates a healthier forest

ecosystem and the revenue [almost \$92,000 to date] that can be put back into the overall management of the forest area. Management plans for City-owned property would contribute towards appropriate levels of land stewardship.

### **C. Natural Resource Protection**

Three critical resources-Webster Lake, drinking supply wells, and wetland areas-were identified as being in need of enhanced protection efforts. The management plans discussed above, along with public education programs can and would contribute to these efforts. In response to an application prepared by City staff, the State has awarded the City grant monies to prepare a watershed management plan for Webster Lake; this is a positive step for resource protection, especially when you consider the public uses afforded by the two city beaches. Protecting the long-term viability of the drinking water supplies is critical for the City and work is required to create the necessary ordinances to achieve this. Similar efforts could be applied to the current Wetland and Floodplain Ordinances, possibly through Innovative Land Use Control [discussed in greater detail in Section VII].

#### **Action Plan for Open Space and Natural Resource Protection**

##### **Issue: Open Space Protection**

**Goal:** Acquire Additional Protected Open Space

**Responsible Parties:** Conservation Commission, City Council, Planning Department, Municipal Service Department, volunteers and civic Organizations

##### **Action Items:**

###### **Short Term**

1. Inventory and map existing protected open space that is owned by City, state, or federal governments, non-profit organizations, or private landowners.
2. Work with the Planning Board on drafting zoning and land use ordinances that provide options [see discussion in Section VII, Land Use and Zoning for more on this] for protecting high value land.

###### **Long Term**

3. Identify key abutting parcels, both public and private, that could be used to expand or better utilize the existing protected land. Criteria for prioritizing parcels should include: topography, value of forested areas, location of any wetlands and waterways, wildlife values, and proximity to city drinking water well sites.
4. Investigate and keep abreast of all available state or federal grant programs that can facilitate the acquisition of land or easements for long-term protection, work with the City Council on potential funding mechanisms and apply for all grants as available and appropriate.
5. Educate residents on the values of open space in general and the benefits of protecting specific parcels.

6. Track applications to the Planning Board and work with the Board and applicants on the issue of cluster developments that could result in the protection of valuable portions of developable properties.

**Issue: Open Space Management**

**Goal:** Prepare and Initiate Management Plans for Existing & Potential Open Space.

**Responsible Parties:** Conservation Commission, Municipal Service Department, City Council, Planning Department, volunteers and civic Organizations.

**Action Items:**

**Short Term**

1. Review inventory of both existing and potential open space land to determine the appropriateness of additional forest management activity.
2. Review inventory of city-owned, non-protected land to determine which parcels are in need of specific management activity [clean-up and/or removal of debris and dumped materials, vegetation removal, etc] so that the land can be better utilized by the city for open space or recreation uses, or for general use by the city.

**Long Term**

3. Continue ongoing forest management activity in the Great Gains Forest.
4. Prioritize parcels in need of management plans and initiate work on the top two rated parcels. Work with Municipal Services Department on performing the work.
5. Investigate the availability of state or federal grants to assist in the development of management plans or performing the outlined tasks.

**Issue: Natural Resource Protection**

**Goal:** Increase awareness of the city's natural resource base, educate the public on the value of protecting these resources, and amend land use regulations to protect the resources.

**Responsible Parties:** Conservation Commission, Planning Department, Municipal Services Department, City Council, appropriate state agencies, and volunteers.

**Action Items:**

**Short Term**

1. Complete work on the DES-funded Webster Lake Watershed Management Plan.
2. Discuss with DES the status and appropriateness of existing protection measures for city drinking water supply wells and abutting land.
3. Evaluate potential land use regulations to better protect well sites [for example, a Well Field Protection Zone Ordinance]. Draft amendments to the regulations as deemed necessary and appropriate.
4. Discuss with DES and others the status and appropriateness of existing regulations for wetlands and floodplain areas.

5. Review existing permitting requirements and regulations pertaining to timber harvest practices. Modify permitting process and/or regulations to provide for increased protection of both the land being cut and adjoining properties.

**Long Term**

6. Continue cooperative efforts with state agencies, the university system, and abutting communities to monitor Webster Lake to better understand algae and pollutant problems and work on protection measures including land use regulations.



Webster Lake at Sunset- provided  
by Marcia Feener

7. Analyze existing studies on the cost of providing city sewer around Webster Lake, and evaluate relative to funding this work through a Capital Improvement Program or available state or federal grants.
8. Evaluate potential land use regulations to better protect wetlands and flood zones. Draft amendments to the regulations as deemed necessary and appropriate.

## V. Historic Preservation & Downtown Franklin

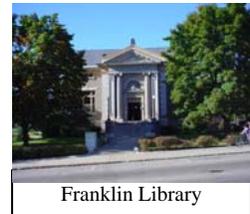
It is sometimes said that history details the past and helps to define the future, and in Franklin this appears to be particularly true. Understanding the challenges to, and the potential of, the historic components of the City is key to making sure that the necessary preservation measures are undertaken.

The fact that Franklin is centrally located in the state, combined with the rivers to provide power, made the City an ideal place for industrial growth. The important dates and events of the City's history have been well documented elsewhere, including the 2000 Master Plan, but put simply, the creation of significant industries [paper, textiles, machinery and tools], the influx of workers [who lived within walking distance of their jobs and the retail offerings of downtown] to run the mills, and the construction of major civic buildings and facilities [Memorial Hall, the Opera House, the Public Library, and Odell Park] helped shape the historic and architectural feeling and look of the core downtown area.



Unfortunately, as has happened to many other communities, improvements in technology and the relocation of businesses to other portions of the country and the world have resulted in the closing of the mills and the outward migration of many workers. These losses have hurt the City economically, but the potential to reclaim the vibrant and historic feeling of the City through active and better utilization of the remaining buildings from this industrial age is enormous.

Below are examples, some raised at the May 9<sup>th</sup> public meeting on this topic, of the types of work and initiatives that can assist in the preservation and enhancement of the downtown area, and all of historic Franklin:



- ❑ Use the development of Trestle View Park as a stepping-stone for additional improvements and capital projects. The park [dedicated September 27, 2005], which is a cooperative effort between businesses, volunteers, and City government and serves as an excellent entrance point at the eastern end of the Central Street's downtown area. Suggested projects and improvements include the construction of a river walk connecting Trestle View Park to Odell Park, and the protection of the "upside down bridge", an excellent example of architectural ingenuity that is listed on the National Historic Register, located not far upstream from Trestle View Park.
- ❑ Promote the activities of the Franklin Heritage Commission, which was established through an Ordinance in January of 2005. The Commission can actively raise awareness of the many and significant historic components of the City.
- ❑ Create the proper regulatory framework for protecting the integrity of the Historic District, which was established in September 2005. Depending upon the outcome of the evaluation of the Commission's advisory role for the protection of historic features, the Commission could ultimately assume the duty of reviewing and approving building permits under the applicable Historic District RSA's, and would operate fully as a Land Use Board.

- ❑ Support the ongoing improvements to the Opera House. Residing within a portion of Memorial Hall, which houses administrative offices of the City, the Opera House is recognized by many as being a prime anchor point for the downtown area. Efforts by the non-profit organization which oversees the management of the Opera House to continue renovation and preservation work and the expansion of the performance schedule, coupled with all appropriate bridges of cooperation between this organization and the City, will benefit both parties in general and the residents of the City as a whole.
- ❑ Educate both residents and visitors about the City’s important historic role in the state and the region. Visitors shopping downtown, kayakers using the river systems, or school children all need additional opportunities to learn more about the City. Walking guidebooks or lesson plans, coordinated with the School Department, should be made available.
- ❑ Be prepared to work cooperatively on the preservation and restoration of the Webster Farm property. Very recent developments in the late summer of 2005 have culminated in plans for a coalition of organizations and state [and possibly federal] agencies to purchase the property, which was the ancestral home [now listed as a National Historic Landmark] of Daniel Webster. Zoning changes will almost certainly be necessary to fully utilize the existing buildings for a variety of historic or educational purposes. The long-term benefits of these protection efforts are significant for the City.

**Action Plan for Historic Preservation and Downtown Issues**

**Goal:** Raise the awareness of, and preserve and restore, the historic nature of the downtown area and all of Franklin.

**Responsible Parties:** Heritage Commission, City Council, Planning Board, Municipal Services Department, School Department, Chamber of Commerce, civic organizations and volunteers.

**Action Items:**



**Short Term**

1. Create the regulatory backdrop for the Heritage Commission to act in an advisory capacity on historic protection and preservation issues relative to new development or alteration of sites or structures in the Historic District.
2. Review and analysis of the advisory work of the Heritage Commission; depending upon the result of this analysis, draft additional language for an Ordinance giving the Commission full power and duties of a Historic District Commission.
3. Review options for the development of land use ordinances and regulations that increase protection of the City’s historic resources. The Planning Board could utilize the Innovative Land Use Controls [RSA 674:21] as the mechanism to draft the appropriate language. [Note that this RSA is discussed in greater detail in Section VII, Land Use and Zoning]
4. Encourage coordination between the Heritage Commission and the Franklin Chamber of Commerce on the small grant program for façade improvements to downtown properties and promote interest in this program so it is best utilized by all parties.

5. Open channels of communication with the Franklin School Departments on how to best prepare and integrate lessons on Franklin's history.
6. Prepare drafts of, and seek funding for, a walking or visitor guide to historical site and areas in Franklin.

**Long Term**

7. Promote the role of the Heritage Commission and utilize the Commission as an overall education tool for historic awareness.
8. Seek out grants and/or gifts to ensure the long term viability of the façade grant program.
9. Promote and support the restoration and repairs of the Opera House; work cooperatively to the greatest degree possible on grants and outside assistance to fund the restoration work.
10. Initiate a coordinated effort between the Heritage Commission, the Municipal Services Department and other appropriate parties on capital goals (landscaping, lighting, and other business/shopper-friendly improvements) for the downtown area to accentuate the historic components of the area.
11. Encourage the involvement of students in the activities of the Heritage Commission and other aspects of historic protection and preservation.
12. Prepare, publish, and distribute copies of the guide.

## VI. Economic and Business Development

The Historic Preservation section mentioned that the City was once home to a significant number of mills and industrial operations that produced a variety of goods. The emergence of these industries made for a vibrant City landscape; the closing of these industries has created a need to both seek out and create new opportunities for business development. At the June 2, 2005 meeting on this topic several important issues were raised.

- ✓ Franklin has a valuable asset in the existing Industrial Park, located off South Main Street, which is home to several major companies. The Park, accessible from the south via Route 3 and exit 17 on I-93, is served by city water and sewer, natural gas and high speed telecommunication links, which are necessary for attracting new businesses. Engineering designs for the improvements to the intersection of Route 3 and Park entrance have been completed and funding for the construction work is in place. This will make it easier for trucks and passenger vehicles to enter and exit the Park, thereby increasing safety and operational flexibility for the tenants of the Park.



- ✓ Explore options for expanding the Industrial Park. This could include constructing new roads to create new lots or purchasing additional land. The Zoning Ordinances should be reviewed to make sure the Table of Permitted Uses is correctly categorized for all appropriate industrial uses and the Table of Lot Sizes and Setbacks allows for the maximum utilization of the land within the industrial district while making sure that abutting residential land uses are adequately buffered from the industrial uses.
- ✓ The central downtown area of Franklin is recognized as another important asset that needs to be revitalized, redeveloped, and protected to the greatest extent possible. The excellent example set by the *Franklin Antique Market* – renovated with respect for the historical setting, with eye-catching window displays – could be followed by other downtown property owners.
- ✓ Use the existing resources present downtown – the recreational orientation of Trestle View and Odell Parks and the rivers [with its annual New Years Day kayak run], Memorial Hall [with City Hall and Opera House], and the overall historical and architectural assets – to help expand and bring in new businesses and development opportunities.



- ✓ Business owners and residents alike need to work for, and promote, the needed improvements to parking and the design of the streetscapes. This work, which was explored in the still relevant Vision 2000 report discussed in Section II, will benefit the City for years to come. Combined with this is the need to support the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce and the recently formed group, Choose Franklin. The former is working on, among other things, the loan program for façade improvements to downtown properties. The latter, which is applying the tools of the Main Street Program, recently completed production work on several video commercials that

highlight the many threads of the community's overall fabric. Local business owners will be able to promote their own business by inserting specific company or business information into the heart of the different videos.

- ✓ The revitalization of the mill buildings, located behind the Central Street businesses and presently underutilized or basically vacant, is an important component for creating an improved downtown Franklin. The current owners, potential investors, and the City need to capture the vitality that has been created through the retail uses, professional office space, and mixed housing options utilized in other mills across the state and import this creative thinking to these buildings. Improving options for vehicular ingress and egress to the mills will play a role in how these mills are re-developed.
- ✓ The pro-active efforts of the Franklin Business and Industrial Development Corporation [FBIDC] need to continue. This quasi-governmental, non-profit, organization communicates and works directly with corporations and business owners to encourage them to locate in the City or expand existing operations. It also acts as a bridge between business and government in addressing the needs and goals common to both. In an era of pitched competition between communities for new businesses to support the tax-base, this type of work is especially important.
- ✓ The potential benefits of a downtown Tax Incremental Financing [TIF] District, similar to the one created for the Industrial Park, should be reviewed. The TIF could be used as a mechanism to fund necessary capital improvements. This could be an important development tool for a City such as Franklin, where there is always strong competition for tax dollars every budget cycle.



When all is said and done, the Franklin of today has some gaps in the economic fabric of the community but the Franklin of tomorrow has tremendous potential. Basic infrastructure [sewer, water, gas] is available; the existing Industrial Park has room for some expansions; the mill buildings downtown contain substantial amounts of square footage for new businesses; much of the historic character of the downtown is still intact; the City is situated on the important transportation corridor of Routes 3 and 11 and, the region as a whole will continue to see increased residential growth. A critical component is maintaining a balance between industrial/commercial and residential growth. Diversity is key for building the Franklin of tomorrow. Taken together, all of these factors point to a downtown and overall community that can again be vibrant with a positive spirit and outlook.

### **Action Plan for Economic and Business Development**

**Goal:** Seek out new businesses and encourage existing businesses to expand to strengthen the commercial and industrial base for the City.

**Responsible Parties:** City Council, Planning Board, Franklin Business and Industrial Development Corporation, business and property owners, business and civic organizations, and volunteers.

## Action Items:

### Short Term

1. Discuss funding options, including a TIF District, for capital improvement projects in the downtown area.
2. Initiate discussions with municipal officials and developers in other communities who have been involved with re-development of the mill buildings.
3. Review the Zoning Ordinance and revise as necessary to insure that all possible development options [including Innovative Land Use Controls such as Mill Overlay Districts and Flexible Zoning (see Section VI, Land Use and Zoning)] and permitted uses are outlined to facilitate the re-development of the mill buildings and overall mill district.
4. Review design and layout issues associated with municipal parking at the rear of northerly Central Street stores. This redesign effort needs to be coordinated with overall mixed-use redevelopment of the mill buildings.
5. Perform analysis of land uses around the existing Industrial Park to determine if there is available and appropriate land for expansion of the Park.



### Long Term

6. Create and implement a Capital Improvement Program, utilizing the recommendations from Vision 2000, for the downtown area.
7. Encourage continued cooperative efforts between city officials and business and civic organizations with interests in the economic well being of the City.
8. Perform regular analyses of land use ordinances and regulations to insure that the correct balance between encouragement and enticements for business development and the need to protect the interests of residential areas are achieved.

## VII. Land Use and Zoning

Previous sections have talked about the character of the City, and what kind of “face” the community presents. A key factor in defining both of these elements is the combination of land use and zoning regulations. The fact that a Land Use Section is one of two required sections of Master Plan goes to underscore the importance of land use decisions for a community.

Since first being adopted, the Zoning Ordinance has been revised many times, both to reflect changing goals and objectives of the City and changes in the state enabling legislation. One significant state statute change occurred in 1981 when the Legislature approved the creation of RSA 674:21, Innovative Land Use Controls. Currently, the statute lists 14 different types of measures, some of which are discussed below, that can be utilized by a community. Just as importantly though, the statute leaves the door open for a community to use its imagination [“Innovative land use controls may include, but are not limited to...” RSA 674:21.] in crafting a zoning provision that meets a specific need of the community.

The Planning Board initiated this update to the Master Plan due to the potential for new growth impacting the City, and a belief that the Zoning Ordinance and associated regulations [Site Plan and Subdivision] all need updating. The overriding goal of the Planning Board is to manage growth and insure that the best interests of the City are protected by the relevant land use ordinances and regulations. The term “Balance” was mentioned throughout all of the Master Plan meetings. The balance is necessary between City-wide interests, private property rights, resource protection, historical and architectural preservation, and the integrity of the city neighborhoods.

To lay the groundwork necessary for changes to the ordinances and regulations, below is an outline of a variety of land use options and related issues. All of these options are on the table for further discussion and debate as the Planning Board discusses proposed amendments to the zoning ordinance or the regulations.

### A. Lot Size

**Goal:** Review Zoning Districts and propose adjustments to lot size as a mechanism to manage overall growth and density.

The required minimum lot size is one of the important controlling factors, especially for residential projects, in determining the density of a given development on a parcel of land. In Franklin, the required lot sizes range from 10,000 square feet for a lot in the R-2 Zone with City sewer and water, to 225,000 sq. ft. for a lot in the Conservation Zone with an on-site septic and well. In almost every zone, there are different lot size requirements depending on whether the property is served by City sewer and water or on-site septic or well systems.

The need to consider larger minimum lot sizes as a mechanism to help control growth was an idea floated at several of the Master Plan meetings. Clearly, larger lot sizes equals less density and fewer houses on a specific parcel of land. From an environmental perspective though, larger lots can sometimes lead to more land clearing with associated run-off problems. There are trade-

offs between lot size and the look of the landscape after development, and the Board needs to weigh a variety of issues and work towards reaching the appropriate balance point. The relationship between lot sizes and development patterns will be explored later in this section.

## **B. Setbacks for Residential, Commercial and Industrial Land Uses**

- Goals:**
1. Adjust setbacks to create differences between the two business zones.
  2. Modify industrial zone setbacks.

Neither of the Business Zoning Districts [B-1 and B-2] have any sideyard setback requirements. The former zone incorporates large sections along North and South Main Streets and the eastern-most sections of Central Street; the latter zone primarily includes the core downtown area, but it also includes some portions of Central Street. While having no sideyard setback is generally appropriate for the downtown, no setbacks in the B-1 zone can lead to congestion and conflicts between certain land uses. Further, landscaping, which helps to improve the look and feel of a commercial zone, is all but impossible to incorporate if no setbacks are required.



Central Street storefronts

Different setback situations involving Industrial zoned land [industrial uses abutting each other or industrial uses abutting residential uses] are important. Creating distinctions between these two different scenarios can help insure that residential property owners are better protected against adverse impacts from abutting industrial uses, and that valuable industrial lands abutting each other are utilized to the maximum degree possible.

## **C. Cluster Developments**

**Goal:** Explore and outline cluster development options, including expanding the zones where it is appropriate and explore requiring it in some districts.

While the Zoning Ordinance has contained for many years an option for cluster developments, the truth is that no real cluster proposal has ever been approved by the Planning Board. Cluster developments are one of the enumerated Innovative Land Use Controls [RSA 674:21] and are worthy of additional consideration for Franklin.

For some people, the term cluster means a way for a developer to cut development costs while increasing profits, with the potential that the “open space” might be subject to development in future years. It is true that development costs might be lower due to shorter roads, but there are also many benefits to the residents, the neighborhood as a whole, and the City. For example:

- a. Approximately 2/3 of the land area is set aside as permanently protected open space, thereby assuring the residents that no new development will occur on the open space adjacent to their lots;
- b. Clustering can minimize the impacts to public safety and infrastructure maintenance budgets [shorter streets equal less winter maintenance and summer repairs]. This is

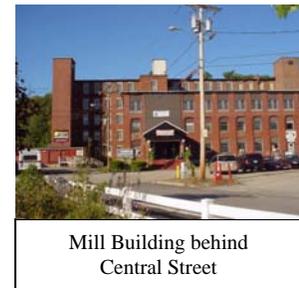
- an issue that has been raised not only at various Master Plan meetings, but in annual budget discussions as well;
- c. All City residents will be able to enjoy the open space for recreational activities;
  - d. Shorter roadways mean that smaller amounts of storm water will need to be managed, with fewer impacts to the environment; and,
  - e. Cluster developments can be used to preserve and protect both historical and agricultural components of the City.

The manner in which clusters were discussed in the 2000 Master Plan, and are regulated in the current Zoning Ordinance, leads to some confusion and contradiction about how and when to promote and utilize this development option. While portions of the 2000 Plan talked about, for example, farmland protection, one of the sub committees discussed abandoning the cluster option altogether. And currently, clusters are not permitted in the Webster Lake watershed, where clusters could be an excellent environmental protection measure.

#### D. Flexible and Discretionary Zoning

- Goals:**
- 1. Explore and outline flexible zoning opportunities, especially as it applies to important economic centers such as the downtown mill buildings.
  - 2. Possibly combine with other land use options such a zoning for environmental characteristics.

3. Prepare appropriate regulatory language for implementation. This is another example of an Innovative Land Use Controls, which means that a reasonable level of imagination can be employed by a community to make this work. Instead of having all of the land use requirements outlined in an Ordinance, some different jurisdictions allow the types and densities of land uses in certain zoning districts to be worked out between the developer and the individual community. This negotiation process can result in a project that benefits both the developer and the community.



Mill Building behind  
Central Street

Flexible zoning could be a valuable zoning option since Franklin is an older community, with different established sections in which re-development could easily occur. This flexibility might be important given the changing nature of businesses and the overall economy, energy and transportation concerns, and the need for affordable housing. Having well defined performance standards, describing where and how this options could be utilized, would be necessary.

#### E. Drainage and Storm Water Management

- Goals:**
- 1. Initiate cooperative efforts between the Planning Board, the Municipal Services Department, and the City Council on the drafting and adoption of regulations and ordinances for management of storm water.
  - 2. Work towards providing funding for upgrades to the existing systems.

The heavy rains in October of 2005 have highlighted the need to deal effectively with storm water and drainage impacts [flooding, erosion and sedimentation problems, and water quality are three primary examples]. Since the City has the combination of river valleys with other areas of

sharp topographic relief, dealing with storm water and drainage is a particularly vexing problem. Regulations or guidelines for storm water management are rapidly being established by federal, state, and local agencies. According to the Director of the Municipal Services Department, the issues for Franklin are a combination of maintaining and upgrading the existing storm water systems, and making sure that newly installed systems are designed and constructed properly.

It is acknowledged that there is a long list of catch basins, piping, and manholes that need cleaning and maintenance and possibly repair or replacement. The obvious constraints in getting all of the necessary maintenance work completed are time, personnel, and money. The creation of a city-wide drainage study is listed as one of the top priorities in the recently updated Hazard Mitigation Plan [discussed more in Section IX], and this could prove critical to responding in the future to any federally mandated storm-water programs.

One approach that the City could take in dealing with this issue is through impact fees, which is discussed in greater detail below. Another approach involves amendments to the Subdivision Regulations, detailing performance standards that could be implemented as part of an overall approach for the protection of environmental characteristics [discussed below] linked to Innovative Land Use Controls. Lastly, the City could adopt some type of overall storm water ordinance to be managed by the Municipal Services Department.

#### **F. Zoning for Residential Dwelling Units**

**Goal:** Review and correct problems and confusion in the existing zoning ordinance and evaluate changes to protect the integrity of existing neighborhoods.

Another issue raised at several of the Master Plan meetings is the zoning for single, two and multi-family dwelling units in different portions of the City. As one would expect in an older community with an industrial history, there are many two and multi-family houses. Current zoning allows single-family houses in all of the primary residential zones; two and three-family houses are allowed by right in the R-2 and R-3 zones; multi-family houses are Special Exception uses in the R-2 and R-3 zones. One obvious problem with the current zoning is that while three-family dwellings are by right in the R-2 and R-3 zones, and multi-family are Special Exceptions in these same zones, the definition in the Zoning Ordinance for multi-family dwelling is a, “building divided into three or more dwelling units”. This conflict needs to be resolved at the earliest possible opportunity.

A larger issue which impacts the character and quality of a neighborhood is whether or not to allow additional influx of two or multi-family dwellings into existing neighborhoods that contain single-family homes. The Lot and Yard Requirements Table controls this type of expansion with a requirement for additional lot area in order to add a dwelling unit; if the required lot area is not available, then a variance would be necessary. The Zoning Board has dealt with this issue on several occasions, and neighbors have raised concerns over lack of available parking and the increased congestion on small lots.

#### **G. Non-Conforming Structures**

- Goals:**
1. Review and modify ordinances to provide for flexibility in altering or re-building non-conforming structures, while making sure that existing footprints remain basically the same, the demands on the land are consistent or brought into greater compliance with the setback requirements, and historic preservation issues are taken into consideration.
  2. Review and modify ordinances and utilize, if appropriate, Innovative Land Use Controls and special or conditional use permits, for managing seasonal conversions to insure that water quality and overall neighborhood character are protected.

The current Zoning Ordinance allows the reconstruction of non-conforming structures that are damaged by fire, flood, or other casualty. One issue that has come to the surface in recent months is that some of the older homes being marketed are in need of significant repairs, especially foundation work, and the repair costs might be equivalent to or higher than the cost to remove the existing structure and build a new structure. Prospective buyers have questioned why it requires a fire or flood to trigger the ability to construct a new and improved structure that will better serve the needs of the owner and have a higher value generating more taxes for the City. The Planning Board recognizes the dilemma in which these buyers find themselves.

The Webster Lake area contains many seasonal homes that create a unique flavor and character to the streets and neighborhoods. Franklin, like many other similar communities, is beginning to wrestle with the problems of how to manage the conversion of seasonal homes to year-round use. A large percentage of these seasonal homes are non-conforming due to either lot size or setbacks, and to enlarge these structures or rebuild a new home on the same lot can change the character of the neighborhood. Views can be blocked, water quality is impacted through pollutant loading and storm water run-off issues, or parking might be a problem. There can also be increased demands for city services in areas not typically served throughout the whole year.

#### H. Signage

- Goals:**
1. Debate and discuss options for signage regulations for the downtown area.
  2. Review overall regulations to help prevent light pollution, manage size and height issues.
  3. Reduce the potential for creating too much of a “strip mall” look in other portions of the community.

Signage is an important factor in how people perceive and react to a downtown area or a business district. Several commentators at two Master Plan meetings downplayed the approach of making all the signage in the historic downtown area look and feel the same. It was felt that the individuality of the different businesses downtown should be highlighted. The Planning Board supports maintaining individuality and differences in downtown signage, but at the same time the Board feels that signage should be designed and installed in such a manner that reflects and compliments the historical components of the downtown area.

## **I. Overlay Districts**

**Goal:** Evaluate [through discussions between city staff, Planning Board representatives, property owners, and potential developers] options for Overlay Districts, which would encourage mixed uses [retail, restaurants, offices, housing, or low-impact industrial] and draft language for hearings and implementation.

An Overlay District is a zoning district superimposed over an existing zoning district, creating supplemental regulations and performance standards addressing issues such as permitted uses, parking requirements, setbacks, or landscaping, thereby allowing certain things to happen in this overlay district that might otherwise be prohibited or restricted in the underlying zone. In Franklin, one area where consideration should be given to an overlay district is the economically and culturally important downtown mill district, which represents both a challenge and an asset for the City. Since these mills were built at a time when many of the workers walked to work, the amount of available parking is limited. The overlay district could be crafted through the flexibility of the Innovative Land Use Controls, discussed elsewhere.

## **J. Inclusionary Zoning / Affordable Housing**

**Goals:**

1. Review data and assessing information to better determine needs for the community and discuss option of an addendum to Master Plan detailing this issue.
2. Prepare regulatory options for implementation.
3. Discuss options and conduct hearings on ordinance or regulation amendments.

On a regular basis, newspaper articles talk about the need to provide affordable housing for persons of low or moderate-income levels. Franklin, with its foundations in the industrial age, has a long history of creating workforce housing. Obvious trends in housing prices make it clear though that even moderate-income workers are sometimes hard pressed to find affordable housing for themselves and their families.

In New Hampshire, the ability of a community to require the construction of affordable housing is defined and conditioned through the Innovative Land Use Controls, where this definition is given:

““Inclusionary zoning” means land use control regulations which provide a voluntary incentive or benefit to a property owner in order to induce the property owner to produce housing units which are affordable to persons or families of low and moderate income. Inclusionary zoning includes, but is not limited to, density bonuses, growth control exemptions, and a streamlined application process”. [RSA 674.21.IV.(a)]

One key word is “voluntary”. If the City wanted to encourage the development of affordable housing, the Zoning Ordinance would need to define the type[s] of desired housing, and establish performance standards for any developer to work within. The ordinance could give a developer a bonus of, for example, one extra market-rate house for every affordable house that is to be constructed within a subdivision. Upper limits on the number of additional units would need to be established, and some kind of restrictive covenants, possibly overseen by a non-profit

organization, would need to be in place for the affordable houses to insure that they remain affordable in perpetuity.

## K. Impact Fees

- Goals:**
1. Initiate a coordinated review [City staff and departments, Capital Improvements Committee, and most importantly the City Council] of capital needs for both the municipal and school sectors of the City.
  2. Evaluate options for developing Impact Fees or timing or phasing requirements for development.
  3. Prepare, if deemed appropriate, supporting data and ordinance language for implementation.

Impact fees, which are defined, explained, and conditioned in the Innovative Land Use Controls RSA, are an assessment imposed on a development for the proportional share of the costs associated with any municipal capital improvement project. The identified share needs to be reasonably related to the capital needs created by the new development. The money collected from impact fees are not intended to pay all the costs for a given project, but only the fair and reasonable share, with the whole community paying its share through yearly budget appropriations or bonding. Examples of such projects include: sewer and water systems, waste disposal, and school, municipal, or recreational facilities. Examples of projects not eligible under impact fees statutes are open space acquisition and the upgrading of existing facilities, where the need for the upgrade is not created by the new development.

The key to establishing impact fees is to have an active Capital Improvements Program, which identifies current capacities and existing deficiencies, puts forward a plan to either correct the deficiencies or initiate a replacement schedule for buildings, equipment, etc, and identifies future needs based on population growth or other parameters. The fees would be assessed for new development and its relationship to a specific capital project. Detailed analysis is necessary to calculate the costs associated with the new development [cost per house or unit, cost per vehicle trips per day, etc], and costs may be assessed or waived in different ways [for example, residential vs. non-residential development, senior housing vs. family housing]. The Planning Board feels that the debate and discussion should take place soon, as additional growth, with all of its related impacts, will be arriving soon.



Somewhat related to impact fees and the demands placed on the City by new growth is the issue of the timing and phasing of new development. Sometimes the Planning Board can work with a developer to phase the project out over several years, but the Board might want to consider options under Innovative Land Use Controls to control growth through ordinance or regulations that limit the number of yearly building permits in a given project or throughout the entire City. These limits would need to be tied into a Capital Improvement program, and must adhere to the state RSA's which addresses the need to balance community and regional development needs.

**L. Zoning for Environmental Characteristics**

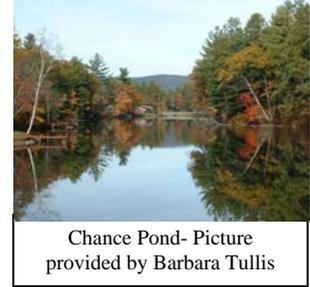
- Goals:**
1. Prepare regulatory options [zoning ordinances, performance standards, or subdivision/site plan regulations] for the implementation of this zoning approach, with flexibility to include protection of significant natural resources [for example, drinking water supplies or wetlands] and important land characteristics [such as slope].
  2. Propose appropriate amendments for adoption.

Zoning for Environmental Characteristics is one of the Innovative Land Use Controls referenced in RSA 674:21, so flexibility is available to the City in creating the necessary zoning language to make it work for the best interest of the City. Whether it is called Low Impact Development, Open Space Residential Design, or something with the word “Green” included, Zoning for Environmental Characteristics has been discussed on state and national levels for several years. A 2003, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research publication, “*The Practice of Low Impact Development*”, outlined different benefits arising from this type of development option:

<b>Municipal Benefits</b>	<b>Benefits for the Developer</b>
* Protects sensitive vegetation & wildlife areas	* Reduces land clearing & grading costs
* Reduces infrastructure, service delivery, and utility maintenance costs	* Reduces costs associated with infrastructure and storm water management
* Balances growth needs with environmental protection	*Does not reduce marketability of the lots and the houses
<b>Benefits to the Homebuyer</b>	<b>Environmental Benefit</b>
* Retention of existing vegetation helps provide shade and reduce energy costs	*Protection of on and off-site water quality by reducing sediment and pollutant run-off
*Promotes the creation of cohesive neighborhoods	*Preserves broader areas of natural vegetation, & wildlife habitat areas
*Protected green spaces provide protection against abutting development and can be used by area residents for passive recreational uses	

To best utilize this planning option a community needs to break away from the usual thinking of rectangular cookie-cutter lots laid out along standard roadways. Instead, a Planning Board would look at the land and the best way to place building sites on the land. There are many, many beautiful areas of the City where a standard subdivision would fail to fit into the character of the area. Development options should be available to the Planning Board to insure that the best possible plan is available for approval. One advocate of this approach, Randall Arendt, recently spoke at the Annual Dinner for the Lakes Region Planning Commission. There, he encouraged Planning Boards to use a four-step planning process:

1. **Open space areas are designated.** To do this, you look at sensitive areas such as wetland or ponds, the interface areas between fields and forests, important stands of trees, stone walls that can be preserved or integrated in the creation of lot lines, or areas where views should be preserved. Once these critical areas are identified, then they would be designated as no-disturbance areas as the remaining steps in the process are conducted.
2. **Determine sites for the individual houses.** Once the decision has been made to protect certain areas, you then move onto siting the houses. It is very important to remember that the number of individual houses permitted on a piece of land generally remains the same whether you rely upon a standard design or an Open Space Residential Design. The houses would be sited to best preserve land features deemed important by the City.
3. **Layout the roadway and trails.** Closely connected to the determination of the house sites is the layout of the roadway. One factor to consider here is minimizing the amounts of earth work [the placement of fill or the cutting of existing grades] necessary to construct the roads. This reduces the impacts to the land and the road can better blend into the landscape. This approach allows you to get away from the standard “200 feet of frontage” mentality, and layout the roads with the goal of reducing to amount of paved surfaces and capturing the storm water benefits mentioned above. You can also work with the developer to create common driveways or short private roadways that might serve 2 or 3 lots. Again, flexibility is key to the process.
4. **Draw the lot lines.** At this point, you have your protected areas, your house site, and your roads; now, you lay out the lots lines, again taking advantage of the topography of the landscape, existing features such as stone walls or tree lines. Needless to say, each individual, private lot will not be the standard size of 200-foot by 200-foot. One advantage of designing your lot lines like this is that you end up with a variety of lot-types, which allows the developer the opportunity to market the lots in different ways.



Basically, this is a process that is the complete opposite of the way in which most subdivisions are designed and engineered. Robert Lemire, a consultant for financial institutions, developers, non-profit organizations, and municipalities, spoke of this approach in his 1979 book, *“Creative Land Development, A Bridge to the Future”*. He used a phrase then that is still relevant today – “Build what needs to be built and save what needs to be saved”. Clearly this approach involves some out-of-the-box thinking, but with the current demands being placed on land and communities today, it seems that the time is right to look for other solutions towards creating housing and neighborhoods for all current or prospective residents of the City.

#### M. **Conversion to Condominiums**

**Goal:** Draft appropriate language for amendments to zoning or subdivision regulations to better manage the conversion process.

The ability of a community to regulate the conversion of dwelling units to condominium ownership is conditioned through state RSA 356-B:5, which says that a community can regulate the conversion process, but cannot frustrate the conversion process where the conversion will involve no changes to the demands on the land and will only result in a different type of ownership.

In Franklin the conversion of existing residential dwellings to condominium ownership is minimally regulated through the Subdivision Regulations [Section 403-26]. In the opinion of the Planning Board, the regulations should address issues including, but not limited to, any existing non-conformities, lot size, parking criteria, setbacks, property maintenance relative to the condo association, or wastewater.

#### **N. Permitted Uses & Use Categories**

**Goal:** Review Table of Permitted Uses and modify to reflect emerging business types, protect the character of certain zones, and serve the needs of the residential and business communities.

With changes in technologies and business patterns, there are often new types of land uses or categories that need to be dealt with through amendments to the Zoning Ordinance's Table of Permitted Uses. Further, it is important to make sure that the Use Table reflects the wishes of the community in identifying both the allowed uses and the uses that need to be limited or restricted.

#### **O. Agriculture and Farmland Protection**

**Goal:** Explore options for ordinances and regulations adopted under the Innovative Land Use Control RSA to protect active and historic agricultural lands.

Zoning amendments might also be beneficial in the protection and preservation of current and historical lands, used for agricultural and farming purposes. Throughout New Hampshire, there have been significant conversions of land from farming to residential or commercial purposes. This has the impact of changing the nature of a community, reducing the economic and land use vitality of an area, and increasing our reliance upon imported farm products, which are trucked in with all of the associated transportation costs. The New Hampshire legislature has recognized, in RSA 672:1.III-b, the "vital and significant contributions [of agriculture] to the food supply, the economy, the environment and the aesthetic features of the state of New Hampshire".

While the City of Franklin does not have many operating farms, some of the undeveloped land that is open and non-forested has historic roots in farming activity. Of course, one of the more significant is the Daniel Webster Farm in southern Franklin [see discussion in Section V, Historic Preservation and Downtown Franklin].

#### **P. Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations**

**Goal:** Review on a regular basis these regulations and look for options under the Innovative Land Use Controls to make appropriate modification.

These regulations contribute to how land is developed in the City. The Subdivision Regulations can deal with issues such as the maximum length of a dead-end road, the restriction for development of land with slopes greater than a certain percentage, or the size of a lot when on-an site septic system is required. The Site Plan Regulations deal with development and construction of commercial, industrial, and multi-family properties, and looks at issues such as setbacks, parking and drainage, landscaping, lighting and signage. The Planning Board needs to make sure these regulations stay current, per changes in State RSA's and court decisions, to best serve the needs of the City.

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### What Next?

To bring everything full circle, it will be said again that all of these ideas and options discussed above are worthy of further debate as specific language for the amendments to the Zoning Ordinance or development regulations are crafted. As with any land use regulation, Innovative Land Use Controls needs to be applied fairly and evenly so that all individual applicants are required to adhere to a consistent set of regulations and standards.

Will all of these options be implemented at once? The odds are against that, but the ability to take advantage of the opportunities presented by and through the statutorily created Innovative Land Use Controls is important for Franklin. Many individuals believe that the City sits at the edge of significant changes and the way in which development occurs will shape the look and the feel of the downtown, the residential neighborhoods, the business corridors, the industrial land, and the natural resources that are enjoyed by so many residents.

## VIII. Capital Projects and Community Facilities

The availability and the condition of community facilities impact how people look at a municipality. For this discussion, community facilities are being defined as: recreational facilities of the school and the City; City-owned buildings; the overall infrastructure of the City;



Franklin Fire Department- West Bow St.

and, equipment [police vehicles, fire truck, public works trucks, etc.]. Dealing with these types of facilities and projects are often difficult for a municipality due to the high costs associated with many of these items. But it is important to take stock of both the assets and deficiencies so that the necessary corrective steps can be initiated to make sure that the needs of the community are effectively met. What follows is a brief description of these components of the City, followed by some general goals and recommendations to aid future discussion and decision making for capital projects.

Generally speaking, all of the issues discussed in this section fall under the umbrella of Capital Improvement Projects. By City Code, there is a Capital Improvement Plan Committee, made up of representatives of the City Council, School Board, Planning Board, Master Plan Committee, and the community, as well as the City Finance Director and the School Business Administrator. The charge to this Committee is to prepare on an annual basis a Capital Improvement Plan, outlining a proposal for capital programs and projects. A draft plan is to be submitted to the Planning Board for review and recommendation of a draft to be presented to the City Council.

The significant issue that Franklin faces, similar to many other communities, is the competition for annual budget dollars. Over the past few years the amounts of money available for capital projects has decreased. And in some cases, the initiative to plan for and fund capital projects has been missing. For example, earlier in 2005, some long needed maintenance was performed on the water system and specifically the water tanks, where routine maintenance had been neglected for many years. The lesson learned from this experience is that it is important to keep up with maintenance and improvements to city infrastructure so that even more costly repairs are avoided in the future. More attention to capital needs is warranted and a strong cooperative effort between city staff, elected officials, and school administrators is required.

### A. School Recreation Facilities



Baseball Field at Franklin High School

Like many communities, the recreational facilities for the Franklin school system are stretched a little thin. The current demands placed on the existing fields by multiple sports using the same areas result in a limited ability for the fields to “rest and recover” between one set of users or from one season to another. Another issue is that some of the local sports organizations, such as Pop Warner Football and the Babe Ruth Leagues, sometimes use the school facilities, which places additional burdens on these fields.

According to the School Superintendent and the Athletic Director, the facilities at the two elementary schools are adequate at the present time. At the Middle School, there is room for expansion of an existing field that is useable, but slightly under-sized for full team sports. Potentially, simple plans could outline the necessary work to complete this project. At the high school, where the demands on the fields are most intense, there are two identified needs. First, the school does not have any track facility. Second, the administration has identified the need for two additional full-sized fields. The idea is to have these new fields be multi-use, so they could be used for field hockey, soccer, and other similar sports. A significant issue standing in the way of creating these fields is the lack of available space. The high school is located near the confluence of the Pemigewasset and Winnipeseauke Rivers and there is little room to grow. Some off-site fields have been considered, but travel time and costs are a hindering factor. Other options for land on which to expand field space might be available, but negotiations with landowners will be required for either lease or outright purchase, and obviously both of these options involve capital projects and budget appropriations.

### **B. Recreation Department Facilities**

Similar to the school department, the field facilities overseen by the Franklin Recreation Department are stretched a little thin, with little time for any specific field to be allowed to recover from frequent use. That fact notwithstanding, most all of the existing field space is in pretty good shape. According to the Recreation Director, the biggest need is a large open field area that could be used for multiple practice space areas depending upon the sports season.

The City’s recreation programs use the fields at Odell Park, Daniell Park, the elementary schools, and the middle school. Various organized sports programs [primarily Little and Lassie Leagues, Pop Warner Football, and Youth Soccer] use these same facilities, so it is easy to imagine the amount of wear and tear.



Odell Park

The Recreation Director mentioned three important maintenance/capital items. First is the need to replace certain playground equipment at Odell Park; this replacement program could be integrated into an overall capital program. Second, some improvements [moving of the playground equipment and changes to the parking and access pathways] at Daniell Park are needed. This work could probably be done with existing staff working within regular annual budgets. Third, is the need to provide for additional irrigation at the Odell Park fields. Funding for this could come through a combination of annual budgets and possibly some capital funding. Funds could also be solicited from some of the sport leagues that use these facilities.

### **C. City-owned Buildings**

The Franklin school system has initiated discussions with engineers and designers for an addition to the Paul Smith School. This project would help relieve an increase in the elementary school population. According to administration officials, the middle and high schools have satisfactory space available to meet current needs. As noted



Rowell School

elsewhere in this Plan though, there is an expectation that Franklin's population will grow over the next 20 years. Policy makers and City officials involved in the development of annual and capital budgets will need to keep their fingers on the pulse of residential development and track trends in housing starts and student population projections to better determine if additional space needs arise.

The Municipal Services Department [the City's DPW] is housed in a small office space, located away from the City Hall. The needs of the Department are not met with this facility, and there is a recognized need to replace and/or enlarge and improve this facility.

The Fire Department is housed in a 1970's facility, near the Municipal Services site. An addition to this building is necessary for equipment and vehicle storage. Because Franklin's Fire Department has, unlike some of its abutting communities, an effective full-time staff, there has been an increase in the requests from these other communities to seek mutual aid assistance for a variety of fire and medical responses. This places a strain on both personnel and equipment and may mandate that a second ambulance be purchased in the near future. Hopefully some funds for this purchase could come from these other communities, but this would require additional building space.



The Police Department is housed in a relatively new facility, and there are no identified space or structural needs.

As mentioned elsewhere in this Plan, there have been thoughts of having the administrative functions of the City move out of the City Hall / Opera Hall, and relocated elsewhere in the downtown, possibly in one of the mill buildings. While this remains an option in the future, the City should also examine existing conditions in the City Hall to better determine what repairs or improvements could be made to make it function better as the seat of City government. If a cost/benefit analysis determines that re-location of the governmental functions make the most sense, then a review of possible locations could be undertaken.

#### D. Infrastructure

This involves maybe the most complicated and costly component of any capital program. The upgrades to roads, sewer and water systems, and drainage are all interconnected, and as highlighted by the water system and tank reference above. The need to bring these critical components of the city up to grade for existing demands and plan for future improvements is very important. Complicating the ability of the City is the recent spike in the price of many materials [asphalt for example] and overall pricing from contractors. And of course the increase in gasoline, diesel, and natural gas, all used by every department of the City, creates even more demand for annual appropriations.

As pointed out in the Land Use Section discussion on drainage and storm water management, the October 2005 rains and flooding have significantly impacted many roads and drainage systems. The Municipal Services Director is regularly upgrading lists on the condition of certain roads,

the measured impacts from these storms, and the necessary improvements to bring the roads back to their pre-storm condition and to a point where future impacts can be minimized through new drainage and related upgrades.

Discussions have been held on possibly establishing a Storm Water Ordinance, creating a dedicated fee structure for performing improvements to the overall drainage systems in the City. This type of approach could be used as an excellent way to supplement an active capital program for infrastructure work. Integrating this program with an Innovative Land Use Control zoning effort could go a long way in insuring that the City stays one-step ahead of future issues with drainage and storm water problems.

As far as sewer and water systems go, there were rate increases in mid-2005 that will provide some needed money for improvements to the systems. But, again the water tank example shows that some additional capital funds will be necessary to insure that these systems best meet and serve the needs of the community.

The current condition of certain city roads has been a recent topic of discussion on the City Council level. The need to undertake improvements to the overall road system is well recognized. How to fund these improvements will be discussed more in the near future, but the Planning Board hopes that any decision made will provide for both regular maintenance and future improvements.

#### E. Equipment

The departments of Police, Fire, and Municipal Services all place significant demands on their vehicles and trucks. Generally, the annual appropriations have in the past included replacement vehicles for the Police Department. Stronger efforts need to be made for the new and replacement trucks and vehicles for the Fire and Municipal Services Departments. For all departments, the fleet of vehicles and equipment needs to meet service demands from the public, and insure that employee/operator safety is protected.



Municipal Services

#### **Goals and Recommendations:**

**Goal:** Prepare Capital Improvement Plans to best serve the citizens of the City.

**Responsible Parties:** Capital Improvement Plan Committee, City Council, Planning Board, City staff and School administrators.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Initiate discussions among all of the responsible parties on the development of an up-to-date comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan.
2. Evaluate priorities and make the hard decisions of how to rank each item on the comprehensive list.

3. Initiate discussion among all parties on the funding options for these projects.
4. Evaluate all funding options, including an analysis of the future costs of not undertaking a certain project.
5. Conduct a public forum or workshop on Capital Projects, and utilize all available methods of educating the public on the issues being discussed.
6. Evaluate the Capital Plan in relationship to the establishment of Impact Fees to assist in the collection of fees from new development for required improvements to capital facilities [see additional discussion in the Land Use Section on Impact Fees].

## **IX. Transportation Issues, Regional Context, Hazard Mitigation and Energy**

There are four additional issues - transportation, regional issues, hazard mitigation, and energy - that impact the City and to some degree the way in which land is utilized.

### **A. Transportation**

The City's central location in the state creates both benefits and impacts. Benefits include easier commuting for workers coming into the City or for residents working outside the City, and increased accessibility to cultural, recreational and natural resource amenities found in the City or throughout the state. Impacts arise from the traffic generated by State Routes 3 and 11 that come through the heart of the downtown. The resulting traffic, backed up at the Central Street lights on many an afternoon, does bring some shoppers to the retail areas of the City, but, by all appearances, much of it is through-traffic.

Attention is being paid to a connector from Route 3 south to Exit 19 off of I-93 in Northfield. This would provide a quicker route for the through-traffic, and it would also add to the marketability of the Franklin Industrial Park, since workers could better access the Park. The Lakes Region Planning Commission, working on the region's Transportation Improvement Program, has placed this connector on the list for funding for preliminary engineering work for the year 2006. Construction may be several years in the future, but the engineering work would be an important first step for the City and the region.

Apart from the transportation efforts geared for the automobile, there are also efforts being directed towards alternative transportation initiatives. In Franklin, this is best exemplified by the construction of the Winnepesaukee River Trail, which starts on Central Street, across from Trestle View Park and runs into Northfield. The goal of the coalition of organizations involved with this trail is to continue this trail along the river all the way to Laconia. These efforts, because of their importance for recreational and business opportunities, should be supported.



Franklin's central location in the state and the proximity of several historic rail lines make the City a vital link in the creation of many of the efforts to create east-west [between the Vermont and Maine state lines for example] or north-south trail systems. Tying together regional rails-to-trails projects with local initiatives would provide an asset for the state and the local communities through which the trail systems would run. These projects dovetail into the recent emphasis on creating healthy communities and the need to provide for alternative, non-fossil-fuel orientated means of transportation for both commuters and recreational user.

### **B. Regional Context**

The City is a member of the Lakes Region Planning Commission, which is the primary avenue for the City to push its goals to be included on the State's Ten Year Transportation Plan. Additionally, the Commission assists the City and the region on traffic assessments, general

planning projects, data collection, housing issues, and economic development. Given the interconnectedness of land use decisions and impacts, the City needs to actively participate in, and cooperate with, the activities of this Planning Commission.

Another example of regional efforts is the City's participation in the Concord Waste Cooperative. This provides an economical way for the City to best deal with its household and commercial trash. Studies are being conducted by this regional group to review the possibility of a landfill on land recently purchased in the Town of Canterbury. On a related issue, presently the City burns brush and clean, non-painted, wood. If the State closes off that disposal option then the City should explore regional solutions to how to manage this component of the overall waste stream.

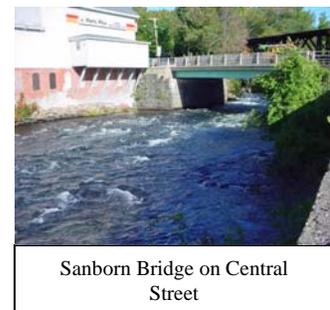
The City also is a participant in the Winnepesaukee River Basin Program for sewage disposal. The regional waste plant is located in south-central Franklin. This facility, which serves several lake and river basin communities, has available capacity to serve the needs of the City. As discussed elsewhere in this Plan, there are efforts being made to expand the availability of municipal sewerage to areas of the City near Webster Lake. This would aid in the overall protection efforts of the lake. At the same time new sewers would be available, the Planning Board should evaluate lot size requirements to insure that the lake and its watershed continue to be protected against over development.

Mass transit also deserves attention, as it links regional concerns with transportation planning. Planning for and implementing opportunities for mass transit might be increasingly important due to rising gasoline prices and the associated impacts on commuters relative to housing choices. And once again, the centralized location of Franklin means that the City will play some role in future implementation strategies, and this should be considered when looking at land use regulations and ordinances.

Discussions and efforts aimed at a revitalized passenger rail network also place the City in a key role given its centralized location. As the price of gasoline rises, direct rail links, or bus or shuttle service connecting to rail stations in Concord, would provide for cost effective commuting alternatives for residents moving into the City.

### C. **Hazard Mitigation**

In the fall of 2005, staff from the Lakes Region Planning Commission, working cooperatively with City staff, prepared a draft Hazard Mitigation Plan. The overall purpose is to create a plan for emergencies created by floods and other weather-related problems, and man-made hazards and issues, and undertake mitigation activities to minimize losses and create effective response mechanisms. After many discussions and evaluations, the top five identified issues and needs are: performing a city-wide drainage study; linking City and School emergency plans; develop a Capital



Improvement Program to insure well-maintained infrastructure; educate property owners about floodways and protecting themselves against flood damage; and, work with the Conservation Commission to identify public lands and develop management plans.

Many of these needs are discussed elsewhere in this Plan. Overall though, they point to the general need for cooperative efforts and discussions between city staff, residents, regional planners and officials, and state agencies. The effective response to some of the problems created by rains and flooding in various areas across the state points to a demonstrated ability to deal with these problems when cooperation occurs.

The Planning Board supports the development of the Hazard Mitigation Plan and the efforts to fully fund and implement this plan. In addition, the plan will hopefully open doors for potential state or federal funding, and it should assist with any reimbursement requests resulting from emergency restoration or repairs conducted in response to storms or other hazard-related events.

#### D. Energy

The two recent Gulf Coast hurricanes have made it painfully clear that gasoline prices and home heating costs will be high this winter and maybe well into the future. It might be time for the State, or the City, to think about ways to achieve greater energy efficiencies for residential housing construction. The State does deal with this issue through the existing energy codes administered by the Public Utilities Commission, but requiring more insulation, tighter windows, or airlocks for doorways, could go a long way towards saving heating dollars for homeowners. While this might be seen by some as outside the accepted jurisdictional boundaries of zoning and land use regulations, an overall purpose of a zoning ordinance [at RSA 674:17.I.(h)] is, “[t]o assure proper use of natural resources and other public requirements”. The administration of these regulations could be tied into the building permit application process conducted through the Planning and Zoning Office. While there would be an increase in the upfront costs of a structure, the long-term costs of heating that structure could be dramatically reduced.

**Responsible Parties:** Planning Board, Municipal Services Department, Fire Department, City Council, Lakes Region Planning Commission.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Continue to advance politically the design of, and funding for, the Route 3 and I-93 connector.
2. Support the construction and expansion of a comprehensive hiking and recreational trail system, and cooperate with local, regional, and state agencies and civic and non-profit organizations on these projects.
3. Continue to support regional discussions and initiatives that advance the interests of the City and the region, and are economically beneficial for the City.
4. Works towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Hazard Mitigation Plan and work cooperatively on a regional and state level on this issue.

5. Evaluate the issues and potential benefits from developing local regulations, utilizing the Innovative land Use Controls, creating performance standards for the construction of residential and commercial buildings.

## X. Summary

Creating a listing of goals and action items is the first step and the easy part of any Master Plan. Turning these into achievements and approved ordinances is the hard part. As pointed out in the Introduction, there was a high level of community participation in the meetings leading up to the preparation of this Plan. That same level of involvement, enthusiasm, and commitment will be necessary to see the positive results of turning the Plan into reality.

Below is a summary of the goals and major action items outlined in the Plan.

### Open Space & Natural Resource Protection & Management

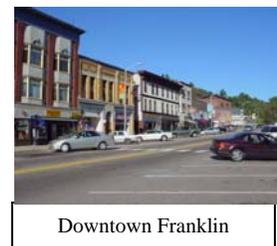
**Goal:** Protect and manage important lands for public use and provide for protection of important natural resources.

- a. Inventory & map existing protected lands, determine key parcels to be added, and implement land management plans to better utilize & protect City properties.
- b. Review and draft land use ordinances, with potential utilization of the Innovative Land Use Controls, in order to provide for greater protection of sensitive lands and significant natural resources, including drinking water supply wells, wetlands, and floodplains.
- c. Continue work on management plan for Webster Lake to insure that this resource is protected; include analysis of potential sewerage of areas around the Lake.
- d. Investigate options for state and federal funding to implement management plans and protection measures for all significant natural resources [open space, water supplies, wetlands, floodplains, and agricultural lands].

### Historic Preservation & Downtown Issues

**Goal:** Raise the awareness of, and promote the preservation and restoration of the historic nature of downtown and all of Franklin.

- a. Create appropriate regulatory program for Heritage Commission to preserve historic components of the downtown area and other portions of the City.
- b. Review options for ordinances and regulations, utilizing Innovative Land Use Controls, for historic preservation and protection.
- c. Encourage private [grant program for façade improvements] and public [capital improvement projects] for building and streetscape type improvements downtown.
- d. Promote awareness of the importance of the City's history through educational efforts in the schools, and the creation of walking/informational guides.



## Economic & Business Development

**Goal:** Encourage new businesses and the expansion of existing businesses to increase the commercial and industrial base of the City.

- a. Review ordinances and regulations, and develop new development options, utilizing Innovative Land Use Controls [overlay districts, flexible zoning, etc.] for downtown / mill buildings.
- b. Work towards creation and implementation of Capital Improvement Programs for downtown area, including streetscape, parking and traffic patterns.
- c. Encourage cooperative efforts for improvements to, and potential expansion of, the Franklin Industrial Park.



## Land Use and Zoning

**Goal:** Insure that land use and zoning ordinances best protect the interests of the all of the residents and land owners of the City and balance the needs of all concerned parties.

- a. Review and modify as needed the ordinances on issues such as lot size, uses permitted in certain zones, signage and setbacks, and non-conforming structures and uses, and condominium conversion.
- b. Encourage, through utilization of the Innovative Land Use Controls, options for development such as clusters, zoning for protection of environmental characteristics, flexible zoning, and affordable housing.
- c. Review options for ordinances or regulations for better management of drainage and storm water, potentially using Innovative Land Use Controls.
- d. Evaluate potential changes [mandatory preliminary review, lot size per slope and soil characteristics, etc] to Site Plan and Subdivision regulations to better manage the permitting process and protect the interests of the City.
- e. Evaluate the costs and benefits of development of Impact Fees.

## Capital Projects and Community Facilities

**Goal:** Prepare, fund, and implement Capital Improvement Plans to best serve the needs and interests of the City and its citizens.

**Transportation, Regional Context, Hazard Mitigation & Energy**

- a. Support transportation improvements that would encourage business development in the City.
- b. Support alternative transportation initiatives for local, regional and state-wide hiking and recreational trails.
- c. Continue participation in regional service delivery and planning organization and agencies.
- d. Work cooperatively on the city, regional, and state levels on hazard planning and preparedness.
- e. Investigate options, under Innovative Land Use Controls, for increasing energy efficiencies in residential and commercial building.

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It is important to remember that, as pointed out in the Introduction, a goal of the Planning Board is to have this Master Plan become a work in progress. The Board plans on evaluating this plan in 2-3 years and making necessary changes to reflect current needs and budgets, community goals, economic conditions, and changes in state or local ordinances. All of these factors impact how land is used and in the end the purpose of a Master Plan is to determine how land in the City of Franklin is best used and what ordinances need to be in place to guide land use.

Some of the goals and action items contained in this Plan will be debated and discussed in greater detail at other public hearings and will be adopted or implemented, but some will not. All the Planning Board can do here is put forward, with the input of the many residents and individuals who participated in the development of this Plan, its outline of the direction the City can take in guiding land use decisions.

The Planning Board thanks all of the residents and concerned individuals who took the time to participate in the meetings and the preparation of this Plan. Hopefully you will stay involved as we move into the next stage of the process. Now, let the real work begin!