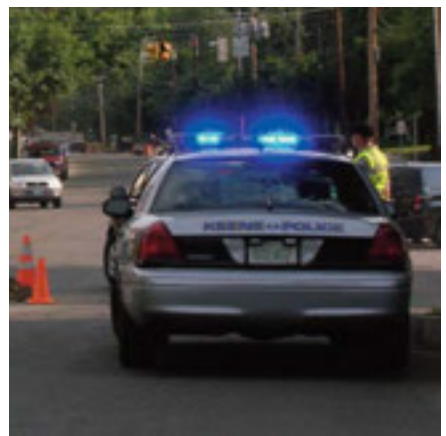
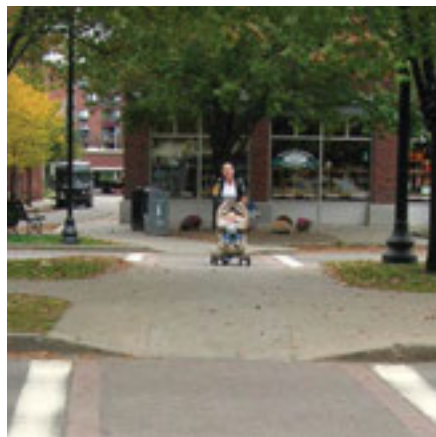


Keene Comprehensive Master Plan



SEPTEMBER 2010

DRAFT

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Why Plan?



Introduction

Each generation's contributions enrich the legacy of the Monadnock Region and the Keene community. This Comprehensive Master Plan (the plan) embodies the community's vision of how the city and region could and should be for future generations. At its most precise, it identifies actions that can be used to achieve that vision. The plan is a guide to assist the community and city government in making the right decisions to move the community forward toward a more sustainable Keene.

The future described in the community vision cannot be achieved all at once. Over the life of the plan, change will occur more quickly or slowly – and in different ways than originally anticipated. Every circumstance influencing the community cannot be accurately predicted. But a flexible plan allows decision makers to accommodate a range of likely and unlikely circumstances, while still keeping sight of the community's goals and vision for the future.

■ **A sustainable community is one that is economically, environmentally, and socially healthy and resilient. It meets challenges through integrated solutions rather than through fragmented approaches that meet one of those goals at the expense of the others. And it takes a long-term perspective—one that's focused on both the present and future, well beyond the next budget or election cycle.** [Institute for Sustainable Communities](#)

Why Plan?



JEFFREY NEWCOMER

A Strong History of Planning

This document is the latest milestone in the community’s long history of appreciating and implementing planning. Keene adopted one of the country’s first zoning codes in January 1927, and today the community has in place nearly 20 area- or topic-specific plans. However, the community embraced planning as early as 1736, when it decided to accommodate new development by doubling the size of the city’s central artery (now Main Street) from four rods to eight. In the late 19th century, under the leadership of George Wheelock, the community embarked on a program that created parks and open spaces throughout the city, including Dinsmoor Woods (1886), Wheelock Park (1886), Ladies Wildwood Park (1887) and Robin Hood Park (1888). Other examples of the community’s planning decisions include beautifying downtown, creating Black Brook Corporate Park, and focusing development within the area bounded by the 9/10/12 Bypass and Route 101.

Keene has a reputation for being the first to take new and creative approaches towards solving community issues. From the early decisions on placement of the community meeting house and planting elm trees in Central Square – now recognized as one of America’s Best Great Public Spaces (2009 American Planning Association) – to addressing contemporary issues like climate change and community sustainability, the community continues to be recognized within the region, the state, the nation, and throughout the world for its innovative, practical efforts and solutions.

Over time, Keene’s appreciation of planning and strong citizen engagement in civic matters has created a community intensely concerned about its people and its future. They have also created a community with a distinctive identity and high quality of life, thanks to careful consideration and implementation of previous plans by the active and involved residents of the community and region.

■ **Long-range planning does not deal with future decisions, but with the future of present decisions.**
Peter Drucker

Why Plan?

The Planning Process

In January 2008, the Keene City Council and Planning Board began a community-based comprehensive planning process to update the collection of existing Master Plans by creating one plan – a comprehensive master plan. A steering committee was created to work closely with the planning department staff and the selected consultant for each phase of the process. The committee spent much time during the winter of 2009 and spring of 2010 drafting the details of the plan, reviewing, revising, and elaborating on the goals, objectives and actions herein.

The first step in the planning process was to create a cohesive community vision devised by the people that know Keene best – its citizens. The second step was to use the vision as a foundation to create the plan. Breaking the project into these two phases has resulted in a community-owned, city-supported initiative, with extensive participation from both community residents and those from surrounding towns and neighboring states. The public's comments, suggestions and stated preferences assisted the steering committee in identifying and maintaining a balanced approach and a range of actions to achieve the community's vision.

Overall, this plan was created with the participation of nearly 2,000 people through various participation methods. The process generated a vast amount of community baseline and supporting information, which can be found either as appendices to this document or on the city's website.



Visioning Conversations

During spring and early summer of 2008, participants gathered in a series of small groups of eight to 10 people for discussions called visioning conversations. These conversations were the main component of the entire public process.

Two rounds of visioning conversations were held. The first focused on identifying community characteristics that participants appreciate today. The second round asked participants to apply creativity and out-of-the-box thinking to consider their vision for the future and what they want to see happen in Keene. Role-playing, creation of future news headlines, and visual mapping exercises helped to guide participants and stimulate creativity, independent of the feasibility of ideas.



The small-group discussion format was informal, often taking place in community gathering places such as coffee shops, the library, or in citizens' homes. This allowed participants to feel at ease and openly share views and ideas.

Why Plan?



Keene Voices

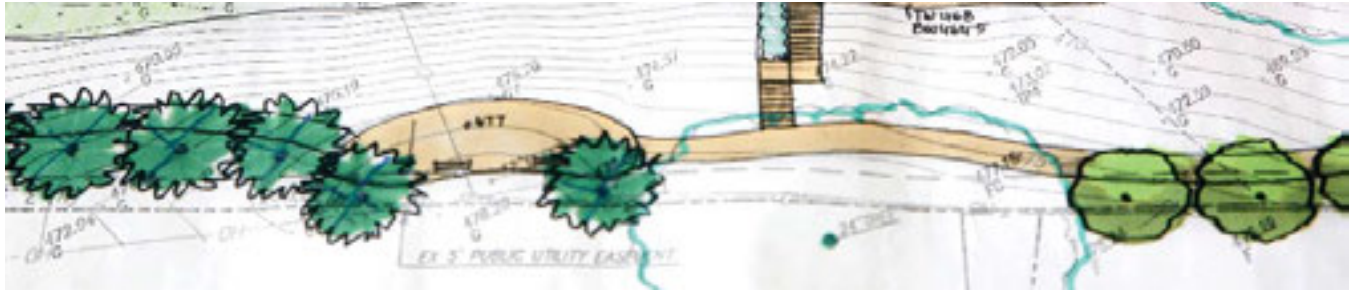
A series of public workshops titled *Keene Voices* was structured around six community-vision focus areas. Each workshop began with an overview of identified issues and opportunities as they related to the focus area. Participants then broke into small groups to discuss and identify ways that the community and city could begin to achieve the identified goals. These directed discussions tapped the knowledge base and energy of community leaders, stakeholders and citizens. The resulting dialogue helped reveal consensus and generate synergy. Information from these workshops was then used to craft the plan's goals, objectives and actions, and to help shape the topics of the practitioner workshops.

Practitioner Workshops: Tools in the Smart Growth Toolbox

The public process identified several community opportunities and challenges. Some of these became topics for a series of practitioner workshops that focused on tools that Keene could consider as part of an overarching implementation strategy; many of these tools became action items in the plan. The workshops were given specific titles under the general theme *Tools in the Smart Growth Toolbox*, to focus participants on the practical nature of these workshops, and to recognize the role that smart-growth principles have had in shaping the community's discussion. These four sessions were held from October to December 2009:

- Sustainable and Affordable Housing Strategies
- Low-Impact Development
- Strategies for a Healthy & Sustainable Economy
- Innovative & Sustainable Transportation Solutions

Why Plan?



How to Use the Plan

Wherever possible, this plan addresses the region as a whole, recognizing that the community's overall success is connected to its location within the heart of the Monadnock Region, and initiatives undertaken by Keene will also contribute to a sustainable county and region.

Without excluding other possible uses, this plan is intended to serve as:

- A. A basis for regulatory actions:** The plan is the foundation for the zoning and land-use regulations and the zoning map, as well as the basis for changes or other decisions made relating to these regulations.
- B. A basis for community programs and decision-making:** The plan is a guide and resource for recommendations in the capital improvement program, for the operating budget, for community development initiatives, for informing changes to regulations, standards, policies and processes, and for direction and content of other local or regional initiatives, such as water protection, infrastructure improvements, or housing.
- C. A source for planning studies:** Few plans can, or do, address every issue in sufficient detail. However, the plan can identify specific needs and recommend further study or effort to address those needs through specific courses of action (e.g., neighborhood plans).
- D. A standard for review at the county and state level:** Other regulatory processes can use the master plan as a reference in review of applications or in the development of regional plans or intermunicipal programs (e.g., regional trail network; issuance of state permits).
- E. A source of information:** The plan is a valuable source of information for the general public, developers, businesses, citizens, the Planning Board, City Council and other local boards and commissions. It is anticipated that community stakeholders and interested investors will use this plan to help guide their organizational or project goals.
- F. A long-term guide:** The plan can assist in evaluating public and private proposals that affect the community's physical, social, economic and environmental characteristics.

Why Plan?

Plan Implementation and Achieving Our Community Vision

The plan will be implemented through the action and coordination of community organizations, citizens, stakeholder groups, and through local and regional civic leadership. The City of Keene, as an organization, will work to implement the plan through day-to-day actions as well as policies made and changed; review, negotiation, and approval of development proposals; facilities planning for services and departments (such as public works, fire, police, and parks and recreation); and programs offered by the city.

Residents, property owners, and businesses – perhaps acting through neighborhood associations, community groups or business associations – have a large role in implementing the actions of the plan as well. These groups are encouraged to read this plan and to identify ways in which their goals, programs and actions can align with the community’s vision for the future.



Ultimately, it is the responsibility of all stakeholders involved in creating this plan to ensure that future projects and programs are consistent with it.



MIKAELA ENGERT

Why Plan?



Consistency with State and Regional Planning Efforts

The State of New Hampshire does not require consistency among local, regional and state planning efforts. However, the City of Keene values alignment of efforts so that policies and programs extend and support each other as much as possible. As such, the State’s Development Plan, Southwest Region Master Plan, the Vision 2020 Plan and the new Hampshire Climate Action Plan were reviewed to identify areas for alignment with this plan.

State of New Hampshire Development Plan Vision and Goals

State of New Hampshire Vision Statement:

To support New Hampshire’s prosperity and unique quality of life we must maintain the essential character of our state’s natural and built environment through innovative approaches to planning, preservation and development at the state, regional and local level.

State of New Hampshire Smart Growth Principles:

Incorporated as part of New Hampshire’s planning policy under sections 9:A and 9:B of the State Statutes, “smart growth” is development that serves the economy, community, and the environment. It does not mean “no growth.” Smart growth increases choices – opportunities to meet community and regional needs for housing, employment, goods and services, and quality of life through more efficient, creative development. Smart growth conserves and makes the best use of vital natural and cultural resources. It enhances the choices and opportunities for present and future generations of citizens. Smart growth does not demand a particular solution, but rather an approach that considers and appreciates the essential qualities and features of the community as it moves forward. Throughout the planning process, in combination with conversations about community values and sustainability, the “Principles of Smart Growth for New Hampshire” were generally referred to. In order to create alignment with the State’s policy for achieving smart growth, these principles have been incorporated into this document to help guide Keene towards a sustainable community. The eight principles and NH goals to implement the State Vision are included in Appendix C.¹

■ **Tradition is a guide and not a jailer.**
William Somerset Maugham

¹ From “Achieving Smart Growth in New Hampshire”, Office of Energy and Planning. Available at http://www.nh.gov/oep/programs/SmartGrowth/about/documents/full_report_ver5.pdf

Why Plan?

Southwest Region Planning Commission Regional Plan ²

The Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) represents a region consisting of 35 municipalities in an area of just over 1,000 square miles. The 2002 Regional Plan aims to provide information and guidance to the people of the region, especially local governments. The plan encourages a regional perspective and cooperation amongst the region's municipalities and is intended to guide the work of the SWRPC.

The plan consists of 11 different elements, ranging from public administration to demographics. Each element provides background discussion, identifies issues and anticipated changes, and provides suggestions to municipalities for how to respond to those issues and changes.

The New Hampshire Climate Action Plan ³

This 2008 plan outlines a statewide greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal of 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. To achieve that goal, the plan recommends 67 different action items in order to adapt to opportunities and vulnerabilities resulting from a changing climate – from building, electric generation and transportation; to carbon sequestration purposes; to integrated education, outreach and workforce training programs.

Vision 2020: Engaging Our Community in Health

This collaborative community health initiative, introduced by Cheshire Medical Center/Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene and led by the Council for a Healthier Community coalition, outlines Cheshire County's current state of health, identifies measures to assess overall community health and provides goals, objectives and work plans for achieving the vision of creating "The Healthiest Community in the Nation" by 2020. This effort is important to this master planning process because it will directly assist in achieving the community's vision for the future.

■ **Giving people a choice of housing, a walkable environment, and a good network of streets is a formula for a higher quality of life.**
Livable Communities
Coalition Executive
Director Jim Durrett

² The Southwest Region Plan (2002) can be accessed at <http://www.swrpc.org/library/general/SWRPC%20Regional%20Plan.pdf>

³ The New Hampshire Climate Action Plan (2009) can be accessed at http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/air/tsb/tps/climate/action_plan/nh_climate_action_plan.htm

Community Vision and Six Focus Areas

The Community Vision

The community vision statement reflects the general diversity of aspirations and interests of the community for the future. It is the community's answer to the question: What do we want our community to be like in the future?



Community Vision

Keene's Vision for the Future

Keene, in 2028, is the best community in America. Our city is vibrant, dynamic, beautiful, and functional. Our community consists of engaged, diverse, multicultural, dedicated, caring, and respectful citizenry supported by a strong and clear vision for the future, open and accessible leadership, collaborative relationships, and ongoing civic dialogue.

In 2028, we have strategically managed our community's physical growth, maintaining its small-town character and friendly and inviting atmosphere, while simultaneously fostering our cultural and artistic identity. By successfully managing our physical growth we have created a city that is livable and accessible to all residents. Our built environment consists of mixed-use development and appropriate density within the city limits; public gathering spaces that allow for interaction between people; well-designed, safe, and maintained neighborhoods with affordable housing and neighborhood amenities; clean and efficient public transportation that connects us to our community, the region, and beyond; pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure that is present throughout our community and that places import on people rather than automobiles; and a well-developed trail system that provides connections between neighborhoods, open spaces, and other communities while simultaneously supporting a healthy lifestyle.

In 2028, people that live in and visit Keene are drawn to our affability and the personable interactions that our community nurtures. We enjoy abundant opportunities to partake in community and cultural events and support our arts and heritage. We enjoy our natural areas, parks, and open spaces that are characteristic of the spirit and landscape of the Monadnock Region. We recognize the role Keene plays in the continued success of the region and we welcome meaningful participation from everyone, including those in surrounding communities.

In 2028, our city continues to grow economically. Our dynamic economy is diversified, innovative, and entrepreneurial, producing abundant business opportunities and living wage jobs. We lead the region in environmental protection, resource conservation, renewable energy, clean industry, and sustainable development. As such, our community is a destination for people from all over the world.

We understand our impacts upon, and responsibilities to, others. We have created a community that supports the health, safety and wellness of our citizenry. We have cultivated an ethic of lifelong learning and provided a well-rounded, broad-based education from kindergarten through college. Our caring, combined with a strong sense of citizenship, creates positive change in our community, across the Monadnock Region, throughout the State of New Hampshire and around the world.

Community Vision



The Six Vision Focus Areas

The vision statement is supported by a set of goals, published as part of the community vision document in 2008. In order to retain and build upon the community input that helped create the vision, the six vision focus areas, also used as community goals, form the foundation for the comprehensive master plan. Sustaining and actively applying these focus areas are key to implementing and achieving the community vision. The six vision focus areas are:

1. A Quality Built Environment
2. A Unique Natural Environment
3. A Vibrant Economy
4. A Strong Citizenship & Proactive Leadership
5. A Creative Learning Culture
6. A Healthy Community

A Quality Built Environment

The built environment addresses the physical and structural parts of our city, including what our city looks like, where we live, how we get around, and how we live. For our future, achieving a quality built environment means:

Providing Quality Housing ❖ Sustaining a Vibrant Downtown ❖ Maintaining Neighborhoods ❖ Preserving and Celebrating Architectural History ❖ Balancing Growth and the Provision of Infrastructure ❖ A Complete Transportation System ❖ Fostering Renewable Energy and Efficient Use of Resources

A Unique Natural Environment

The natural environment addresses the natural areas (green spaces, plants and animals, hill-sides and waterways) within and around our city, as well as the man-made areas (green infrastructure, parks, agriculture, and gardens). For our future, achieving a unique natural environment means:

Achieving Community Sustainability ❖ Creating Green Infrastructure

Community Vision



JOEL ST. JOHN

A Vibrant Economy

A vibrant economy addresses the issues of opportunity, prosperity, livability, and availability of meaningful work for citizens. For our future, achieving a vibrant economy means:

Providing for a Balanced Local Economy ❖ Employment Opportunities

A Strong Citizenship and Proactive Leadership

Strong citizenship and proactive leadership focuses on the way our city is led and how community members are engaged in civic opportunities. For our future, achieving a strong citizenship and proactive leadership means:

**Transparent and Responsive Leadership ❖ Collaborative
Community Planning ❖ Engaged Citizenry**

A Creative, Learning Culture

A creative, learning culture considers individual and community health and well-being, education, and interpersonal relationships. For our future, achieving a creative, learning culture means:

Thriving Arts and Culture ❖ Educational Opportunities for All ❖ Diversity

A Healthy Community

A healthy and safe community considers community and individual health and well-being, provides access to healthcare opportunities, and provides resources to lead safe, healthy lives. For our future, achieving a creative, learning culture means:

Healthy Living ❖ Public Safety ❖ Social Services

Community Snapshot

This section provides a brief overview of major statistics and trends for the City of Keene. It is meant to provide a snapshot of the current state of the community. As the plan is implemented, some of this information will be useful to measure success. The full baseline document can be found on the city's website.

Keene is a vibrant community, the hub of activity in southwestern New Hampshire. The city's population has grown slowly but steadily since 1970. This growth rate is expected to continue in subsequent years; by 2030, Keene's population will be approximately 25,220. Cheshire County has been growing at a faster rate than Keene, and it is anticipated that this trend will continue through 2030. As the hub of the region, Keene provides services, programs and resources for a much greater population than the residents of the city alone. This responsibility places great importance on Keene as a regional provider. It also adds stress on systems and programs that are designed to serve a smaller population and on the Keene taxpayers that are asked to provide regional services.



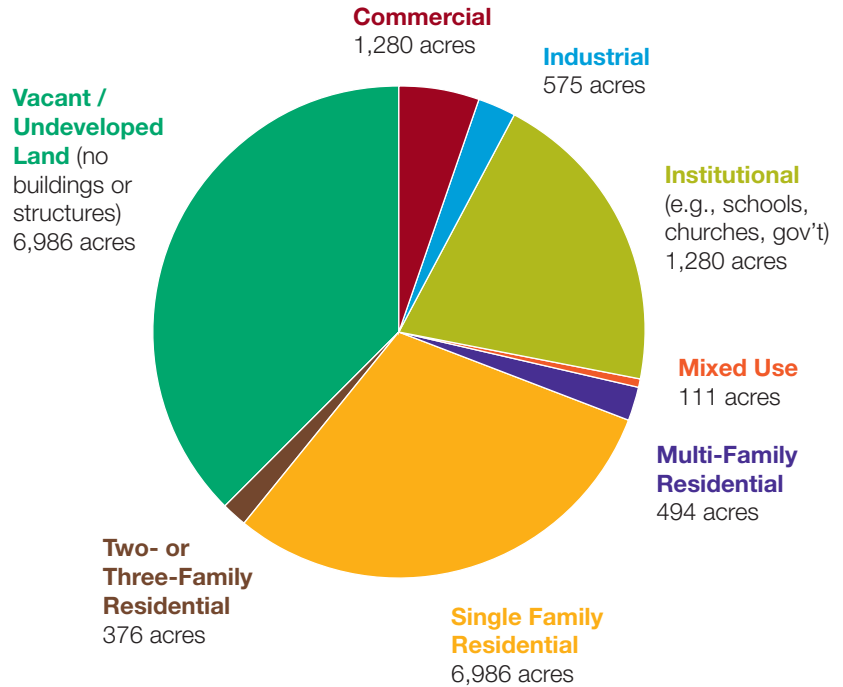
Community Snapshot

Land Use

The City of Keene’s land-use data from 2001 and 2008 was analyzed to identify trends (Figure 1, Table 1).

It is important to note that the amount of land used to accommodate both industrial and commercial uses is disproportionate to the amount of floor space provided over roughly the same time period; meaning that during that time, significant amounts of land were consumed providing a comparatively small amount of revenue generating space. This trend may also indicate lower levels of reoccupation of existing buildings and redevelopment of older buildings.

Figure 1 Existing Land Use



Source: City of Keene GIS and Dep't of Assessment Data

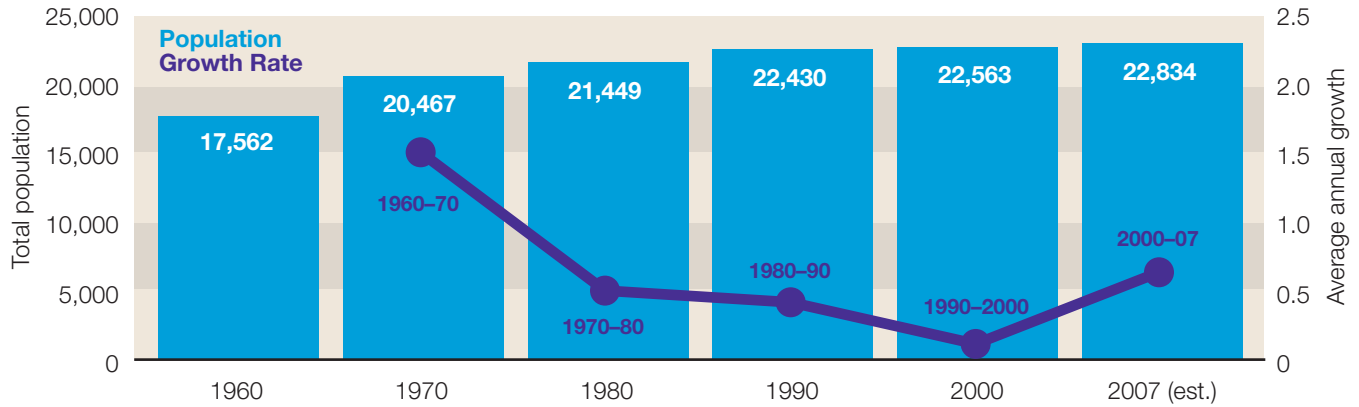
Table 1 Change in Land Use

Land Use Category	2001	2008	% Change
Residential – Occupied	6,960.98	7,855.33	13%
Commercial – Occupied	811.95	1,280.09	58%
Industrial – Occupied	540.45	575.25	6%

Source: City of Keene GIS Land Use Data

Community Snapshot

Figure 2 Total Population and Average Annual Growth Rate, 1960–2007



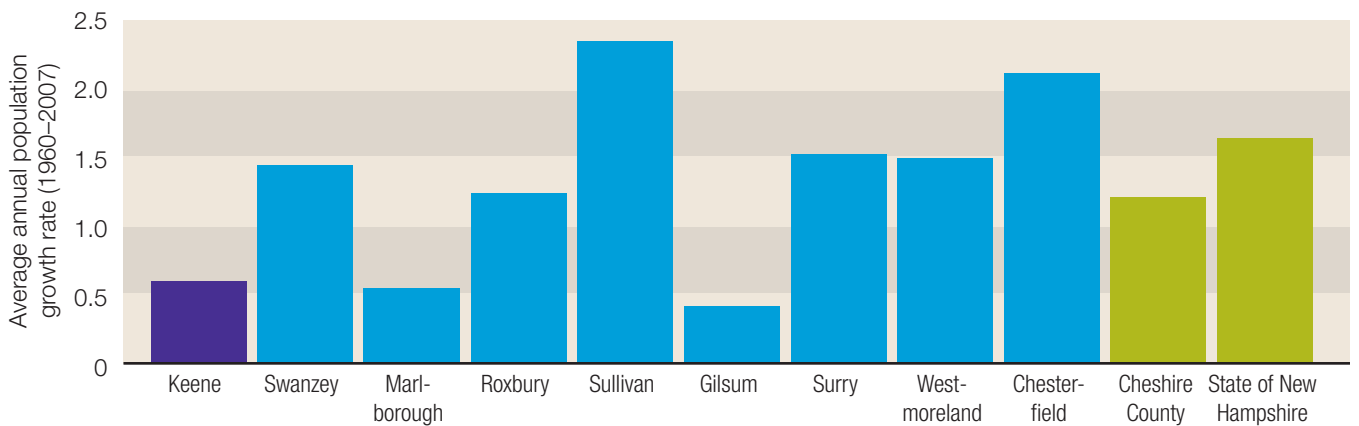
Source: NH Office of Energy & Planning, 2000; U.S. Census Bureau, 2008

Population

Keene’s current population is estimated at 22,834, and although the community’s population continues to grow, the rate at which it has been growing has slowed significantly over the last 50 years (Figure 2). Between 1960 and 1970, the average annual growth rate was 1.5%. Between 2000 and 2007, the total average annual growth rate was just 0.6% (U.S. Census, 2008).

Keene’s population growth rate has also historically been much lower than most of the surrounding towns, Cheshire County and the State (Figure 3). Population growth rates in adjoining towns, such as Swanzey, Chesterfield, and Westmoreland, have increased more rapidly than Keene’s, suggesting that these communities are absorbing some of the city’s economic spillover.

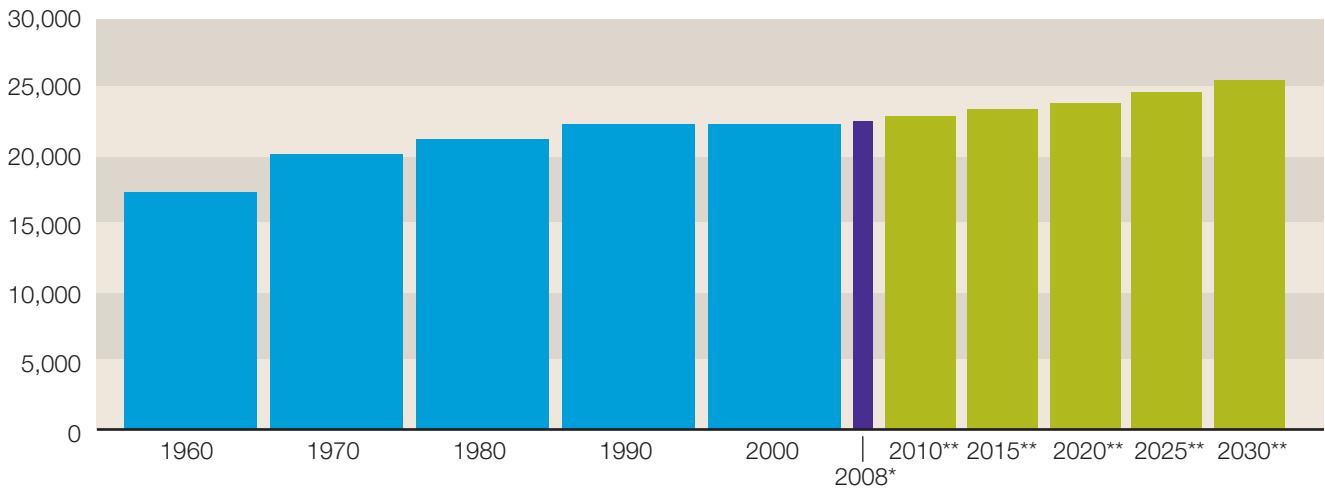
Figure 3 Average Annual Growth Rate: Keene and Surrounding Towns, 1960–2007



Source: NH Office of Energy & Planning, 2000; U.S. Census Bureau, 2008

Community Snapshot

Figure 4 Historical and Projected Population, 1960–2030



*The Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) estimated a 2008 population of 22,653. **The years 2010 through 2030 are population projections provided through OEP.

Sources: NH Office of Energy and Planning Population Estimates and Projections; http://www.nh.gov/oep/programs/DataCenter/Population/documents/population_estimates.pdf; <http://www.nh.gov/oep/programs/DataCenter/Population/documents/MunicipalPopulationProjections2010-2030.pdf>; US Census – American Fact Finder, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&geoContext=&street=&_county=03431&_cityTown=03431&_state=&_zip=03431&_lang=en&_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&show_2003_tab=&redirect=Y

Population growth has been slow but steady since 1970, and Keene is estimated to continue to grow at the same rate, reaching approximately 25,220 people by the year 2030 (Figure 4). The last US Census in 2000 indicated a population of 22,563 for the City of Keene.

Between 1990 and 2000, the elderly population (age 65+) increased by 5.2% and now constitutes 15.2% of the population (Table 2). School-age children (age 5-19) make up 22.2% of the population. The baby-boomer population has grown significantly: the largest growth was in the age 45 to 54 cohort (58.7%), followed by a 23.2% increase in the age 55 to 59 cohort. The largest decreases were in the “under 5 years” and age 25 to 34 cohorts.

Table 2 Population by Age Cohort, 1990–2000

Age Cohort	1990		2000		% Change
	Number	% of Population	Number	% of Population	
Under 5 years	1,303	5.8%	944	4.2%	-27.6%
5 to 19 years	4,841	21.6%	5,001	22.2%	3.3%
20 to 24 years	2,760	12.3%	2,739	12.1%	-0.8%
25 to 34 years	3,266	14.6%	2,501	11.1%	-23.4%
35 to 44 years	3,279	14.6%	3,073	13.6%	-6.3%
45 to 54 years	1,901	8.5%	2,980	13.2%	56.8%
55 to 64 years	1,823	8.1%	1,900	8.4%	4.2%
Over 65 years	3,257	14.5%	3,425	15.2%	5.2%
Total	22,430	100%	22,563	100%	0.6%

Source: U.S. Census

Community Snapshot

Education

According to the 2000 Census, 87.3% of Keene's adult population (age 18 and over) has completed high school; of this cohort, 31.9% hold a bachelor's degree or higher. This data is strong when compared to the national average: 80.4% of the adult population has completed high school and 24.4% hold at least a bachelor's degree. The educational attainment of Keene's adult population is reflected in the high percentage of persons (age 16 and older) working in management, professional, and related fields (35.4%). Sales and office occupations rank second, at 30.1%.

Keene State College Enrollment

Forty-seven percent of all undergraduate students at Keene State College are out-of-state. Of freshmen, 84% live on campus, compared to 42% of non-freshman undergraduates. As a result, 58% of non-freshman undergraduates live off-campus.

Economics

Between 1997 and 2007, Keene's total employment base has increased by about 5%. Most of the net growth has occurred in service sector employment while goods-producing jobs declined by about 11%. Keene's 6.1% employment growth since 2000 exceeded the County's 4.6% and the State's 4% growth rates (RKG, 2009). The median household income for the City of Keene in 2008 was estimated at \$49,649. Although the overall median household income and non-family income in Keene were both lower than the Cheshire County median in 2007 and 2008, median family income in Keene for these years was higher than Cheshire County. Family households make up about 57% of the total households in Keene (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 and 2008).



Table 3 Keene State College Enrollment, 2000–2008

Year	Total Enrollment (Matriculated students / based on fall enrollment)
2000	4,004
2002	4,437
2004	4,463
2006	4,529
2008	4,948

Source: Keene State College Office of Institutional Research; Factbooks 2000, 2005 & 2009

Community Snapshot

Income and Employment

Overall, the median income for all household types is \$37,033. Family households, which constitute 56.8% of all households, have a median income of \$49,935. The median household income is below that of both Cheshire County (\$42,382) and the state (\$49,467). Family income is relatively consistent with Cheshire County (\$51,043), but is \$7,640 below the state median (\$57,575) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

As of 2010, the four largest employers in Keene are Cheshire Medical Center / Dartmouth Hitchcock-Keene, Keene State College, C&S Wholesale Grocers and the Keene School District (Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce). This is reflected in the American Community Survey (2006-2008) estimates which indicated that the largest industry in Keene is Education, Health and Social Services (27.6%) (Table 4).

Table 4 Percentage of Workforce in Industry, 2008

Industry	Percentage
Educational Services, Health Care & Social Assistance	27.6%
Manufacturing	10.8%
Retail Trade	18.0%
Arts, Education, Recreation and Accommodation & Food Services	12.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey; Selected Economic Characteristics

Poverty and Unemployment

In 2008, the national poverty threshold for a family of four was \$22,025. According to the American Community Survey (2006-2008), 6.7% of families were below the poverty level in Keene; 9.6% of families were below the poverty level nationally. In Keene, 14.4% of individuals were below the poverty threshold while, nationally, 13.2% were below the poverty threshold (U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey Selected Economic Characteristics).

Table 5 Unemployment Rates, 2000-2007

Location	2000	2003	2007
Keene	2.6%	2.7%	3.4%
Cheshire County	3.0%	3.2%	4.6%
New Hampshire	2.8%	4.3%	4.8%
United States	4.0%	6.0%	6.6%

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor – Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Census Bureau 2005-2007 American Community Survey Selected Economic Characteristics.

Keene's unemployment rate has remained below county, state and national levels despite, and as a result of, increases on all levels. While Cheshire County has begun to reflect state averages, Keene has stayed below both (Table 5).

Community Snapshot

Housing

New housing growth in Keene has been substantially slower than both the county and the state. Between 2000 and 2008, New Hampshire has undergone an 8.5% increase in housing units (Table 6). During this same period, the total number of units in Cheshire County has increased by 5.9%. In comparison, Keene had only a 2.1% increase over eight years.

Table 6 Number of Housing Units, 2000–2008

Location	2000 (units)	2008 (units)	% Increase
Keene	2.6%	2.7%	3.4%
Cheshire County	3.0%	3.2%	4.6%
New Hampshire	2.8%	4.3%	4.8%
United States	4.0%	6.0%	6.6%

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor – Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Census Bureau 2005-2007 American Community Survey Selected Economic Characteristics

Occupancy Status

Of the 9,493 housing units existing in 2008, 52.3% were owner-occupied, 39.8% were renter-occupied and 7.9% were vacant. The average household size is 2.54 people in owner-occupied units and 2.19 in renter-occupied units (U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey Selected Housing Characteristics).



MIKAELA ENGERT

Community Snapshot

Rental Data

Statewide, the median gross rent in 2008 is \$919/month (Table 7). The median gross rent for Keene is \$915/month while Cheshire County's median gross rent is \$882 per month. While Keene's rents increased at a higher rate than the state, Cheshire County's increased the most at 48%.

Today, the City of Keene has an estimated 9,500 housing units (U.S. Census, 2007). Slightly over half of these homes are single-family detached houses; the remainder consists of attached/multi-family housing or mobile homes (Table 8). More than 90% of all of the homes were built prior to 1980, and more than one-third were built before 1940 (Table 9).

Table 7 Median Gross Rents, 2000–2008

Location	2000	2008	% Increase
New Hampshire	\$646	\$919	42.3%
Cheshire County	\$596	\$882	48.0%
Keene	\$622	\$915	47.1%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 Census SF3- H63: Median Gross Rent (Dollars); U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2008 American Community Survey Selected Housing Characteristics

Table 8 Housing Type by Percentage, 2007

Housing Type	Percentage of Housing Stock
Single-Family Detached	52%
Single-Family Attached	4%
Two-Family	12%
Three- or Four-Family	10%
5-9 Apartments in Building	5%
10-19 Apartments in Building	6%
20-49 Apartments in Building	4%
50 or more Apartments in Building	2%
Mobile Home	5%

Source: U.S. Census, 2007

Table 9 Age of Housing Stock by Percentage, 2007

Year Structure Built	Percentage of Housing Stock
2000 or later	2%
1990 to 1999	7%
1980 to 1989	11%
1960 to 1979	26%
1940 to 1959	19%
1939 or earlier	35%

Source: U.S. Census, 2007

Community Snapshot



Transportation

Low levels of development activity (measured in building permits), low rate of population growth and modest increases in several economic sectors indicate that the overall demand on Keene’s transportation system has not been overwhelming. When comparing data on commuting practices, for example, changes in several categories were nominal, while a few categories do show a small tendency toward automobile oriented commuting practices (Table 10).

Ridership numbers for the City Express public bus service are an indicator of the use of public transportation; however, they may not be indicative of the need for public transportation. This service is currently administered by Keene’s Home Healthcare, Hospice and Community Services (HCS) organization. It is Keene’s only local public transportation service. Although ridership for the service is not large (at approximately 140 rides per day), ridership has increased approximately 13% annually on average (Table 11). It is not known whether this is the result of increased fuel prices, changes in employment or other socioeconomic factors.

Table 10 Means of Commute, 1990-2000

Means of Commute	1990 Census Data	2000 Census Data	Change from 1990
Drives Alone to Work	73.1%	76.5%	3.4%
Carpool	11.5%	11.5%	0%
Walk	9.9%	7.9%	-2.0%
Work at Home	3.2%	3.3%	0.1%
Bicycle	1.4%	0.4%	-1.0%
Public Transit	< 1.0%	< 1.0%	0%

Source: U.S. Census, 1990; U.S. Census, 2000

Table 11 City Express Ridership, 2003–2008

Year of Service	Total Ridership
2003	28,362
2004	29,468
2005	33,343
2006	31,413
2007	40,345
2008	50,101

Source: Home Healthcare Hospice & Community Services

Community Snapshot



JOEL ST. JOHN

Recreational Resources, Trails and Conservation Land

There are approximately 2,000 acres of recreation land in the community primarily under the care of Keene’s Parks and Recreation Department. Between 2003 and 2010, the Parks and Recreation Department managed close to 30 different recreation programs in a given year. These programs take place in both indoor and outdoor facilities including the coordination of continued use in four playground facilities.

In addition, the community has approximately 16 miles of trail, creating a network that includes both regional and community multi-use paths (Keene GIS data). In addition to the trails network in the community, the Department of Public Works oversees the maintenance and enhancement of approximately 65 miles of sidewalk. Increases in the amount of and improvements to sidewalks are included each year in the Capital Improvement Program.

Keene has approximately 4,300 acres of land either zoned as conservation (app. 1,900 acres) or permanently protected through conservation easements (app. 2,400 acres). Of the total number, the City of Keene has placed easements on approximately 1,000 acres of city-owned lands.

Community Snapshot

Table 12 Cheshire County and State of New Hampshire Health Statistics

	Cheshire County		New Hampshire	
	Yes/good (%)	Number of Respondents	Yes/good (%)	Number of Respondents
Heavy drinking	5.8	477	6.4	6,721
Current asthma	9.1	489	10.4	6,832
Have diabetes	7.0	493	7.2	6,891
Any physical activity in past 30 days	76.3	491	78.5	6,880
Any health coverage	88.4	491	89.9	6,880
Current health status	88.0	483	88.6	6,816
Any days in the past 30 days during which mental health was not good	38.9	487	35.5	6,802
Overweight or obese	66.8	470	63.1	6,588
Current smoking	19.7	492	17.1	6,869

Source: UNH, 2008

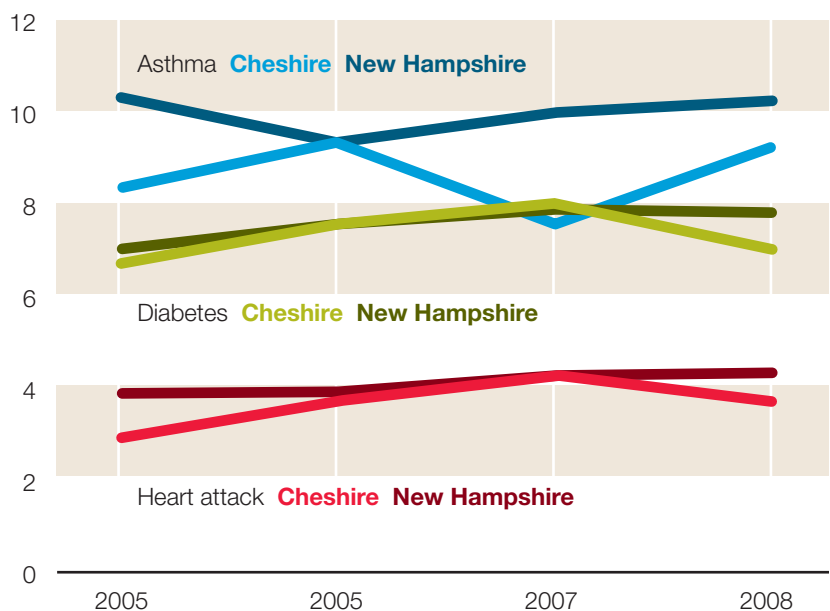
Health

According to the United Health Foundation, New Hampshire was the third-healthiest state in 2008, after Vermont and Hawaii; it was ranked fourth in 2007. Strengths include a low percentage of children in poverty (6.5% of persons under age 18), high immunization coverage with 93% of children ages 19 to 35 months receiving complete immunizations, and a low infant mortality rate at 5.2 deaths per 1,000 live births. Since 1990, the prevalence of smoking has decreased from 30.7% to 19.3% of the population and the incidence of infectious disease has decreased from 18.3 to 8.1 cases per 100,000 people (UHF, 2009).

Challenges include moderate public health funding at \$59 per person and a moderate number of poor mental health days per month at 3.5 days in the previous 30 days. In addition, access to health care varies significantly by race and ethnicity in the State; 23.6% of Hispanics lack health insurance compared to 12.9% of non-Hispanic whites (UHF, 2009).

Health statistics for Cheshire County, of which Keene encompasses about one-third of the

Figure 5 Diabetes, Heart Attack and Asthma Rates for Cheshire County and New Hampshire, 2005–2008



Source: HDSM, 2008

Community Snapshot

population, were similar to state levels, and are indicative of a healthy community (Table 12, previous page). Cheshire County, however, ranked lower than the state for physical activity, health coverage, current health status, mental health conditions, obesity, and smoking rates. Cheshire County rates for heavy drinking, asthma, and diabetes were better than the state average (Figure 5, previous page).

Culture/Arts

According to the New England Foundation for the Arts, there are a total of 76 culturally related businesses and non-profits within the City of Keene. These range from organizations and businesses such as Tri-

Keenan Tile Works, to the Colonial Theater, to Stonewall Farm, to the Historical Society of Cheshire County, to the French-American Group of Keene, to the Equine Journal, to the Starving Artist Collective and numerous galleries. The depth and breadth of arts and culture in Keene and surrounding communities is substantial given its population size. A recent economic im-



M. PLOTCHYK

act study done by Americans for the Arts for Monadnock Arts Alive! indicates that nearly 500 full time jobs are currently supported by regional arts and cultural opportunities, generating nearly \$17 million in local economic activity. In reviewing 10 major arts and cultural organizations within the city proper that had financial information available, approximately \$3.8 million is generated by those groups, as reported through Guidestar.

Community Snapshot

Leadership

Keene's leadership is representative in its achievements, recognition and awards, consistent voting record, longevity of service and consistent high bond rating.

Keene has been recognized time and again as a great place to live, work, and raise a family:

- Top 10 Great Public Spaces, Central Square – Recognized by the American Planning Association's Great Places in America program, 2009
- The third least economically vulnerable micropolitan town in America by Forbes magazine in November 2008
- Among "America's Dozen Distinctive Destinations" by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2003
- One of the top 10 Great Places to Raise a Family by *Parenting Magazine* in their tenth anniversary issue (May, 1997)
- The 10th best small city in the East (tied with Cortland, NY) in a book titled *The New Rating Guide to Life in America's Small Cities* by Kevin Heubusch (Prometheus Books, 1997)
- One of New Hampshire's top ten neighborhoods where history and community combine (the South End; March, 2009)
- All America City, 1964



In addition, the citizens of Keene have consistently shown their leadership and community involvement through a consistent voting record in the State General Elections. In the last two elections, 77% of registered voters (out of 16,546) and 73% of registered voters (out of 18,420) cast their ballot on Election Day.

The City of Keene has also consistently retained a high bond rating of A1 from Moody's, which reflects "a continued trend of strong and stable financial operations ... the rating also incorporates the community's moderately-sized tax base, a healthy and stable economy, and average debt burden." The community has also consistently received a AA- rating that reflects good financial management practices and policies, very strong financial reserve levels, and a stable and diverse economy indicating the community's "very strong capacity to meet financial commitments."

Community Snapshot

All-America City Awards

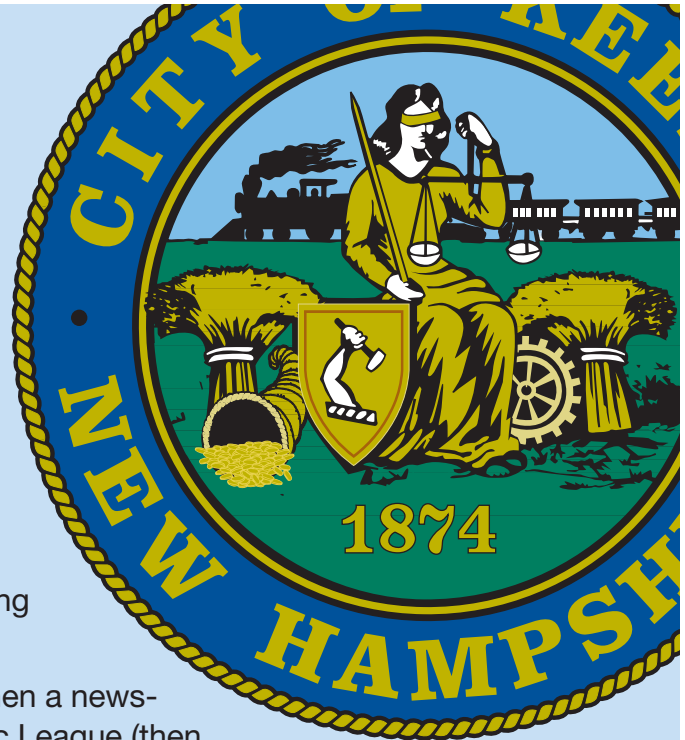
The National Civic League recognizes 10 communities each year for outstanding civic accomplishments. To win, each community must demonstrate innovation, inclusiveness, civic engagement, and cross sector collaboration by describing successful efforts to address pressing local challenges.

More than 500 communities have won the award, some as many as five times. All-America Cities have shown the ability to innovate in such areas as job creation, neighborhood revitalization, crime reduction, new housing for low income people, improving education, and engaging youth.

The award program was founded in 1949 when a newspaper reporter approached the National Civic League (then known as the National Municipal League) with the idea of naming the 10 best governed cities each year. Instead, the league created a program that recognized cities for civic achievements.

Today the award competition is open to neighborhoods, towns, cities, counties and metropolitan regions. In their applications, AAC finalists briefly tell their community stories, list two of their most pressing challenges and three outstanding community projects. The award program culminates in a three-day event where community delegations tell their stories of successful change to a national jury of business, non-profit, and local government experts. All-America Cities benefit by increasing community pride, networking with civic activists from across the country and gaining national recognition. The AAC designation has helped communities win grants and new resources and attract new employers.

Source: www.allamericacityaward.com



Community Snapshot



Philanthropy

The people of Keene and the Monadnock Region are givers. Whether businesses contribute to local non-profits or citizens are volunteering their time to various organizations, Keene's ethic of philanthropy and volunteerism is strong. According to Vision 2020, the county's overall level of corporate giving to non-profits has remained stable, despite current economic conditions. Vision 2020 also indicates that businesses within the City of Keene have increased their giving slightly, while the reverse is true in giving from businesses in the surrounding towns.

The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation reports that in 2008, donors in the region contributed more than \$600,000 and that the Foundation itself distributed close to \$2 million in grants and scholarships throughout the communities of the region. The breadth of the charitable projects in the region and the high level of commitment to giving indicate a strong community connection and sense of caring by our citizens, which in turn sustains a high quality of life and makes Keene unique compared to other communities in New Hampshire and across the country.

The Plan

Defining a Sustainable Community: Balancing Environment, Society and Economy

The word “sustainability” is being used more frequently, but it does not have a universal definition and it has been described in numerous ways. The most commonly referred to definition is the one from the Brundtland Commission from 1983, which states that sustainability is “Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” In 2003, Keene defined sustainability in its 2003 Community Goals, which states, “If Keene and surrounding town are to continue to be a desirable, affordable place in which to live and work, it is essential that there be a proper balance among the factors that make up our quality of life – why people enjoy living here. These factors can be summarized as: Environmental quality, Economic vitality, and social Equity, and are referred to as the three “E’s” of a healthy and sustainable community. The goals that are set forth herein are intended to preserve all the best of our region and to embrace participatory democracy, which will enhance its vitality and stability for the future.” Essentially, what the community said in 2003 and reiterated throughout this master planning process is that there are no trade-offs between these areas (e.g., economic growth or environmental health, development or resource protection); sustainability optimizes all three.

Community Sustainability

A truly sustainable community is one that takes a long-range view, balancing and integrating economic, environmental, social, and physical considerations within its local decision-making. Achieving a sustainable community requires dedication throughout the city – municipal departments, citizens, businesses and organizations – to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It means coordinating efforts to use resources efficiently, reduce waste, and prevent pollution and environmental impacts. It means taking into account our shared objectives to achieve our community’s vision for a healthy community, continued high quality of life, and a vibrant economy.

Over the last decade, Keene has worked to address sustainability through measures to lower greenhouse gas emissions and increase community resiliency to the expected impacts of a changing climate. By addressing climate change through collaborative planning and action, the community can foster long-term environmental, social, and economic vitality within Keene and the Monadnock Region.



A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.

Aldo Leopold (1886-1948)

The Plan

This plan focuses on the goal of achieving community sustainability. Since this goal requires many different stakeholders, it is recommended that a Sustainability Commission be created that includes representation from various stakeholders throughout the community to monitor progress on sustainability efforts across sectors such as land use, housing, open space, public health, alternative transportation, water quality, air quality, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and financial sustainability, and to report that progress to local decision-makers.



You can't rely on bringing people downtown, you have to put them there.

Jane Jacobs, [The Death and Life of Great American Cities](#)

Downtown

Keene's downtown is the heart of the region, providing all residents access to local, county and state services. It is a central gathering place and the most visible representation of the community to visitors. With very little, easily developable, land left within the community, the downtown offers an opportunity for increased densities and expansion of a sustainable mix of uses.

Sustaining the vibrancy of downtown is vital to achieving a sustainable community because it:

- Establishes our community's overall identity and reflects our appreciation of Keene's architectural and cultural history
- Provides convenient opportunities and options for residents and visitors to access goods, services, arts, cultural and educational resources as well as recreational opportunities
- Creates jobs and incubates small businesses
- Supports social interaction, building community spirit
- Reduces sprawl and the inefficient use of resources



MIKAELA ENGERT

The Plan



MIKAELA ENGERT

► Downtown Strategies

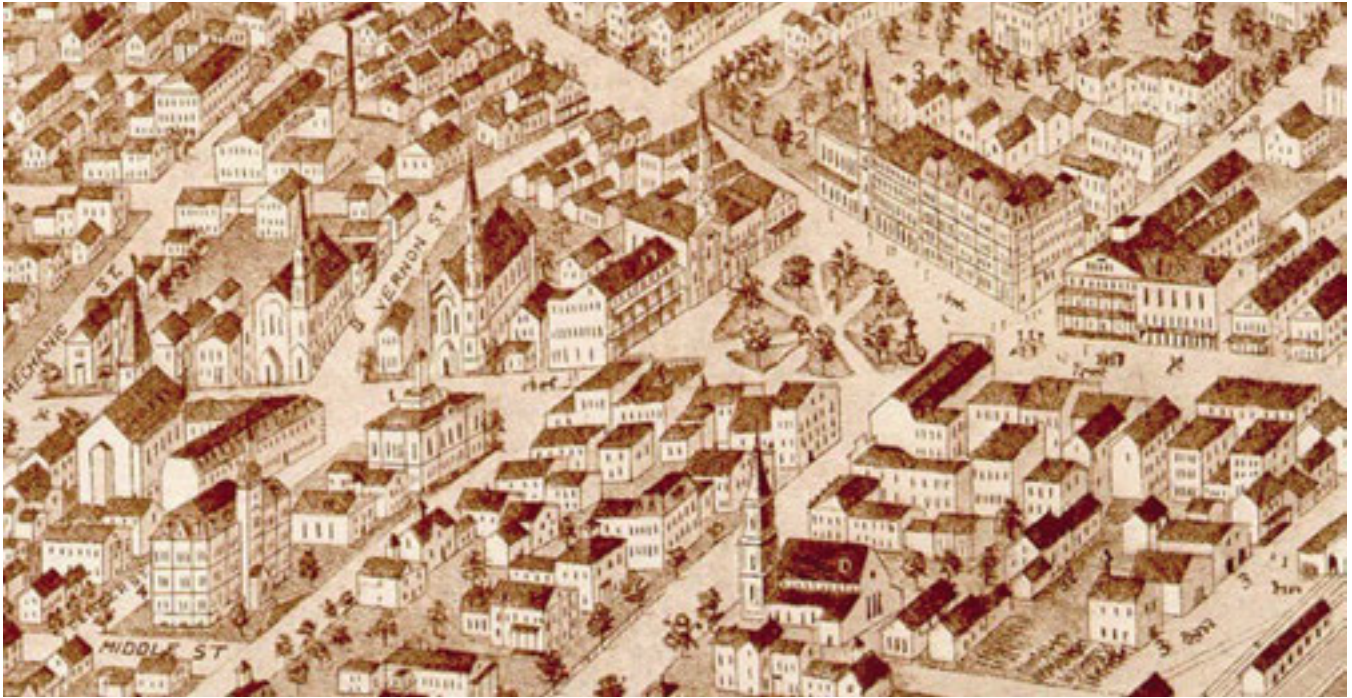
Infill Development

Community members recognized opportunity to foster new downtown development – specifically, redevelopment and expansion of the existing downtown building pattern for the Gilbo Avenue area between Main Street and School Street. Many community members are concerned that potential development in this area might not reflect the downtown’s existing built pattern. Opportunity to incorporate streetscape amenities along the Gilbo Avenue right of way was also a high priority to continue the feel of Keene’s Main Street. For any infill development downtown, including but not limited to Gilbo Avenue, the community desires redevelopment that:

- Is similar to Keene’s traditional downtown streetscape layout and massing of buildings on upper Main Street
- Incorporates wide sidewalks
- Includes streetscape amenities such as street trees, benches, rain gardens, traffic calming bump-outs, pocket parks, etc
- Supports a high level of pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity through effective use of bike lanes and pathways
- Allows for a mix of uses that includes retail, commercial, institutional, and residential components
- Increases density within the downtown core, fostering downtown vibrancy and supporting community goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create a walkable and bikeable community, encourage growth within the 9/10/12 Bypass, and protect valuable open space resources (such as Keene’s hillsides for their visual aesthetic and flood mitigation characteristics)

Other areas within the downtown core that could accommodate infill development include the Emerald Street and Railroad Square area, and areas around Winchester, Marlboro and West streets.

The Plan



Architectural Character

The architecture of buildings in Keene's downtown reflects the history, personality and qualities of the community and the businesses that inhabit them. In discussions with citizens regarding the architectural style for future downtown buildings, a few key points emerged.

- New buildings should not be homogeneous. Avoid a generic development feel and create individual buildings with a distinct character.
- New buildings in downtown should be made from quality materials that are durable and do not become blighted over a short period of time.
- Architecture can and should be contemporary and elegant. However, it also needs to be rooted in Keene's local aesthetic, with the influence of contemporary design and sustainable innovation creating a balance between old and new and helping maintain the integrity of the built environment.
- Character-defining features of historic buildings should be preserved and used to influence the design of new buildings.

The Plan

Massing & Human Scale

Buildings define both their internal and external environments. They define the way the community's urban outdoor environment looks and feels to people as they walk down the street. As such, new buildings in the downtown should be positioned to support a human scale. Moving building frontage up to the sidewalk in redevelopment areas of the downtown creates a "street wall" that encloses and focuses street and sidewalk activity.

Building height in downtown was discussed a number of times by participants. Keene used to have a denser, much taller downtown, with buildings of 4 to 7 stories in height lining nearly all of Main Street. A combination of 3 to 7 story buildings that emulates the traditional downtown pattern of Central Square would balance the desire to maintain Keene's small town feel with the goals of focusing development into existing developed areas and respecting Keene's history and the current built environment. This combination should be a goal of future redevelopment.



The Plan



R. LANDRY

Downtown Vibrancy

Keene has a long-standing reputation for having an exciting, active downtown that supports a wide variety of uses. As downtown businesses come and go, it is important that the community encourage an array of businesses that provide basic needs for the community and facilitate pedestrian activity, along with a variety of residential uses. The placement of those uses on first, second or higher floors within a building are also important to maintaining vibrancy. Retail and services businesses should continue to be placed on the first floor, with office and residential on the upper floors, in order to maintain walkability and support downtown as a destination.

Residential development is an increasingly prominent part of redevelopment in downtown Keene. Redevelopment that includes apartments, lofts, condos, and live/work scenarios can work well in downtown areas, and as developers seek ways to build in Keene, these types of housing could provide Keene with a more consistent street life and sustainable economy. This type of living is attractive to a young demographic, as well as executives, and will help attract new talent to the area. A diversity of housing types is important to maximizing the community's appeal to all ages.

The Plan



Artistic, Cultural, Educational, Institutional and Entertainment Uses

These uses play an increasingly important role in the vibrancy of our downtown and should be supported. The downtown has already lost two important “anchor” uses to the community’s suburban fringe, presenting a significant threat to the downtown’s continued vibrancy. A specific plan for downtown redevelopment sites should be created to guide potential developers. Appropriate redevelopment of this area would include a mix of uses that are consistent with the downtown including commercial, retail, and housing.

The downtown has opportunities to strengthen visitor and entertainment activity by creating visual and performing-arts uses and facilities that meet the needs of the arts and cultural community.

The Plan

Signage & Wayfinding

Advertising and commercial uses aside, signs act as a navigational system for people finding their way around Keene. Signage in Keene should adhere to the community goal of being a charming, small New England town.

Signage should be clear, attractive and apparent, but not overwhelming. Pedestrian-scaled signage that is part of a formal wayfinding system should be encouraged in the downtown core to help people find their way around downtown and to side-street businesses. Sign materials should be complementary and consistent with the area's architecture.

As part of a comprehensive revision resulting from this master plan, land-use regulations dealing with signs should strive to allow individual expression and adequate advertising for businesses. This should be balanced with the goal of maintaining the charm of downtown.

An effective wayfinding system should be developed that allows people to find shops, trail linkages and other points of interest within the community. This system should be consistent in design and clear in purpose. Collaboration with local artists, health, cultural and historical organizations to create this program should be considered.



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The Plan



Parking

Parking is a contentious issue, and the general consensus among the community was that there is not enough downtown parking. In order to achieve goals of creating a walkable community, the city and community will need to evaluate and devise a strategy to address parking.

On-street parking should continue to be incorporated to the greatest extent possible. On-street parking is convenient because it is located closer to storefronts and it enriches downtown areas by focusing pedestrian activity on the sidewalk. On-street parking also helps calm traffic. As redevelopment occurs in the downtown, and specifically along Gilbo Avenue, on-street parking should be incorporated into the streetscape design.

Structured parking facilities should be preferred over the creation of additional surface lots. Such facilities should be strategically located throughout the downtown to support the recommendation in the 2002 Transportation Master Plan that Keene should be a park-and-walk community that values pedestrian and bicyclists primarily and automobiles secondarily. These parking facilities should also include a mix of uses if any portion of the facility defines the streetscape, in order to ensure a vibrant and human-scaled streetscape.

Surface parking lots increase the amount of impervious surfaces and stormwater runoff and should be strongly discouraged. They also create gaps in the urban fabric, counteracting the massing strategies that define the downtown area. However, surface parking lots can be appropriate if the sizes of these lots are scaled down, creating smaller parking areas tucked behind buildings.

Keene is at a great advantage because all downtown parking needs can be met through linkages to bicycle, walking and transit routes, and by providing a diversity of parking options.

The Plan

Streetscape

Keene's downtown is the most visible, walkable area in the community, so it is important that the streetscape design continue to communicate and enhance that character. The provision of a streetscape with generous sidewalks, attractive lighting, street trees and plantings, and a variety of street furniture creates a welcoming atmosphere for pedestrians and provides visual cues about downtown.

Stormwater best management practices (BMPs) and native plantings should be integrated into the landscaping to display Keene's sustainable vision. Incorporation of BMPs throughout downtown as well as in redeveloped areas will help create a walkable community and creatively manage stormwater runoff.

Street trees and other plantings are part of Keene's larger green infrastructure network formed by parks and green corridors. They enhance the aesthetics of the street by defining travel corridors. Street trees also make sidewalks 5 to 15 degrees cooler, increasing both the comfort of the space and the life of concrete and asphalt pavement. Trees reduce the negative health effects of vehicle pollution and have been shown to reduce blood pressure and improve overall emotional health. Members of the community feel strongly about providing street trees, seeing them as a link to Keene's history as the "Elm City," when elm trees were pervasive throughout the community. The city should expand its existing tree program into a full urban forestry program.

A healthy mix of pedestrian and vehicular activity is another indicator of a vibrant downtown. Though the urge to firmly separate these activities is strong, in great civic spaces these uses often overlap. Keene's Central Square is an example of this juxtaposition.

Pedestrians should not feel that one side of the street is isolated from the other and should feel safe crossing downtown streets. Keene has already successfully implemented traffic-calming techniques in the downtown core by including corner bulb-outs and clearly marked crosswalks, and by slightly narrowing driving lanes. Expanding this infrastructure to other areas of downtown will help create a walkable community.



The Plan

Central Square One of Top 10 Great Public Spaces

Keene, NH – The American Planning Association (APA) announced that Central Square has been designated one of 10 Great Public Spaces for 2009 by APA's Great Places in America program. APA Great Places exemplify exceptional character and highlight the role planners and planning play in creating communities of lasting value.

The picturesque Central Square, with a historic New England church as its backdrop, is singled out by APA for its centuries-long role of being at the center of civic affairs in Keene socially, economically and politically. At the same time, it has been important to Keene spatially given its physical location adjoining or within close proximity to the city's major roads and regional trail system.

Through Great Places in America, APA recognizes unique and authentic characteristics found in three essential components of all communities — streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces. APA Great Places offer better choices for where and how people work and live everyday, places that are enjoyable, safe, and desirable. Such places are defined by many characteristics, including architectural features, accessibility, functionality, and community involvement.

“At the center of Keene’s civic, economic and social activity, Central Square shows us the importance of planning public spaces into communities,” said APA Chief Executive Officer Paul Farmer, FAICP. “One of the most important roles of a public space is to bring a community together and Central Square does just that -- not only during special events such as the annual Pumpkin Fest, but throughout the year,” he added.

The idea for Central Square did not come from a formal plan, but evolved over time as the community’s needs and resources allowed. In 1828, when a meetinghouse located at the site was torn down, the idea for the town common took root. Despite being a dusty area crossed by roads in every direction, the common was a popular meeting place and served as a public market of sorts.

Over the years, improvements have been made leading up to the present day Central Square that features a bandstand, fountain, benches, trees, seasonal plantings, and monuments. Today the square remains what it started out as – the heart of the community.

The Plan

Housing

Housing in Keene is, and will remain, a fundamental challenge for the community as costs of community services continue to increase and Keene's reliance on property taxes places a growing financial burden on its residents and businesses. The community's ability to improve upon its existing housing stock, create new housing opportunities across all incomes and lifestyles, balance the mix of rental and owner-occupied units, and meet sustainability and energy efficiency goals will continue to be a determining factor in Keene's – and the region's – health and prosperity. Overall, housing must be conveniently located, healthy, safe, and affordable.



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Quality housing is vital to achieving a sustainable community because it:

- Attracts and retains a skilled and educated workforce
- Denotes strong and safe neighborhoods
- Contributes to the region's overall quality of life
- Contributes to the community's tax base
- Reduces the community's contribution to global climate change and uses resources efficiently

► Housing Strategies

Housing Design and Quality

The design of housing throughout Keene has a direct impact on the long-term safety, efficiency, diversity and appearance of the community. Given that individual budgets often dictate construction decisions, several techniques and guidelines can help improve the appearance and performance of Keene's housing stock.

It is recommended that Keene create guidelines (or standards for areas where they could be beneficial) for residential and residential mixed use areas identified on the Future Land Use Map that include the following components: safety and durability, housing efficiency and sustainable green building guidelines, and human- vs. auto-oriented design. These guidelines would also illustrate the desirable range of housing types. Other options to consider are homeowner education programs on the above topics, as well as for maintenance, weatherization and energy conservation, in conjunction with a strong life/safety enforcement program to ensure houses do not deteriorate to a point where they become hazardous to the community. Homeowner incentive programs to maintain properties are another option.

The Plan

Provide a Balanced and Diverse Housing Stock

Our community seeks to have a balanced and diverse housing stock, providing choice in housing types, affordability, location, and density. Keene's current balance of owner and renter units is skewed towards rental. Throughout neighborhoods, rental units are serving large portions of the student population. In order to ensure housing choice and opportunity for all citizens, the community and city leadership will need to encourage and support homeownership and rental opportunities through existing partners that provide appropriate, well-maintained, quality, safe, efficient housing for all portions of Keene's demographic, particularly for its families and professionals.

Since most of the community's available residentially zoned land has been developed, housing needs have to be addressed through infill development and the rehabilitation and redevelopment of existing stock. Focus should be placed on providing housing choices that meet the needs of young professionals, artists, and executives, which were identified as a current gap in Keene's housing stock.

Great care must be taken to ensure that existing, stable and livable neighborhoods are not made unstable or unlivable through the addition of significant new housing development. Infill or redevelopment within existing neighborhoods should be built at a scale, density and character consistent with the existing development patterns. For example, in-law apartments or the conversion of a large home into condominiums can fit seamlessly into the built environment, without drastic change to the outward appearance; i.e., the large home could still appear to be a single-family residence. This type of residential infill allows for a change in density, not a change in intensity of residential use, which in turn supports the community's goal to create a compact, walkable community and provide choice in housing. Areas suitable for future housing growth include downtown and certain surrounding neighborhoods.

Since the community is not expected to grow substantially in population and its housing needs will remain similar to current levels, creative housing solutions, if done well, can contribute greatly to keeping the small-town feel of Keene, while providing more housing choice and allowing people to live, work and play in the same community.



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A house can have integrity, just like a person. Ayn Rand

The Plan

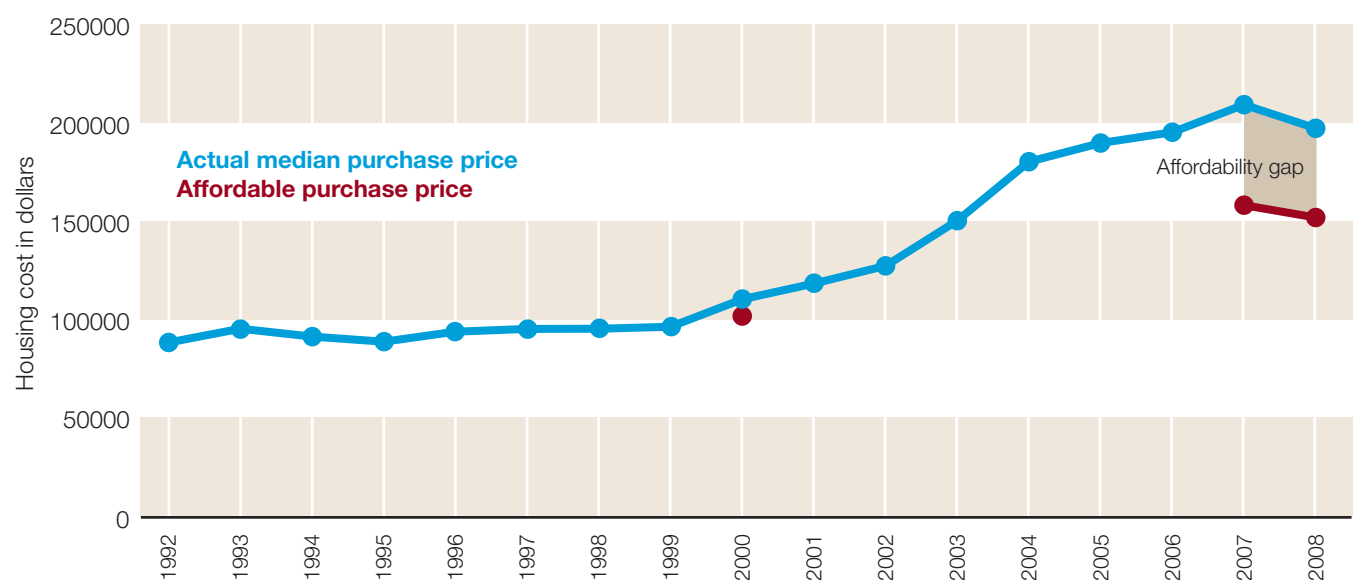
Affordable Housing

Despite the current downturn in the housing market, Keene's home and rental prices have remained stable, lowering slightly. According to the U.S. Census, the median home-sale price in Keene increased by 110% over the last 10 years, or 7.7% annually (\$95,000 to \$200,000). In comparison, the county and the state median home-sale price increased annually by 7.4% and 6.9%, respectively. The "affordability gap" – the difference between the actual median home-price cost and what a median-income household can afford – increased from approximately \$10,000 in 2000 to approximately \$50,000 in 2007. There is a growing gap between what people earn and what they can afford for a home (Figure 6).

The rental survey for 2008 performed by the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority indicates that the community's median rent exceeded the state's median rent across all bedroom sizes. For example, the community's median for a two-bedroom unit (\$1,052) now approaches that of Hillsborough County (\$1,082), which has the highest median rate in the state. Potential renters would require a combined total income of nearly \$50,000 for this to be affordable.

To address this, the community and the city should support creative means to expand affordable workforce housing. For example, changes in land-use regulations can assist in creating a market for developers to build this type of housing through the provision of density bonuses or other incentives. Adding inclusionary housing into requirements for new residential development may be another way to support affordable housing construction. Creative financing means, such as creation of an affordable workforce housing fund, could also be explored. Regardless, community stakeholders, such as local employers, developers, agencies, and city leadership, should devise a specific strategy to address the community's housing needs.

Figure 6 Housing Affordability in Keene, 1992–2008



Source: U.S. Census. 2008. 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table S1901. Income in the Past 12 Months (In 2008 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars). http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=16000US3339300&-qr_name=ACS_2008_3Y

The Plan

Student Housing

Discussions with municipal officials, housing experts, neighborhood representatives and college faculty indicated that rental housing in Keene, particularly for students, is perhaps the community's most pressing housing issue. As home ownership rates have changed in the community, the conversion of owner-occupied homes into commercial rental properties has been clearly documented. This has eroded the character of several neighborhoods, resulted in overcrowding in some cases, and raised concerns about how best to control and direct the strong demand for student rental housing.

Housing that meets the needs of undergraduates and graduate students should be supported in order to address neighborhood quality-of-life issues as well as the provision of housing for Keene's workforce.

Energy Efficient and Sustainable Housing

A high standard of environmentally sustainable design features for new, retrofitted and rehabilitated residential uses should be established. These standards should then be incorporated into the development review and building permit processes. City code should be reviewed to ensure that it supports the community's energy efficiency goals. When federal, state or similar funding for housing is used, these standards should be applied.



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Historic Resources and Cultural Heritage

Cultural and historic resources include many elements: buildings and structures; scenic roads and rural landscapes; important institutions; urban streetscapes; and other character-defining landmarks. Keene’s historic resources and rich cultural heritage support the community’s quality of life and its perception by visitors, those looking to relocate to the community, and those doing business here.

Since Keene’s older buildings, structures, bridges, stone walls, rail trails, parks and other cultural resources are located throughout the community, we are able to learn from and build upon the influence of our history in order to ensure a culturally rich quality of life. As the community changes over time and new buildings and structures are constructed, Keene’s historic buildings and traditional architectural identity will become even more vital. It is imperative to the community’s success and quality of life that historic areas are protected and preserved as much as possible, while also adaptively reusing historic resources for modern, sustainable uses.

■ **If you would understand anything, observe its beginning and its development.** Aristotle

Recognizing downtown’s importance as the core of the community’s heritage; Keene has made special efforts to preserve what is one of the most intact historic downtowns in the state, region and possibly the country. The Historic District Commission reviews changes to the Downtown Historic District to make sure that any alterations are consistent with the district’s character.

In addition to the protection of Keene’s heritage, preservation of historic resources is an integral part of achieving long-term community sustainability. Traditionally, historic buildings have not been viewed as “environmentally sound” structures since older buildings are often assumed to be inefficient. However, restoring and renovating these buildings is more environmentally sound and energy efficient than building new ones, especially after they are retrofitted with energy upgrades. In addition, the dense development pattern indicative of many historic downtowns and neighborhoods promotes walkability and allows residents to be automobile-independent.

The Plan



► Historic Resources and Cultural Heritage Strategies

Economic Development and Historic Preservation

Historic preservation is important to citizens and benefits Keene in many ways. Economic benefits include those associated with the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings and heritage tourism, as well as the impact that historic designation has on neighborhood character and property values. Other benefits include preservation's contribution to downtown economic development and revitalization as well as supporting the community's sense of place.

The identification and recruitment of users for the community's historic buildings in downtown is important to the city's economic development. Through economic development partnerships, committees and organizations, Keene should seek to attract businesses that will continue to invigorate the downtown area and showcase the community's heritage – inclusive of redevelopment of the Middle School, YMCA, Colony Mill and Center at Keene. The ability to preserve the community's most important historic and cultural spaces, transforming them into prime business, residential and destination areas with a concerted economic and quality-of-life strategy, will continue to make Keene the kind of community where people want to invest, work, live, and play.

Energy/Green Building Guidelines for Historic Buildings

Modern technologies and weatherization procedures allow significant improvements to buildings without compromising their historic value. With that said, it is important to strive for whole-building solutions that address each building's unique situation in an intelligent, cost-effective and historically sensitive manner.

A program of education and technical assistance should be created that would guide developers and owners in implementing green and energy-saving improvements while also preserving, protecting and enhancing a building's historical features. The program would also help property owners seek grants to perform these improvements.

A guidebook should be created that outlines the defining features of Keene's historic areas, older neighborhoods, buildings, streetscapes, public spaces and landscaping. It should include guidelines on how to protect, restore, repair and maintain existing buildings and features, as well as how new development is designed to be sensitive to traditional designs. It should provide information about green building and ways to reduce environmental impacts that are specific to historic resources.

The Plan

Adaptive Reuse

Respectful adaptive reuse of historic properties should be a high priority for redevelopment of historic structures, especially in historically significant areas of the community, such as downtown, or industrial areas. Efforts to preserve and revitalize historic buildings can be challenging because of modern code requirements as well as structural problems resulting from past uses, potential contamination or poor maintenance.

Beyond the successful brownfields remediation program, Keene needs to ensure that developers are able to access a mix of financing options while meeting the community's goals for green building, adaptive reuse, historic preservation and safety. Development incentives should also be considered that support reuse and preservation of buildings. Working with economic development organizations, a specific strategy should be created to redevelop existing buildings in a manner that meets the community's needs for affordable housing, high-quality/high-skill jobs, mixed-use development and creative-arts spaces.

■ **New needs need new techniques.**
Jackson Pollock

Heritage Planning & Historic Preservation

The Heritage Commission is charged with researching and publishing property histories and recommending the establishment of historic districts. The Downtown Historic District, the first one established, is a local historic district administered by local regulations and review by the Historic District Commission. Consideration should be given to also listing the Downtown Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places to provide the honor and recognition that accompanies listing on the register. Unlike local districts, a National Register district is purely honorary and does not provide any regulation or oversight unless federal funding is provided.

In addition to downtown, the Heritage Commission is interested in protecting the historic scenic gateways into downtown.

Court Street, Washington Street and the south end

of Main Street all boast an abundance of historic homes and buildings that should be protected to preserve the character of these individual neighborhoods. Each of these areas should become a local historic district, a National Register district, or both.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CHESHIRE COUNTY

The Plan



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CHESHIRE COUNTY

Beyond the creation of formal historic districts, the Heritage Commission and the city should work with neighborhood groups to explore the need and desire to develop “neighborhood heritage districts” to oversee and affect the changes taking place in our historic residential neighborhoods as they undergo rapid evolution and demographic changes.

Historic preservation should also be further integrated into other local land-use and building regulations. Potential impact on historical and cultural resources needs to be taken into account in decisions about economic development, building permits and compliance, infrastructure, land-use planning, and housing. Local government and community organizations must coordinate and support an effective historic preservation program.

Arts, Cultural, Environmental Heritage Tourism Program

The community should develop a program of annual events and activities that highlight the historical, educational, ecological, recreational, spiritual, physical and social heritage of our community. This would promote educational and entertainment opportunities for both residents and visitors. Cultural resources and destinations should be included in a community wayfinding program, with signs and maps highlighting public cultural attractions. Information should be compiled on arts and cultural opportunities and used to create a specific tourism and marketing strategy. The community should celebrate National Preservation Month and Week to create activities that promote the importance of preservation. An historic-plaque program will help create awareness and educational opportunities as well as memorializing and recognizing people, places and events for their cultural significance.

The recent *Americans for the Arts Economic Impact Study of Arts and Culture in the Monadnock Region* should be used to promote the community, create special events and festivals, and identify other economic revitalization strategies. Programs that attract writers, artists, historians, or other arts and cultural professionals to the area should be created, expanded upon if they already exist, and should be promoted widely as part of a collaborative educational and economic strategy.

The Plan



A Walkable Community

Keene already has a strong foundation as a walkable community. Much of the downtown has traditionally been walkable through its mix of land uses and provision of sidewalks, connections to trails, and close proximity of goods, services, housing, and employment. However, walkability is limited to that area, and much work remains to create a truly walkable community outside of downtown. To create and support walkability, sidewalks and crosswalks need to be improved in more areas than just the downtown. Traffic along major corridors needs to be calmed and improvements to safety for pedestrians and bicyclists need to be made to support greater density. In addition, mixed uses in neighborhoods should be encouraged and community connections between neighborhood mixed-use areas, schools and other amenities provided.

The bottom line is that people must have a place to walk to and a way to walk there. In the downtown core and surrounding downtown neighborhoods, walkability is tied directly to streetscape amenities. In other parts of the community, it will have a different focus, perhaps through the connection of suburban neighborhoods to trail systems and schools.

The Plan



► Walkability Strategies

Evaluation and Maintenance of Sidewalk/Pathway System

High priority should be placed on fixing sidewalks that have fallen into disrepair. Sidewalks should be installed first in areas that will fill in gaps in the sidewalk network within the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. These neighborhoods should have sidewalks on both sides of the street, where street width permits. Maintenance of sidewalks and trails is key to promoting walking and bicycling.

Proper maintenance, even in winter, is a current issue. While budgets are a limiting factor in sidewalk maintenance, a long-term goal should be to identify major connections that will, at a minimum, be cleared consistently throughout the winter. This will ensure a basic level of year-round connectivity.

Connectivity

Throughout the visioning and master planning process, a goal that arose time and time again was that of achieving a high level of connectivity between where people live, work and play. The community recognizes that a true community is created when people can meet and relate to each other in public spaces, which is more likely to happen in a place that has a compact mix of connected activities.

As Keene changes over time and infill development occurs throughout the community, great care should be taken to ensure that related uses and projects are combined or located near each other, within the quarter-mile radius commonly used to verify community walkability. Creating compact development in and near existing developed areas will encourage community interaction and enhance the viability and sustainability of adjacent businesses and civic services.

It is imperative that Keene work to alleviate connectivity gaps in the existing sidewalk network, as well as in trails, greenways, crosswalks, bicycle lanes, and other bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The Plan



Street Crossings

A key component of walkability is getting people across streets through the appropriate location and use of crosswalks, bridges, pathways or other safe and efficient crossings. In areas of high pedestrian and automobile traffic (downtown, school areas, commercial corridors and gateways, etc.) bump-outs not only make crossing easier for pedestrians, but they provide a visual cue to drivers to look for people in the crosswalk.

Encourage Walking and Bicycling

The community and city can encourage walking and bicycling via the use of existing walking tours, developing a wayfinding system with maps, participating in the Safe Routes to School program, supporting various pedestrian and bicyclist organizations, and enforcing pedestrian laws vigilantly. To further educate and promote alternative modes of transportation, the community can expand its walking tours to include formal tours for bicyclists.

In addition, the strategic placement of amenities such as benches, bicycle racks and lockers throughout the community will also encourage walking and bicycling. Part of this effort is already underway through the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee as well as the community's and SAU 29's participation in the Safe Routes to School program, which identifies safe routes to and from school, assists in education and awareness for both students and parents, and assists in making physical improvements to sidewalks within the vicinity of schools. This strategy directly links to Vision 2020 goal 4.6: Increase path infrastructure to promote active living.

The Plan



Green Building

In order for Keene to meet its goal to become a sustainable community and support the State's Smart Growth Principles, buildings designed and built in the community must fall within the guidelines of this plan. Doing so will foster a walkable mixed-use community by locating services, jobs, homes, arts and culture, and other community amenities within walking distance of each other. Buildings must strive to be healthy, efficient, safe and beautiful.

Buildings in Keene should be efficient and appropriately sized for their environment. They should be designed and built to last 100 years or more. Developers interested in Keene should take note that this community wants buildings that incorporate sustainable site and building design into their plans, and they should be willing to work with professionals in the sustainable design and construction fields.

It is strongly recommended that the city and community create and adopt its own standards for green building, create programs to educate developers on green building, and devise incentives to promote green building in areas of the community ripe for redevelopment.

► Green Building Strategies

Sustainable Materials

Sustainable materials reduce the negative environmental and economic impacts of their manufacture and transport. Lumber from managed forests is considered more sustainable than lumber from virgin forest. Locally harvested lumber is considered more sustainable than lumber from outside the region. The nature of the material, its longevity, and the way it is made, packaged, and transported all contribute to its overall level of sustainability. It should be a priority to use the most sustainable materials and resources whenever possible, in both public and private projects.

Recycled/Reclaimed Materials

Use of recycled materials should also be a high priority for development in the community. Recycled and reclaimed materials are those that have been previously used. They may be directly reused, or they may be new material that includes reprocessed components. Bricks and large timbers are often reused directly in other projects, while park benches or bollards can be made from reprocessed plastics.

■
**We shape our
buildings;
thereafter they
shape us.**
Winston Churchill

The Plan



Local and Regional Goods and Materials

New England has a reputation for innovation, pragmatism and self-sufficiency. New Englanders know that local and regionally available materials and goods are important for the region's economy and overall sustainability. Local and regional products are more sustainable than foreign products because they take less energy to package and transport, which in turn means these goods have a lower carbon footprint. Sourcing locally and regionally has social benefits as well; goods and materials can cost less, and the money spent on them stays in the community and region through wages, taxes, mortgages, and other spending – which all helps to build a local, living economy.

Making use of local and regional materials and products will help to create the type of niche industry and high-paying, skilled jobs identified as part of the community visioning process. A great opportunity

The Monadnock Local Living Economy Project is an emerging community project of the Hannah Grimes Center that will encourage separate initiatives to work collectively to improve our region's community and economy.

What does the Local Living Economy mean?

In November 2009, a group of community members gathered to explore the concept of a Local Living Economy. The BALLE Network has its own definition, but what does it mean to us – citizens of the Monadnock Region?

Here is a small sample of ideas shared.

The Monadnock Local Living Economy is a place where:

- All citizens can have a great quality of life.
- Our basic needs are met within our community and region.
- Individuals realize that they are beyond the worth of their jobs.
- Leadership helps identify common ground and overarching community goals.
- Citizens are creating a new definition of what our needs really are.
- Individuals and banks are investing in social capital.
- We are working cooperatively and collaboratively.
- All citizens are engaged and feel included.
- Celebrating our community.
- We are thinking of our community as a system.

For more information on Monadnock Local Living Economy, go to <http://www.hannahgrimes.com/lle>

The Plan

exists to incentivize new businesses and support our entrepreneurial spirit – an opportunity that has and will continue to grow our economy locally and beyond.

Green Building Guidelines and Standards

The following principles and techniques can help serve as a guide for improving the durability, quality and energy efficiency of projects of all uses and scales. These are a starting point for incorporation of green building into local land-use regulations, as the field of green building is constantly expanding and identifying new products, technologies and methods.

- We should strive to design and construct buildings to last 100 years.
- Programs should be developed to educate owners and occupants of buildings about weatherization, energy conservation, maintenance techniques, operation and maintenance of high-efficiency systems, and other topics, with the goal of improving and maximizing building performance.
- Building design should take into consideration Keene’s climate and natural systems, e.g., snow loads, stormwater management, etc.
- Residential projects should be encouraged to follow green building and energy efficiency guidelines established by the city and community.
- Incorporate day lighting strategies to decrease reliance on electricity.
- Use low-toxicity paints, sealers, carpet, and other materials.



In the not-too-distant future, all development will be green. Developers, builders and buyers will discover that green not only enhances their pocketbooks, but also their health and the quality of their lives. The developers who grasp this first will have an edge in a massive, emerging market. William S. Becker, US Department of Energy

The Plan



Neighborhoods

Over the years, most of Keene’s focus for redevelopment and planning has been on the downtown, available industrial lands and large-scale retail development. Neighborhoods have not received the same level of assessment or action. For this reason, now is the time to assess and plan for the community’s neighborhoods, as conversations on economic vitality and quality of life turn more frequently to issues of maintenance and quality of homes, provision of infrastructure, and availability of a safe, durable and diverse housing stock. While many people see and experience the community mainly through its downtown, our neighborhoods are the foundation for present-day Keene as well as for the Keene of the future.

Our neighborhoods – whether urban, suburban, or rural – provide a variety of opportunities. These include diversity in age, housing choice, income levels, lifestyles, economic opportunities, and transportation connections. There are even opportunities for preservation of culture and heritage in each of these neighborhood areas.

► Neighborhood Strategies

Recognizing that each of Keene’s neighborhoods has its own distinctive issues, plans should be developed for each one, beginning with those that are in need of revitalization or redevelopment or that have an existing and active neighborhood association, such as the North Central Neighborhood Group (NOCE) and Southeast Keene Neighborhood Group (SEKNG). Plans should attempt to develop each neighborhood’s identity and vision, and should include actions that residents, city leadership and other stakeholders can take collectively or individually to promote cohesiveness and a feeling of investment, or to deal effectively with neighborhood quality-of-life issues. Neighborhood associations should be created and supported as well.

■ **Don't buy the house, buy the neighborhood.**
Russian proverb

The Plan



Neighborhood Village Activity Centers

Activity centers provide services, goods, jobs, and a sense of community and identity for each neighborhood. Keene already has a number of village activity centers in each neighborhood; ranging in scale from the stand-alone neighborhood store to a grouping of uses, such as a hardware store, food market or deli, professional offices, laundromats, etc. Where possible, these activity areas should be strengthened through redevelopment to provide more neighborhood amenities within walking distance (1/4-mile radius) from homes and appropriately suited to the neighborhood's needs. Zoning in these neighborhoods should be reviewed not only for residential density analysis to ensure a walkable environment, but also to create opportunity for appropriately scaled neighborhood activity centers to establish and thrive. Use of RSA 79-E, a state statute that allows municipalities to offer tax incentives for economic development through building redevelopment, should be explored.

Mixed Uses in Neighborhoods

Each of Keene's neighborhoods should be encouraged to have a mix of uses, not only in the village activity centers, but also in range of housing choice and types. Single-family homes, townhomes, condominiums, apartments, accessory dwelling units, small cottages, etc. – all should be considered for inclusion in Keene's neighborhoods in a manner that fits each neighborhood's scale and density goals. Particular attention should be paid towards mixed uses downtown and in surrounding neighborhoods. The community's land-use regulations need to be reviewed and updated to ensure that this strategy is achievable.

Neighborhood Public Amenities and Urban Design

Besides the creation of village activity centers, neighborhoods should have certain amenities available, such as community gardens, trails, parks, playgrounds, and bus stops for school buses and the City Express.

Design of streets, provision of street trees, neighborhood lighting, on-street parking, protection of historic buildings, creation of neighborhood historic districts, and improvement of the design of the facades of neighborhood businesses all contribute to the attractiveness of the community as a whole. These also spur redevelopment and investment by neighborhood property owners.

The Plan

Neighborhood Schools

During this plan's creation, community members emphasized the importance of Keene's neighborhood elementary schools. Neighborhood schools provide benefits such as walkability, creation of social opportunities and neighborhood networking, and access to community resources. As much as possible, they should remain neighborhood schools. However, as the population of Keene's young children declines, resulting in lower school enrollments, the community will be faced with a conflict between the advantages of neighborhood schools and the desire to keep school taxes low and use educational resources efficiently.

Should some neighborhood schools become available for adaptive reuse, the community should have a strategy in place to guide the use of these buildings in a way that retains their value and contribution to neighborhood quality of life.

Elementary schools in other communities have been repurposed as neighborhood community centers that provide recreational opportunities, some have been used to create new village activity centers and business incubators, and some have been turned into high density, mixed-income housing.



Neighborhood Connections

Increasing neighborhood walkability will be key to achieving overall community walkability. As people walk or ride bicycles more frequently, the reduction in automobile trips will reduce air pollution, increase Keene's air quality, help lower the community's carbon footprint and raise overall public health. Appropriate connections should be provided according to neighborhood location. In urban neighborhoods, a complete sidewalk system with crosswalks, bicycle lanes or extra shoulder space for bicycles should be provided as part of a very high level of connectivity, offering multiple route choices. In suburban neighborhoods, sidewalks and pathways may be limited to major roadways, connecting schools and homes and suburban village activity centers. In rural areas, connectivity may come in the form of regional multi-use trails and wide shoulders along rural routes that are marked for use by cyclists and pedestrians. It may also come in the form of designated footpaths connecting more than one rural residential area. The community should strive to provide the most appropriate scale of connectivity for all neighborhoods.

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Climate Change

Keene has a long and steadfast history of proactively addressing climate change. In April 2000, the community signed onto the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign (CCP), administered by ICLEI–Local Governments for Sustainability. Since agreeing to participate in the campaign, Keene has developed a Local Action Climate Plan to identify ways the greater Keene community can help lower greenhouse gas emissions. The city and community, led by its CCP Committee, has developed processes and implemented projects to ensure that they are on track to meet their greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal of 10% below 1995 levels by 2015. Keene reaffirmed this commitment in its Community Goals of 2003.

Despite the community's and city leadership's commitment to mitigation, Keene is already feeling the impact of a changing climate. From more frequent and worse flooding, to changes in annual snowfall, to the infesta-



tion of non-native plant and animal species, to the increase in high-heat-index days and poor-air-quality days, the community has come to recognize that these changes are affecting the community's built, natural, and social environments.

The current state of the world illustrates that humans emit far more carbon dioxide than natural environmental processes can absorb. It is estimated that if everyone lived like an average American, it would take five Earths to support the amount of carbon emitted into the atmosphere. This imbalance is linked to increasing global temperatures that could dramatically change our landscape, economy and cultural experience of place.

With the goal of becoming a sustainable community, it is important for Keene to continually assess its carbon footprint and identify ways to mitigate as well as adapt to climate change. The community has been and should remain a local, state, national and international example for small communities with limited resources that are looking to address these issues.

The Plan

► Climate Change Strategies

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

One of the most effective tools to understand a community's impact towards global warming is a greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) inventory. This process includes taking an inventory of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e), or greenhouse gas emissions, over a given period of time. Keene completed such an inventory in 2000, using 1995 as a baseline year and set two separate targets: 1) 10% reduction below 1995 levels for the community as a whole and, 2) 20% reduction for municipal emissions.

An update to the 2000 GHG inventory is currently under way and needs to be completed. Once the inventory update is completed, it will be amended to this plan to assist in identifying new reduction targets as well as future actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for both community and municipal emissions. Preliminary analysis from the update process indicates that the largest portion of community emissions is derived from transportation, followed by buildings, which is consistent with the 2000 inventory's conclusions. At this point, one observation can be made – the community must begin to make substantial changes to its transportation, land-use and energy policies in order to effectively reduce overall community emissions in order to meet the reduction targets outlined in the 2004 Climate Action Plan.

Consistent Emissions Inventorying and Reporting

Continued monitoring is essential to the success of Keene's climate program. The GHG inventory process should be formalized within the community and completed at least every two years. An annual report would be helpful, but it is not feasible due to the amount of time necessary to gather the information. Streamlining the information gathering process would help make this effort automatic and reliable. Individual homeowners should be encouraged to do

In 1995, Keene community emissions totaled 204,529 tons of CO₂e. By 2015, without taking any action, the community's emissions were predicted to increase by 26% to 257,716 tons of CO₂e. In order for the community to reach its 10% reduction goal, the community would have to reduce its emissions by 70,860 tons in order to reach the 2015 target level of 184,076 tons of CO₂e. As the community moves forward with its climate program and the GHG inventory update, progress should be measured and new reduction targets established that align with the State's reduction targets.

In 2009, Governor Lynch's Climate Change Policy Task Force recommended that New Hampshire strive to achieve a long-term reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. The goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050 has been adopted by numerous states, cities and organizations. This goal is based on the reductions that climate scientists believe to be necessary to stabilize greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at or below 450 parts per million CO₂. It has been projected that stabilizing the concentrations of greenhouse gases at this level will avoid the most severe and catastrophic potential impacts of climate change.

The Plan

their own carbon footprint calculations through the New England Carbon Challenge. Small businesses can assess their carbon footprint through a local program, the 10 Percent Challenge, and larger businesses can use the skills, tools and expertise offered through the non-profit organization Clean Air – Cool Planet.

Energy Efficiency

We should continue to strive for energy efficiency in all buildings in the community. A combination of standards, policies, and incentive programs will be necessary to create new energy-efficient buildings and update existing ones. Given that nearly 48% of Keene's emissions come from residential and commercial buildings, this could dramatically shift Keene's carbon footprint through simple, easy-to-implement changes in how we build, where we locate buildings, and how energy-efficient buildings are designed. We should pursue the development of a community-wide weatherization program that will provide financial assistance and incentives for homeowners who might not qualify for federal or state weatherization programs.



Renewable Energy

The city and community should actively pursue the integration of renewable, large- and small-scale energy sources, such as wind, solar, and geothermal, into the community's energy mix. City government should continue to pursue federal and state funding for renewable energy projects as well as working with local groups to create renewable-energy incentives for residential and commercial landowners.

Adapting to Climate Change

Adapting is about making choices today to be prepared for the potential changes of tomorrow, and maintaining or improving the community's ability to withstand those changes. These choices could affect the community's energy and food security, air quality, public health, employment opportunities, and overall economic well-being into the future. In 2007, Keene chose to actively address this issue, becoming one of the first communities in the country to create a climate change adaptation plan.

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Taking Steps to Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change

To address the increasing impacts of climate change on the community, the City of Keene has committed to expanding climate protection efforts to include climate adaptation. In 2007, the community engaged in a multi-stakeholder progressive action planning process designed to create a Climate Resilient Community. The Adaptation Action Plan is the result of that process and provides recommendations for community policies, goals, and targets to improve preparedness in the face of predicted climate impacts. The first step Keene took in this process was to partner with ICLEI and join the Climate Resilient Communities™ (CRC) pilot program, the first of five U.S. cities to do so.

Many strategies from the 2007 Adaptation Plan have been included in this master plan with the goal of actively increasing the community's overall resiliency. At the same time, implementing these strategies will support community goals like reducing energy use, lowering carbon footprint, creating a healthier community, and fostering a highly adaptable place to live.

Adapting to climate change is a multi-faceted task. It includes planning to reduce the risks while also identifying and capturing opportunities. It includes adjustments in the built, natural, and social environments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; creating more energy efficient buildings; ensuring a healthy food supply; and much more. And it includes making existing infrastructure and policies more resilient to climate impacts.

The Plan

Economic Development

Residents recognize the need for a strong and diverse economy in order to grow and prosper and enhance Keene's quality of life. With its roots in an industrial past, Keene looks to retain the best of these traditional economic drivers while positioning itself for new economic opportunities. Indeed, Keene's long-range goal from 1993 is still relevant: *To continue as the economic center for the region by encouraging economic development that will increase employment opportunities and expand our tax base while maintaining quality of life.* However, Keene does not desire to see economic development solely for its own sake. The community wants to balance its traditional economic sectors with new opportunities, such as green technology and sustainable manufacturing with a focus on local ownership. Community members want new businesses in Keene that support the community's goals for social, financial and environmental responsibility.



A primary strength of Keene's economy is diversity. Large and small businesses, institutions such as Keene State College, Cheshire Medical Center/Dartmouth Hitchcock Keene, and Antioch University New England, government, and non-profits all contribute to economic resilience. Keene does not rely on one business sector for jobs and economic growth, a fact that was recognized as contributing to a designation by Forbes Magazine in 2008 as the third-least economically vulnerable micropolitan town in America. Maintaining and expanding this diversity is central to strengthening Keene's economic position.

New jobs must be a primary objective for Keene and the region. High quality jobs that pay a living wage are viewed as imperative to Keene's long term economic sustainability, expansion of tax base and lessening the tax burden on homeowners. Growing the job base will require a multi-pronged approach including fostering local start-up companies, retaining and expanding existing firms, and new business recruitment. All of these need strong attention and new programs to succeed.

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Sixty-five percent of all businesses in Keene are firms with fewer than 10 employees, and small businesses including sole proprietorships are likely to remain the predominant form of local business. Growth of small businesses must be a key aspect of Keene’s economic development strategy, and Keene should consider promoting itself as a New England region “Entrepreneur Center.”

Of all new jobs generated since 2000, retail jobs have seen the greatest increase primarily due to the opening of Monadnock Marketplace. Most of these jobs provide a modest wage with limited benefits and little chance for advancement. The low wage scale of retail jobs makes living in Keene difficult due to high housing costs. As a result, employees are forced to commute to Keene from outlying towns, increasing roadway congestion and carbon emissions and decreasing the region’s overall sustainability. High-quality jobs which pay a living wage have the opposite effect and help preserve Keene’s long-term quality of life.

Crafts people, artisans, green-collar jobs, health care, finance, eco-technology and sustainable manufacturing, research, product design, software development, technical services and renewable energy are all business types that could emerge within the community along with a shift toward sustainable thinking. Stimulating these business types will create healthy commerce and pay dividends toward the long-term economic health of the region.

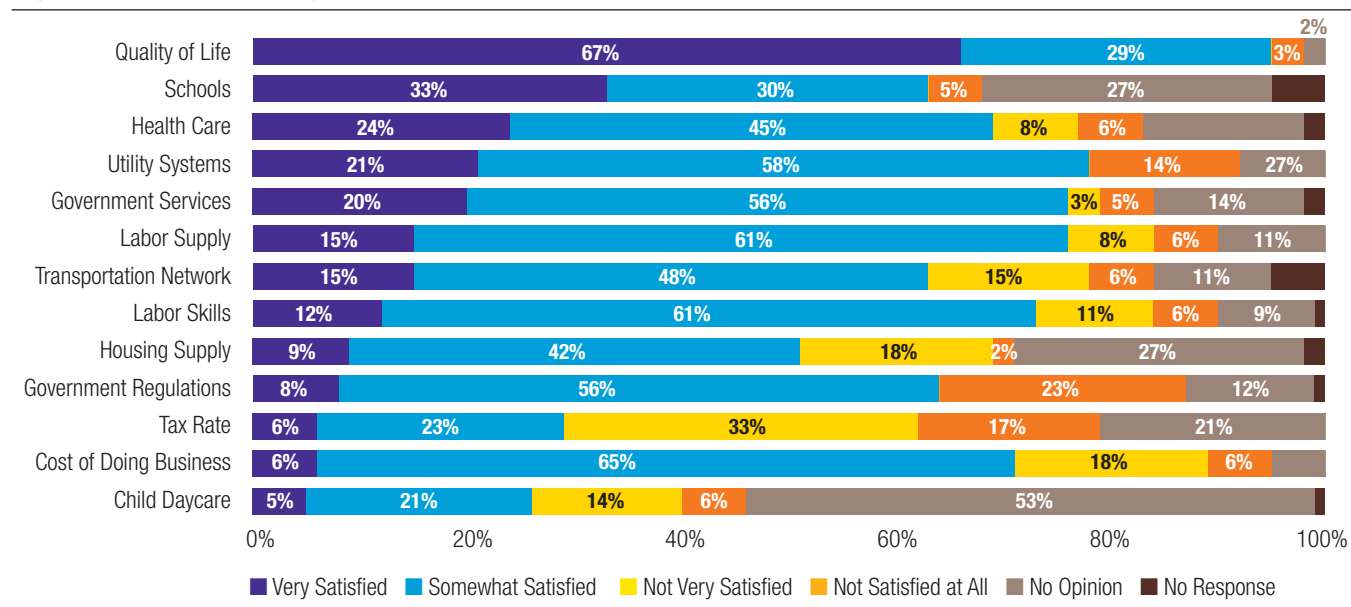
The Business Survey

Keene’s economic strategy must reflect the goals and desires of both city residents and its business community. As part of the extensive public outreach process undertaken for the master plan, a survey was conducted of a sampling of businesses in the community. In part, the survey’s purpose was to help formulate an economic strategy that reflects current and future needs of these businesses, which provide the community’s economic foundation. The results should not be taken as statistical certainty, but as a way to guide future business development. The complete survey can be found in the appendices to this plan.

The survey asked respondents to indicate their level of satisfaction regarding a variety of features in the community. When asked “how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall conditions for doing business in Keene?” 32% of respondents indicated they were “very satisfied” overall. The largest number of businesses, 58%, said they were “somewhat satisfied,” suggesting there is room for improvement in some areas. Only 10% in total indicated a greater level of dissatisfaction, with 8% of respondents “not very satisfied” and 2% “not satisfied at all.” (Figure 7, next page)

The Plan

Figure 7 Business Survey Results



When asked to specify “how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following as they relate to operation of your business in Keene?,” the greatest level of satisfaction was registered for quality of life in the community, where 67% of respondents were “very satisfied” and 29% were “somewhat satisfied.” While the term “quality of life” is subjective and open to interpretation, it certainly suggests that most businesses believe the community is a good place to live and/or operate.

This information points to areas the community can improve upon through its economic development strategy. The community’s mix of businesses and how it impacts the tax base is a large concern for both residents and local government. Ensuring that rules, standards, and regulations are easy to follow and understand is also an area for improvement. These statements are consistent with the feedback received through both the business survey and the planning process.

When asked to identify the most important things the community can do to support the success and growth of businesses in Keene, the following was identified:

- Lower property taxes
- Reduce or minimize regulatory impacts by streamlining review and permit processes
- Improve transportation by improving access, reducing congestion, increasing the availability of transit, and expanding bicycle and pedestrian options
- Increase availability of parking
- Maintain streets and sidewalks
- Encourage economic development by attracting new businesses to the area, supporting existing economic development groups, such as MEDC, the Chamber of Commerce, and Hannah Grimes
- Support and maintain downtown as the economic hub of the community

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Regarding downtown businesses and the retail environment, respondents indicated that people like the current retail options downtown, but they also want to see more variety – especially less-expensive, more “practical” stores, along with the “unique” shops. Many feel that downtown has too many non-retail businesses (real estate, loan shops, etc.) and not enough retail options. A majority believes that incentives geared towards certain businesses will assist them in locating downtown. In addition, respondents desired extended hours of operation for stores during the evenings and weekends. A majority of respondents wanted to see more dining options downtown – especially those that could provide outdoor seating.

In addition to the business survey, the Friends of Center City conducted a survey open to all interested residents, workers, and visitors to determine what people value about the downtown as well as what they would like to see improved. The complete survey is included in the appendices to this plan.



► Economic Development Strategies

Appropriate Industries

For over a century, Keene has been a community mainly based on local manufacturing and agriculture. While the economic balance has changed dramatically from the community’s early days, residents understand what it takes to create and operate local businesses and respect the land and resources that help them to be successful entrepreneurs. Recognizing that the definition of industry is evolving, Keene is in a position to leverage local business knowledge and use it as a competitive advantage in a new sector of the American economy.

Keene should encourage and recruit industries that are in line with building up local manufacturing and industrial economy. For example, the community should actively recruit food processing and packaging facilities that meet the needs of regional food producers and focus attention on attracting new industry and jobs in various sectors such as energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable product manufacturing, precision manufacturing and engineering, health care and biotechnology, and software engineering.

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In addition, it should be noted that Keene has an established development goal of balancing a majority of the tax base among industrial, commercial and residential uses. By aiming to balance the tax base in this manner, Keene can preserve the community's economic stability through the resulting diversity of land uses, which in turn builds resiliency within the community. This means that Keene can capture opportunities during times of economic prosperity and is less vulnerable during periods of economic hardship.

This approach also provides a basis for communication to potential investors by encouraging development in a way that results in appropriate growth and continued renewal, and preventing economic stagnation arising from the concentration of limited types of land use. As the tax base is balanced, Keene can continue to support various types of businesses and employment opportunities as well as provide various housing types, particularly workforce housing, within the community. The overall effect within the community, and thus the Monadnock Region, is a healthy mixture and balance of land uses that in turn provide economic stability, reduces sprawl and inefficient use of land, and increases community resiliency. Efforts to achieve this goal should be continued as Keene moves forward towards its vision for the future.



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Airport

The Keene Airport plays a critical role in the economic development infrastructure in the region. Its existence has resulted in the development of a wide range of aviation services and has also been key to attracting new businesses to Keene, directly influencing available jobs, tax base, and the provision of services. However, because the airport is located in Swanzey, Keene residents do not benefit from the tax revenue that it generates. Working collaboratively with the Town of Swanzey to address the question of revenue sharing is recommended. There are also opportunities to expand both aviation and non-aviation businesses at the airport and to market the facility for more commercial uses. Where these opportunities exist and are in alignment with the goals of this plan and the airport's master plan, they should be pursued.

Marketing and Recruitment Campaign

Keene must initiate a sustained recruitment campaign. This campaign should coordinate the roles of various economic development stakeholders within the community and provide a consistent message through a media kit to potential investors. This message should stress the community's sustainability focus, social responsibility, human and social capital, its quality of life and commitment to business innovation and creativity.

Small Business

A majority of businesses in Keene and the region are small businesses that are locally owned and operated. As such, small-business retention and growth must be supported through access to resources, including physical space and training opportunities. Opportunities to expand and promote "green and sustainable" small businesses as part of a local business development strategy and incubation programs should be explored so that Keene can actively create a green economy. Creation of a revolving loan fund should be considered to provide the financing necessary for startups.

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Broadband

Broadband deployment is unquestionably needed and is vital to the regional economy. The current shortage has posed monumental challenges for economic growth, particularly for small businesses – the core of the New Hampshire economy, with about half of employers in the state having four or fewer employees. The shortage of high-speed, affordable broadband services in the Monadnock Region is serious and is identified as a necessary priority in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Southwest New Hampshire, approved by the US Economic Development Administration.

The unique population density and distribution characteristics of towns in the Monadnock Region do not meet the minimum requirements of broadband provider business models. The region does not have a wireline backbone infrastructure, and providers' potential revenue does not justify the expense to build the last mile required to make broadband readily and widely available throughout the region, despite the fact that a universal demand for broadband service is painfully present. For areas that already have access to this critical infrastructure, the ability to add capacity is something that should be considered now for the future. In addition, the mountainous, forested landscape further complicates the business case for broadband delivery.

No one technology is best suited to solve the region's broadband shortage. A diverse, multi-faceted approach using a combination of fiber and wireless technologies will be required to equip the region to participate in the global economy, particularly in light of the region's geographic challenges.

All efforts necessary to achieve the objectives of the Monadnock Region Broadband Plan (included in Appendices) should be pursued.

Creative Economy

Keene's creative economy includes many interlocking industry sectors that provide creative services and goods, such as advertising, film, arts, design, and architecture. In the last year, Americans for the Arts conducted an economic impact study for the Monadnock Region that identified the overall impact non-profit arts and cultural organizations and their audiences have



The Plan

on the local economy. It found that arts and culture is a \$16.6-million industry in the region, supporting 477 full-time-equivalent jobs and generating \$1.3 million in local and state government revenue. It also concluded that non-profit arts and culture organizations spend \$13.1 million yearly and leverage \$3.5 million in additional spending by audiences, directly placing this money back into local restaurants, hotels, retail stores and other businesses.



A creative economy is the fuel of magnificence. Ralph Waldo Emerson

Since the creative economy also strengthens traditional economic sectors by creating new jobs in the technical, service, and management areas and also promotes community vitality and quality of life, we should pursue ways to support creative industries, cultural non-profit organizations and individual artists to further expansion of the creative economy in the community and region. Support could include providing public art throughout our community, creating new events that draw people to Keene and highlight local artists, and developing facilities and space for performance, living / studio space, and other artistic activities.

Roles in Economic Development

One of the most overlooked but critically important economic development tools is an active and involved community. The Keene Downtown Merchants Group and Keene Development Commission are ideal partners in pursuing this work, as well as Monadnock Economic Development Corporation, the Chamber of Commerce and Hannah Grimes. Given that Keene has so many different groups focusing on aspects of the local economy, it may be worthwhile establishing a Sustainable Economic Development Commission.

This commission should include representation from various economic stakeholder groups and could be charged with helping to create a unified message, sharing of resources, and planning for a sustainable, local economy. The government and the private sector both understand the need for economic development and proactive attention to the economy. Cooperation and a close working relationship between the community and its leaders will help sustain local businesses and recruit the kinds of job-creating industries that meet Keene's vision for the future. The following list of roles is intended to help establish the ways available resources can be best used.



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Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)

MEDC has been a longtime partner with the City of Keene and the community in the redevelopment of the city. This group has been successful in recruiting new industries to the community and in managing development projects. Some of Keene's larger businesses, such as C&S, Janos Technologies, and Precitech, were recruited in partnership with MEDC. This group has been and should continue to be an excellent resource to understand the needs of existing business owners. Over time, the relationship between MEDC and the city has evolved. It may be time to evaluate that relationship to refocus efforts in order to ensure that these two groups work in close collaboration for citywide economic development opportunities.

Cheshire County and Surrounding Municipalities

The impacts of new job opportunities and community amenities are shared by the city, county, and region as a whole. There is a good chance that large employers may locate outside the city limits. Therefore, cooperation and tight coordination of the Regional Economic Development Partnership and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that are provided through the Regional Planning Commission will be imperative to the region's overall economic stability.

Hannah Grimes' mission to educate entrepreneurs

is rooted in the vision that the success of these entrepreneurs results in a thriving local economy and vibrant community built upon our region's heritage, culture, natural resources, and the entrepreneurial spirit of its people. Hannah Grimes is an essential hub in developing an innovative, creative, civic-minded network of entrepreneurs deeply committed to their community.

Hannah Grimes Center

The Hannah Grimes Center helps entrepreneurs and small-business owners start and grow their businesses through professional consulting, training, and resources. The center combines the resources of professional staff, private sector, and state and local resources to provide high quality business management consulting, education programs, and practical information. The center is invaluable to small start-up businesses in the community and the region.

Keene Chamber of Commerce

The chamber is an advocate for regionwide businesses and provides its members with a variety of networking, education, marketing and community service programs. It will be imperative that the Chamber of Commerce work with the City of Keene and MEDC in the future to ensure a consistent message in the recruitment of businesses to the area as well as support to existing businesses.

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CHESHIRE COUNTY

Transportation

Much of Keene's present charm is linked to its transportation past. Historically, many of the streets in the community were designed in radial and grid patterns that linked Central Square to the outlying community. Keene's present-day street layout consists of many circuitous streets and cul-de-sacs. In contrast to the predominantly grid-style street network of the past, which diffused traffic throughout Keene, the current network channels traffic from various neighborhood streets and concentrates it onto collector streets and arterials.

The role of the turnpike and the railroad is also evident in the layout of Keene and the architectural styles of the community's buildings. The Third New Hampshire Turnpike, which operated between Boston and Bellows Falls, Vermont, was one of the region's most important transportation systems at the time. Incorporated in Keene in 1799, this turnpike later became the route of the Cheshire Railroad, which connected Keene with Boston in 1848.

By the end of the 19th century, Keene was served by four railroads: the Cheshire Branch, the Ashuelot Railroad, the Manchester and Keene Railroad, and the Connecticut River Railroad. These railroads have played a pivotal role in Keene's history. Though all the rail lines and many of the former railroad buildings have been removed or converted to other uses, the rail beds and most of the stone bridges that supported this infrastructure still remain. Today, these resources provide Keene and the Southwest Region with important trail corridors, connections and linkages to surrounding towns and states. Public transportation is still an issue within the community, however, with no convenient means to travel to or from Keene via bus or train.

► Transportation Strategies

Connection Between Transportation and Land Use

The linkage between transportation systems and land use and development was a critical consideration in the development of transportation strategies. This linkage is crucial to planning and implementing a transportation system that efficiently and safely serves the region's wide range of activities and uses. The transportation system must adequately serve all areas within Keene, now and in the future.

The Plan

Potential Transportation Planning and Analysis Tools

- Develop new analytical standards and requirements that focus on “person trips,” not vehicle trips, for proposed developments.
- Require review of pedestrian, bicycle, public transportation and parking impacts of all new development.
- Identify mode-share goals by use and/or district, and require proposals to demonstrate how to achieve them.
- Develop parameters to allow level of service (LOS) to degrade within certain conditions for projects in compliance with overall community goals. Allow contributions to “systemwide” improvements in lieu of project specific mitigation.
- Consider a fee for curb cuts that result in the loss of on-street parking spaces in order to promote consolidation of curb cuts among developments.
- Alter parking requirements to establish ranges, or parking maximums.
- Include bicycle parking requirements for all developments.

As land development decisions are made, there must also be consideration of the appropriate type and the extent of transportation improvements. Conversely, during the planning of transportation projects, especially in areas with relatively little current access, decision-makers must account for the land-use impacts of the additional accessibility. Revision of the city’s land-use regulations should include alternative-transportation design requirements that will support the community’s goal to create a walkable, bikeable community.

Park & Walk Community

Throughout the planning process, participants envisioned a system that integrates motor vehicles, public transportation, pedestrians, and bicycles into a network of services and facilities. This network is encompassed in the “park-and-walk community” concept. Public transportation, pedestrian and bicycle access should be incorporated in transportation infrastructure and land-use planning decisions.

The concept of a park-and-walk community involves motorists parking in defined locations and finding convenient transportation options during their time in the community by means of public transit, walking or bicycling.

This concept enables a variety of benefits including:

- Enhanced mobility for residents and visitors.
- Reduced traffic congestion in retail areas.
- Reduced vehicle emissions.
- Promotion of private investment.
- Preservation of public infrastructure investment.
- Improvement of public health by integrating physical activity into daily routines.

The Plan

Public Transportation

Effective public transit service throughout Keene is essential to the success of the park-and-walk community. Effective public transit must be available to move people when and where they wish to go. This presents a number of logistical and budgetary challenges for Keene's transportation decisions and the private-sector principle of providing access for employees and customers. Given the diverse character of commuter, business and residential trips in the Keene area, an effective reduction in personal motor-vehicle trips will require substantial public transit, van or carpooling services. Creating a more efficient, easily identifiable and accessible downtown city express service may be one way to encourage a shift in commuter transportation choice.

Other alternatives should be explored to reduce fuel use by reducing vehicle miles traveled, such as rideshare programs, car-share programs, and the exploration of an official community Zip Car or Segway Safe program. All of these have potential to assist in moving people in a more economical, environmentally friendly way, which will assist in creating a sustainable community as well as highlighting Keene's creative problem-solving mentality.

Complete Streets

Members of the community expressed a desire, as part of creating Keene's walkable community, to strive for "complete streets." Complete Streets is a national program that encourages local municipalities across the country to build road networks that are safer, more livable and welcoming to everyone. Keene should make it a consistent policy to design streets with all users in mind, including drivers, public transport riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists as well as older people, children, and those with disabilities. Bicycle lanes in particular have been a topic of recent discussion for both the Court Street and Washington Street reconstruction projects.



There is no single design prescription for "complete streets." Ingredients may include sidewalks, bike lanes or wide paved shoulders, special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public-transportation stops, frequent crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, and more. A complete street in a rural area will look quite different from one in an urban area. However, both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road. As Keene's existing roads are repaired or reconstructed, it should be a policy of the city to incorporate these ingredients to the scale and degree appropriate for the location and type of roadway (e.g., urban streets vs. rural highways).

The Plan

Traffic Calming

While the city should continue to encourage the efficient flow of traffic on city streets, managing traffic to improve the quality of life on residential streets should be pursued as well. The city has already taken measures around Keene State College to slow traffic along Winchester Street at major pedestrian crossings with the construction of raised and lighted crosswalks. The city has also utilized stamped concrete and other crosswalk patterns to indicate crossing areas throughout downtown, as well as roundabouts to slow traffic and ease congestion.

Traffic-calming measures help improve livability of a place through inexpensive and flexible means. Strategies include raised medians, use of bollards and planters, bulb-outs, chokers, neckdowns, roundabouts and traffic circles, widening of sidewalks and narrowing of streets, diagonal parking, surface treatments, or the use of speed tables, road humps, and cushions.

Correctly applied, all of these can help test measures in different combinations and locations, fine-tuning the mix until the desired result is achieved. Some of these measures contribute to other community goals, such as combining traffic calming with innovative stormwater management techniques in urban street rain gardens or bio-swales, or reducing a community's emissions by encouraging walking and bicycling instead of vehicle trips.

Parking

As previously indicated, providing public parking will continue to be important for the economic well-being of the more developed areas of the community, such as downtown. As infill occurs in other areas of the community, such as Key Road, Optical Avenue, Winchester and West streets, parking will be necessary for bicycles as well as vehicles. Parking should always be constructed to the side and rear of buildings, making it ancillary to building and pedestrian traffic. Bicycle parking should be creatively incorporated into the built environment and highlighted to promote its use.

Developed in Europe, traffic calming (a direct translation of the German *verkehrsberuhigung*) is a system of design and management strategies that aim to balance traffic on streets with other uses. It is founded on the idea that streets should help create and preserve a sense of place; that their purpose is for people to walk, stroll, look, gaze, meet, play, shop and even work alongside cars – but not dominated by them. The tools of traffic calming take a different approach from treating the street only as a conduit for vehicles passing through at the greatest possible speed. They include techniques designed to lessen the impact of motor vehicle traffic by slowing it down, or literally “calming” it. This helps build human-scale places and an environment friendly to people on foot. – Project for Public Spaces

The Plan

Private Transportation Options

Private transportation options are another community need. Though a number of taxi services and private shuttles run to surrounding airports, community members have expressed a need for such services on a more frequent and affordable level, as well as private car hires.



Airport

Established in 1943, the Keene Dillant-Hopkins Airport covers approximately 1,000 acres and has two runways. The primary runway is 6,200 feet long and is equipped with an instrument landing system; the crosswind runway is 4,000 feet long. The airport operates an automated weather observation system and is equipped with precision approach path indicators. It can accommodate aircraft up to, and including, large commercial jets. However, because of its proximity to large commercial airports near Manchester, Boston and Hartford/Springfield, large-scale passenger service is not likely to return to the Keene airport in the next 20 years.

The primary role of the airport is to serve the general aviation, corporate, and commercial needs of Keene and southwestern New Hampshire. It plays a major role in the New Hampshire Statewide Airport System Plan as well as the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems.

The Plan

Since the airport is located in the town of Swanzey, it is subject to Swanzey’s zoning regulations. The airport is currently zoned business and its surrounding areas are zoned residential, business, industrial park, special lake protection and rural/agriculture. In order to ensure the airport’s economic success into the future, coordination with Swanzey is imperative. Reviewing the existing zoning around the airport with the town of Swanzey to create a mix of nonresidential retail and aviation commercial uses may be beneficial to both municipalities.

The 2003 Airport Master Plan recommends several actions for the airport’s future developments, many of which are complete, under way, or scheduled in the current Capital Improvement Program. The airport’s role in economic development and in the overall transportation system should not be ignored. Rather, it should be enhanced through its development as a regional “Aviation Center of Excellence.” There are several strategies in need of further exploration, including providing another access route to the airport, changing public perception of the airport’s proximity to the community, pursuing an economic development strategy for sites surrounding the airport, and including it as part of a formal emergency management and preparedness plan.

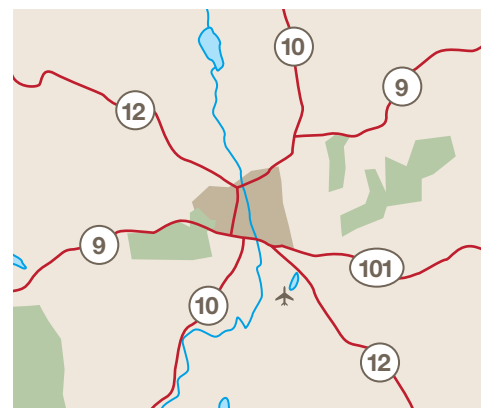
Downtown Corridors

Improving major corridors will improve traffic flow and visually enhance the approaches to various parts of the community. West Street in particular was discussed time and again during the planning process as a corridor in need of a “facelift,” i.e., providing pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure, access management, street trees and grassed medians, etc. All of these could change the way West Street looks and how Keene is perceived by visitors entering the community from that corridor. Other downtown corridors include Marlboro Street and Optical Avenue, Winchester Street, Court Street, Washington Street, and Roxbury Street. More information on downtown corridor development can be found in the land-use section of this plan.

Regional Gateways

As Keene and southwest New Hampshire grow, the need for convenient access to markets within and outside the region will grow as well. Currently, four primary regionwide transportation gateways connect Keene to the rest of the world:

- NH Route 9 from the west and east
- NH Route 101 from the east
- NH Route 10 from the north and south
- NH Route 12 from the north and south



These gateways, like many of the former railroads, all converge in Keene forming a bypass system around the central core. Traffic from Vermont, Massachusetts and other parts of New England must travel through Keene and southwest New Hampshire along these highways to access other areas and communities. Keeping the rural character of these gateways is important to the community; they provide the first experience visitors have with the community, and

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visitors consistently comment on the beauty of the views when first entering the community. More information on gateway development can be found in the land-use section of this plan.

Regional Transportation – Southwest Region Transportation Plan

In 2007, the Southwest Region Planning Commission completed a regional transportation plan that outlines eight recommendations for planning and development of a future regional transportation system. The plan's recommendations should be reviewed periodically, especially when planning for transportation infrastructure, to ensure that Keene's projects are aligned with the community's and the region's needs.

Keene's public planning process identified the following areas as regional transportation needs. These needs align well with the recommendations in the 2007 regional transportation plan. Keene places a high priority on continuing to collaborate and participate in regional transportation planning, as well as lobbying for federal and state funding to improve state highways through the state's Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan process.

Regional Transportation Needs

Public Transportation

The region has a growing need for improved and increased transportation services, whether volunteer, public or for-profit service, for those without access to an automobile (or who would use a convenient and efficient alternative). Increased motor-vehicle use has led to significant air-quality problems, sprawling development, roadway congestion, and dependence on nonrenewable resources. To improve environmental quality, personal health and well-being, the region needs to identify and implement a public transportation program that meets the needs of its population (See "Chapter 3: Findings and Recommendations", SRTP 2007, page 62). City leadership should officially become part of the new Transportation Management Authority through the Southwest Region Planning Commission.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is a growing component of the region's transportation system. They improve quality of life and often provide an alternative to the automobile. Too often, however, this infrastructure does not receive consistent maintenance and preservation. All bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be preserved and maintained in a manner that promotes safety and efficiency and minimizes lifetime costs. Increased monitoring of use and condition is important.

When possible, the region should continue to expand its bicycle and pedestrian network in a way that maximizes its contribution to the region's economic growth and vitality. Safety, connectivity, and accessibility are key considerations (See "Chapter 3: Findings and Recommendations," SRTP 2007, page 62).

Rideshare

The region should establish and support a formalized rideshare program. The Contoocook Valley Transportation Company (CVTC) has created such a program that primarily serves the region's

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eastern towns. Employers in Keene and towns to the north, west and south of the city should pursue collaboration with CVTC to create an effective and efficient regional rideshare program. Doing so can save participants money, reduce air pollution, save resources and create social-interaction opportunities (See “Chapter 3: Findings and Recommendations,” SRTP 2007, page 62).

Interregional Travel and Multi-Modal Connectivity

Quick, easy travel into and out of the region is important to the regional economy. Perhaps the largest need is connection to other, existing regional transportation options from Keene to surrounding destination points, such as Concord and Manchester/Nashua. Access from those destinations to Boston, New York City and Montreal is feasible through other public transportation providers or via transfer to another transportation mode. However, this should be deemed a short-term solution to a larger, long-term need.

Current transportation projects in eastern New Hampshire are expanding the I-93 corridor and extending commuter rail from Lowell, Massachusetts, to Nashua and eventually Manchester. To the south, MassHighway plans to continue expanding and improving Route 2 as well as expanding commuter rail along this corridor from Fitchburg to Gardner, Massachusetts. The completion in 1980 of the expansion of Massachusetts State Route 140 from Route 2 near Gardner, Massachusetts, to Route 12 in Winchendon, Massachusetts, dramatically decreased travel time between greater Boston and the southwest region. Economic growth will follow along these corridors, and it is imperative that our region is adequately connected to it. It is also important to maintain and expand links to the larger New England economy through enhancement of the NH 12 and NH 101 corridors and establishing multimodal connectivity (See “Chapter 3: Findings and Recommendations,” SRTP 2007, page 62).

Goods Movement

The movement of goods into and out of the region is a major function of our current transportation system. It also impacts our region’s food and energy security. Truck traffic – the primary way of moving goods into and out of Keene – is growing, and is expected to continue into the foreseeable future. As a result, it is important that goods movement is considered as part of all future transportation planning studies and highway and bridge reconstruction projects (See “Chapter 3: Findings and Recommendations,” SRTP 2007, page 62).



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Regional Land Use/Transportation Connection

As stated previously, there is a strong connection between land use and transportation. Transportation facilities determine what land uses can be supported, and land uses determine what transportation facilities are needed. Planning for either should take place in a cooperative and complementary manner, not in isolation. Regional transportation needs and local land-use and development objectives must be balanced with transportation planning and investment decision-making.

Whenever possible, the region's communities should be encouraged to pursue infill development, with particular attention to the redevelopment of brownfields. Because the infrastructure is already in place, infill development and redevelopment is an efficient use of the region's physical resources.

Preservation of existing active and abandoned rights-of-way for future transportation use is strongly recommended. These rights-of-way often pass through desirable locations; once fragmented, they would be difficult and expensive to restore.

Without the use of the private automobile, Keene and the region are essentially isolated. Keene must assist in supporting multimodal regional transportation solutions that provide mode choice, increase the availability of interregional public transport, promote compact development and protect community character, and promote the efficient and secure movement of goods – all while keeping in mind community connectivity, climate change and sustainability goals. (See "Chapter 3: Findings and Recommendations," SRTP 2007, page 62)

Infrastructure

Throughout the public process, residents expressed their appreciation for the quality and breadth of city and community services. It is expected that the city will lead the community with a strong commitment to sustainability – even through infrastructure changes. Long-term infrastructure investments are preferred over short-term remedies, and maintenance of existing infrastructure is preferred to the creation of new infrastructure (from both a financial and land-

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use perspective). Citizens expressed a strong desire for the city to create a consistently balanced and practical approach toward infrastructure that will preserve the community's hillsides visually and ecologically, efficiently use and reuse resources, and result in the responsible maintenance of the community's investments.



M. PLOTCHYK

The community is facing several challenges with its aging infrastructure, particularly in water, sewer and roadways. Maintenance of these systems was deferred during the 1980s, resulting in the overlap of several current upgrades and improvements, some of which are mandated by federal or state requirement. These costs will likely stretch capital-improvement budgets for some time.

Bridges also pose a particular challenge. Out of 32 active city bridges, 11 are on the state's "red list" for various deficiencies. A six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is reassessed each year, particularly as it relates to bridges, street reconstruction and resurfacing, water system improvements, drainage improvements, sewer rehabilitation and other related items.

Specific studies for water and sewer have also been undertaken, and these recommend specific courses of action so that the city may meet its federal requirements. The strategies in this plan are not meant to replace these specific studies or federal requirements, but rather enhance them and ensure that the city is able to address infrastructure needs creatively and in a financially responsible manner.

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► Infrastructure Strategies

City Streets

The city has a policy to “dig the road once.” This means incorporating street trees, planting medians, burying utilities, and making infrastructure upgrades all at once, which saves money and time. The city should continue this policy into the future.

A few areas will require improvement as the city moves forward with street reconstruction projects. These include providing accessible curbs, ensuring that stormwater drainage is properly located and designed, and that sidewalk connections and crossings are placed in necessary and logical areas. Curbing is another part of road reconstruction that should be evaluated based upon location and need, balanced against the cost to provide this feature. In areas with on-street parking, curbing assists in stormwater management and



keeps cars parked on the road, not on the grassed median between the sidewalk and roadway.

As part of the annual CIP process, city streets are evaluated via survey and prioritized for rehabilitation on a cost-effective basis.

Wastewater

The Keene Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is owned by the City of Keene and is operated by the city’s Department of Public Works. It is a Grade IV secondary treatment, activated sludge facility. Located on Airport Road, behind the airport, the WWTP currently treats the domestic and industrial wastes from the communities of Keene, Marlborough, and some sections of Swanzey with a combined population of 35,000. It also accepts septage waste from the region.

The treatment plant is an activated sludge process, with biological nitrification, permitted for the discharge of an average daily flow of 6 million gallons. Peak design capacity is 15 million gallons per day. Treatment consists of grit removal, primary settling, secondary aeration, flocculation, final settling, and disinfection by ultraviolet light. The plant effluent is discharged into the Ashuelot River. Solids collected from the primary and secondary systems are thickened and combined, then dewatered using belt filter presses. The dewatered solids are then landfilled.

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The city is permitted, through its NPDES Discharge Permit issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of New Hampshire, to treat and discharge 6 million gallons per day. The actual average daily flow is approximately 3 million gallons per day. Effluent flow to the river must have a monthly average of less than 30mg/L total suspended solids (TSS) and 25 mg/L carbonaceous biochemical oxygen demand (CBOD). Keene has averaged greater than 95-percent removal of both of these parameters since 1990.

Long-term wastewater strategies include identifying ways to use wastewater as a resource, adopting environmentally responsible wastewater treatment and disposal strategies, and working towards a strong water-conservation program.

The City of Keene should make it a policy to install only low-flow fixtures in city projects, and encourage all private projects to do the same. The city should also explore the potential for using waterless urinals and composting toilets in appropriate situations.

Many advances have also been made in natural systems-based, decentralized wastewater treatment systems that are energy efficient and provide high-quality discharge. These systems harness native plants and micro-organisms in constructed wetland systems to safely treat waste underground and discharge water that can percolate into the ground, or be used for irrigation. These “living machines” can even be used to grow harvestable plants and help develop alternative opportunities for new businesses that use the nutrient rich by-products.

Water Supply

The City of Keene delivers drinking water to approximately 85% of all Keene residents and the North Swanzey Water Precinct. Keene’s water comes from two reservoirs located in the town of Roxbury and from four wells located on Court and West streets. Water from the reservoirs goes to the Water Treatment Facility, where it is filtered, disinfected and made less acidic before it enters the distribution system. Well water is pumped from the Court and West Street aquifers. It is not filtered, but it is disinfected and the acidity is adjusted.

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Because well water and reservoir water is mixed together in the distribution system, it is important for the city to continue resident education programs on water quality and pollution prevention to ensure that water quality remains high. It is also recommended that the city create and adopt specific performance standards for water supply and distribution that include flow, pressure and system life-cycle cost expectation.

The city should maintain its policy that maintenance or upgrades to the existing system has a higher priority than expansion of the system into new areas, unless the expansion would also improve an existing substandard system performance. The cost for expansions to the existing system should also be borne by those adding to the system. City water and sewer funds should be used for the maintenance and preservation of the existing system. Changes to the city's land-use regulations and code should include standards for private and public systems and source protection, and should identify where connection is mandatory.

Stormwater

Stormwater in the community is the result of runoff from developed areas. What is not immediately absorbed into the ground or collected in the stormwater system often pools in low-lying areas before infiltrating into the groundwater table. One of Keene's goals for the future is to establish stormwater systems that work with natural systems to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible. The planning process made it clear that a multipronged strategy will be required to manage stormwater



adequately, prevent large-scale flooding and remain financially responsible through the establishment of this infrastructure. One way that Keene is moving toward this goal is through use of innovative stormwater management, a low-impact, low-cost design that is effective while allowing the existing system to remain at its current capacity. It should be noted, however, that the city will replace an individual component of the system, such as a culvert, on a case-by-case basis if it is found to be below the current capacity standard.

Conventional stormwater management methods usually capture water flowing off impervious surfaces, channelize or pipe it, and discharge it into undeveloped areas or streams. Often called "hard" engineering solutions, these methods aim to alleviate problems in individual areas

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but can lead to larger environmental problems such as increased soil and stream-bank erosion, increased flooding potential throughout the community and downstream, and interruption of the natural infiltration process. In most cases, rather than being intended to manage stormwater at its source, these conventional methods were reactions to development patterns that ignored ecological



impacts. The key to responsibly managing stormwater is integrating development into the natural landscape – or in areas where infill development is occurring, integrating natural systems back into the built environment. A citywide stormwater strategy will ensure that development considers its effect on the entire system, not just at the local site.

Given that most of Keene is situated within the 100-year flood plain, and given Keene's history of floods and the expected future increase in the frequency and amount of precipitation because of climate change, the city itself is the ideal built environment in which to incorporate innovative stormwater management solutions. Combined with a system of integrated flood-control practices, Keene's ability to manage stormwater can be greatly improved and overall community resiliency can be increased.

The 2000 Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan and 2005 All-Hazard Mitigation Plan provide detailed review and analysis of Keene's flooding risk, and recommendations in these plans are still appropriate in 2010. While many of the actions in the plan have been implemented, the following remain relevant:

- Apply for additional flood mitigation funds to finish flood proofing or other feasible mitigation strategies for the remaining Krif Road and Krif Court commercial and industrial properties.
- Develop and implement a mitigation plan to protect the Kingsbury Corporation facility, which is partially located in the floodway and entirely in the 100-year floodplain.
- Develop a program to mitigate risks and secondary hazards associated with flooding at the Tanglewood Estates manufactured home park.
- Conduct site visits to properties on the Hazardous Material Inventory to determine risk of release during flooding or other hazard events.

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- Strive to create programs to retrofit existing flood channels and detention basins with trails and other recreational amenities.
- Evaluate systemwide solutions for the Beaver Brook watershed, including assessing the feasibility of modifying or replacing bridges that create obstructions and backwater flooding.
- Restore flood-storage capacity of filled areas within Woodland Cemetery wetland complex.
- Assess the feasibility of expanding the Three-Mile Swamp structure to create greater storage capacity.

It is recommended that the city pursue specific stormwater management strategies and incorporate them into land-use regulations and code. The goal in highly developed areas is to minimize imperviousness, harvest stormwater and maximize water infiltration. Where feasible, components of the stormwater system should be incorporated into the community's architecture. The city should explore the use of greenroofs, cisterns and rain barrels; if feasible, a program should be created to encourage their use in residential and commercial development throughout the community.

A program should also be created to educate citizens and developers on best management practices to manage stormwater, such as rain gardens, bio-swales, and topographic depressions. Planning Board regulations should be revised to incorporate a zero-runoff policy for new development as well as to require innovative stormwater techniques in proposed development. Many developers are incorporating porous concrete and asphalt, porous pavers, bio-swales and other innovative methods into their site plans, as the ability to tie into the city's existing system becomes less feasible.

Electricity & Lighting

New Hampshire and the region have a long history of dealing with powerful storms that knock out power supplies. A December 2008 ice storm left more than a million state residents without power, some for more than a week. With the potential for increased severe storms and winds, it is prudent to consider a long-term energy-security strategy that would move utilities to an underground system, protecting them from storms, high winds, ice and other potentially damaging effects. While this would occur slowly and over time, it may be cost-effective to do in combination with complete road reconstruction or when other opportunities present themselves.



While this would occur slowly and over time, it may be cost-effective to do in combination with complete road reconstruction or when other opportunities present themselves.

Exterior lighting is an important design tool for improving safety and security. When done right, lighting can greatly enhance the character of a community. It can highlight architectural details, draw attention to amenities, or celebrate a streetscape. However, overlighting does not trans-

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late into increased security, and choosing what not to light is as important as choosing what to light. The ideal streetscape uses the fewest possible fixtures that will provide adequate light.

Other important components to appropriate street lighting are light color, energy efficiency and dark-sky compliance. The night sky can still be enjoyed from downtown Keene on a clear evening. That part of our community character can be preserved by encouraging the use of full-cutoff light fixtures and bulbs that reduce light pollution and reduce energy use. The city's current standards for street lighting should be reviewed to ensure they meet the community's energy, aesthetic, and safety purposes.

Recycling and Solid Waste Disposal

Reducing waste, reusing resources, and recycling are not new concepts to New Englanders. The region's pragmatism and history of limited resources has taught residents never to take more than they need, and not to waste what may not be available tomorrow.

In order to become a truly sustainable community, Keene must continue teaching future generations about recycling and waste management. The majority of the natural resources we extract from the earth are refined and used once before being placed in a landfill. Much of what we put into landfills never biodegrades and can pollute adjacent water supplies.



M. PLOTZKYK

As Keene develops into a model sustainable small community, it is important to move towards reducing waste or possibly even making Keene a zero-waste community – eliminating landfill waste altogether. New markets could be identified for recyclables and other materials that can be repurposed.

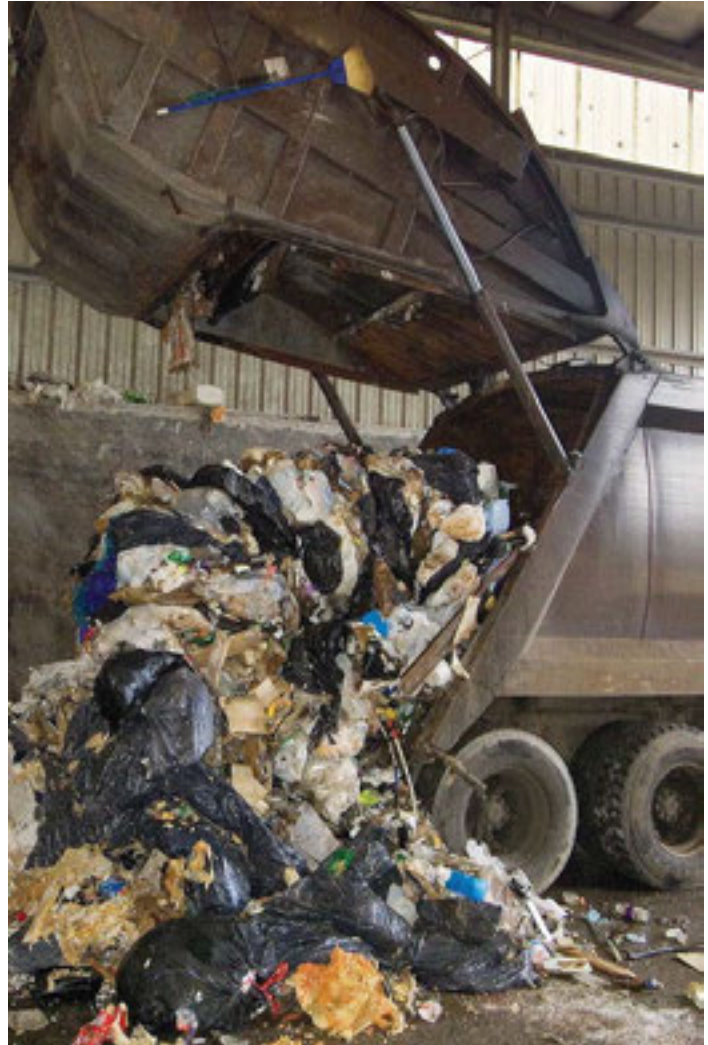
The City of Keene and community partners should develop an educational campaign with the goal of reducing waste generated by residents and commercial operations by 70% through recycling, reclaiming, and composting. All waste generated within the community, including construction waste, should be brought to the facility for recycling, reclamation, composting or transport, as appropriate.

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The community and city are in a position to require innovative waste management for new construction projects. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) points are awarded when 50% to 75% of construction waste is diverted from the landfill; this could be coupled with a green building incentive program to encourage builders and developers to design and build eco-efficient buildings.

Other possible techniques for achieving waste-reduction goals are:

- Bring back education provided by the city to inform residents and businesses about simple, cost-neutral ways to reduce waste. A calendar was used as part of a previous successful educational campaign.
- Explore possibilities for creating new industry or industry partners who could use the municipal waste as a clean fuel source or raw materials.
- Create the gas to energy to local food production system at the transfer station and recycling center, which would create jobs, provide local sources of food and feedstock, generate renewable energy for the facility, and reduce carbon emissions.
- Include recycling options in public facilities where they are easily accessible and visible, including public parks and trails.
- Expand the composting program to include commercial food waste.



M. PLOTCHYK

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Open Spaces & Greenway Connections

A community's green and open spaces consist not only of farmlands, forests, fields, playgrounds, golf courses, baseball fields, pathways and trails, but also of school fields, front and backyards, downtown pocket parks and street trees, cemeteries, and streetscapes. Greenways connect open spaces together by creating corridors of natural habitat areas, combined with trails for active and passive recreational use. Greenways also serve as corridors for the movement of wildlife between habitat areas.

Keene is fortunate to have an extensive network of parks and open spaces for both active and passive activities and uses. Parks have played an integral role in Keene's development. From Central Square to Ashuelot River Park to the historic Dinsmoor Woods and Ladies' Wildwood Park, these areas help create a sense of identity and add to Keene's quality of life, attracting businesses, visitors and residents.

With the proper design, open spaces and the greenway connections between them can provide an important opportunity for environmental stewardship and education. Parks and other green spaces are important to Keene's sustainability and climate change efforts since they reduce the heat retained by buildings and pavement – the "urban heat island effect." The vegetation in green spaces filters air, improving air quality, and provides crucial habitat for wildlife. Green spaces cleanse and infiltrate stormwater runoff; when integrated into the built environment, natural stormwater treatment systems are cost-effective solutions that assist in flood mitigation.

Throughout the planning process, discussions clearly articulated the community's broad desire to increase physical connections to and among existing open spaces, neighborhoods, and the downtown core.

► Open Space & Greenway Connections Strategies

Trails and Bicycle Pathways

Trails provide the opportunity for passive and active recreation while also providing alternatives to driving by connecting neighborhoods to parks, open spaces and Keene's downtown. Keene has worked hard to create the excellent trail system it has today. To continue to expand the network and fill in gaps, the following recommendations from the City's Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee should be implemented:

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New Bicycle Paths

- Roundhouse T connector from School Street to Island Street
- Route 12 North Connector
- Cheshire Rail Trail North (Whitcomb Mill Road to Stone Wall Farm)
- Cheshire Rail Trail South (Eastern Avenue out toward Route 101)

New or Expanded Bicycle Lanes

- Washington Street (Central Square to Route 9)
- Marlboro Street – Optical Avenue – Route 101
- Wheelock Park Road (Park Avenue to Appel Way Trail)
- Summit Road (Maple Avenue to New YMCA)
- Upper Court Street (Hospital Roundabout to Hastings Avenue)
- Upper Washington Street (end of '09 improvements to Old Concord Rd.)
- Base Hill Road (State Route 9 West to Swanzey Town Line)
- State Route 10 South (Winchester Street Roundabout to Swanzey)
- State Route 12 South aka. Lower Main Street (101 Bypass to Swanzey)

Highway Improvements/Share the Road

- Arch Street (Park Avenue to Old Chesterfield Road)
- Base Hill Road
- Bradford Road
- Court Street (Central Square to Roundabout)
- Chapman Road
- Concord Road (to Jordan Road)
- Eastern Avenue
- Felt Road
- Hastings Avenue
- Hurricane Road
- Island Street
- Jordan Road
- Key Road
- (North and South) Lincoln Street
- Main Street (Central Square to 101 Bypass)
- Meadow Road
- Old Walpole Road
- Park Avenue
- Roxbury Road (Jordan Road to Chapman Road)
- Roxbury Street (Central Square to North/South Lincoln Street)
- Rule Street
- Whitcomb Mill Road
- West Street (bike path outlet to West Hill Road)
- Winchester Street (Main Street Roundabout to 101 Bypass Roundabout)

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Greenway Connections

Linear routes, such as those along rivers, and adjacent to railway lines, utility right of ways and major roads, can serve as connectors linking people and places to open spaces throughout the community. An added benefit is that animals are provided contiguous routes to move within and through the environment as they migrate.

Keene already has several corridors, such as the Ashuelot River Trail. The city should expand this corridor and pursue expanding the system along Black Brook, White Brook, Ash Swamp Brook and the Minnewawa River. Connections to existing local and regional rail trails can help create an integrated wildlife and recreational corridor network. See the future land-use plan in the Land Use section to see how these systems could connect many of Keene's existing open space and wildlife resources.

Parks

To address active and passive recreational needs of the community, the city should prepare a Parks Master Plan that will identify gaps in the park system. This plan could also initiate a park-classification system and associated standards. It would also outline a specific strategy for including improvements in the city's Capital Improvement Program. Some ideas that came out of the public process for the community's parks include:

- Providing dog parks.
- Creating small playgrounds or "tot lots" in neighborhoods.
- Building a permanent skate park that is integrated into a more traditional park-like atmosphere.
- Expanding the Ashuelot River Park and Green Corridor.
- Creating a park by the Stone Arch Bridge on Route 101.

Natural Resources, Opens Space Preservation, and Restoration

Open spaces provide habitat for various plants and animals. A basic-level Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) for the City of Keene was completed in 2009, and this work should be continued into an expanded and comprehensive inventory with the goal of integrating this information into the decision-making and prioritization processes. The NRI should inform the creation



JEFFREY NEWCOMER

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of a conservation and open space plan, identifying natural resources and open spaces. This work should be coordinated with the City of Keene Parks and Recreation Department.

The City of Keene currently has a number of easements placed on land for conservation purposes. As the community moves towards its vision for the future, it will be important to include these already existing resources into the open-space plan as well to continue to protect important natural resource values within the community. In addition, the Land Use Change Tax program should be preserved to assist the community is achieving its open space goals.

The open space plan should determine targets for conserved lands, recreational resources as well as farmland and forested areas. Those lands that are important to the maintenance of the community's ecological, economic and social health should be included in the plan and used to guide the creation of an open-space program. The elements of the open-space plan should align with the State Wildlife Action Plan. In addition, any future resource-specific NRIs should ensure consistency with the goals and principles of this master plan.

Restoration of important conservation values and functions is important to the community, especially as it relates to wetlands and surface waters and to the flood mitigation these resources provide. Conservation areas around important wetland and surface-water areas allow the natural system space to work, such as when wetlands are flooded after heavy rains, or when a stream naturally shifts its location slightly over time. Review and revision of land-use regulations to include more stringent standards for wetlands and surface waters should be pursued. Possible changes to development standards that limit the impact on a site should also be part of any regulatory review, since this can allow for natural systems to function correctly or restore a previously affected area.

Conservation Partners

There are a number of partner organizations throughout the region that often work with the City of Keene and the Keene Conservation Commission on conservation efforts. These include but not limited to:

- The Monadnock Conservancy
- The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests
- Ashuelot Valley Environmental Observatory (AVEO)
- Friends of Open Space – Keene
- UNH Co-operative Extension
- Antioch University
- Keene State College – Environmental Science Program

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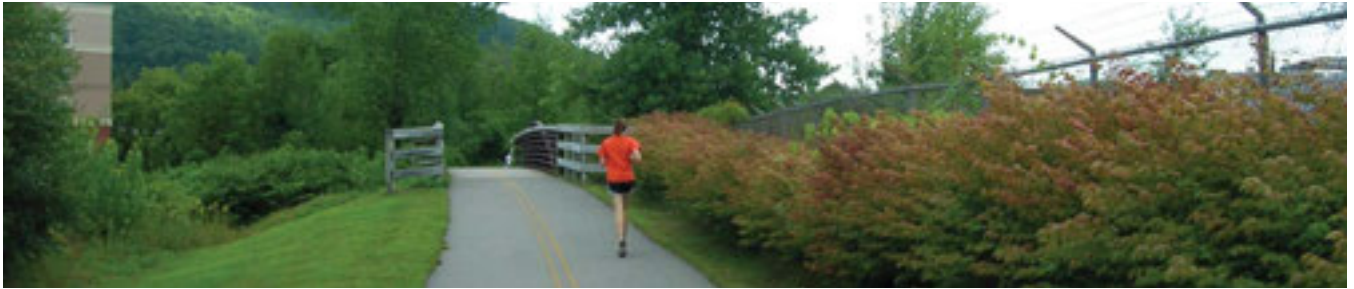


Urban Forestry

A healthy urban forest can help the community achieve goals of environmental, social, and economic sustainability while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The urban landscape can be understood as an ecosystem, with each part relating to and affecting the whole. Within this ecosystem, the urban forest mitigates air and water pollution. It also functions as a place for recreation and escape from urban stress. By shading and sheltering buildings, trees reduce the costs of cooling and heating. And even in urban settings, our health and welfare benefit from exposure to nature.

The benefits of urban trees are many, and as part of the community's commitment to greening its streets and addressing air quality and climate change, an urban forestry program should be created. Such a program would incorporate the community's existing street tree program and expand it throughout neighborhoods. It would also result in a community tree inventory, a carbon sequestration calculation, and educational programs for landowners on tree maintenance. It would establish planting guidelines, pruning schedules, and policy for how to deal with impacts to the community's urban forest.

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Community Health & Wellness

Keene is known for its attention to a healthy lifestyle. We work hard to sustain the physical, mental and social well-being of our citizens. When health issues arise, we can easily access high-quality knowledge and services within our community. Our support for health and well-being reflect our commitment to ecological, social and economic interconnectedness, as we understand that it takes a balance of all three characteristics to create healthy individuals and a healthy community.

► Community Health & Wellness Strategies

Coordination of Efforts

Through the Council for a Healthier Community's healthiest-community initiative, Vision 2020, the ability exists to align community goals and city programs with the five target areas noted in that plan (Health Status, Health Literacy and Communication, Health Care Access, Wellness, Social Capital). Given the extensive public outreach and focus on health within the community, it is recommended that municipal decision-making be coordinated with this initiative by integrating the goals of Vision 2020 into the City Council, Planning Board and Capital Improvement Program processes. The Council for a Healthier Community should regularly update the Planning Board, City Council, and city departments such as Parks and Recreation, Planning and Human Services so that city government can adjust programming and funding to best support the goals of a healthy and active community.

Access to Programs and Facilities

Keene can help make access to preventive care programs easier for the community by working with established programs, such as Keene State College's Youth Nutrition Fair and health education programs at Cheshire Medical Center. We can assist in the communication and marketing of these programs to the larger community.

Another possible strategy is to create a Community Recreational Amenities Committee that can assist the Parks and Recreation Department in identifying and purchasing appropriate software to track membership in local programs, assess demand for facilities, and help manage and prioritize recreational facility renovations and replacements for the Capital Improvement Program.

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MIKAELA ENGERT

Active Well-being

As our population ages, we should be working towards the creation of a community that integrates, not separates, all ages into the fabric of community life. This can be accomplished through changes to local land-use regulations to ensure the creation of mixed-use and mixed-income neighborhoods that will provide housing choice, support a high level of independence for children and seniors as well as allow seniors to age in place. Increased intergenerational opportunities for health care and recreation should also be provided and, when able, expanded (e.g., senior volunteer programs that interact with day-care facilities or after-school programs). We should explore the possibility of creating a new multi-generational community/senior center in a centrally located, walkable, transit-friendly location within our downtown area. A new community/senior center could be integrated into other facilities, such as a mixed-use development that includes housing, retail, commercial and/or institutional uses. These facilities could provide programming for seniors as well as opportunities for intergenerational interaction and support.

Food

Local sources and sustainable agricultural practices can provide us with a high-quality, healthy, affordable and secure supply of food. We should continually seek to help local food producers sell their goods directly to consumers, such as by providing a permanent location for Keene's farmer's market. We should also continue to support household and community gardens as well as sustainable food-production methods and education opportunities, linking local food with health, economic development, and land-use and climate-change goals.

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Maintaining a Safe Community

When compared to similar-sized communities throughout the country, Keene is a safe place to live. A safe community is one that consistently promotes safe and healthy behaviors that protect people from hurt and harm in all aspects of their lives. We want a safe community so that we can minimize the cost of medical care by reducing the number of injuries; to provide a source of community pride; to encourage families and people of all ages to move to the community; and to maintain Keene's high quality of life.

Crimes committed in Keene tend to be nonviolent, such as theft or other property-related offenses. Though severe crimes are not prevalent in our community, during the public process, residents and enforcement officials did express the need and desire for additional law and code enforcement for the college community, given the high percentage of response calls attributed to that segment of the community.

► Safe Community Strategies

Effective code and law enforcement

As a community, we value our high quality of life, high level of safety and low crime rate. In order to maintain and improve upon these qualities, we must assess procedures for enforcement of the city's health and property codes. These codes are in place to ensure that housing remains safe and in good condition, as well as to ensure that our community maintains a high level of aesthetic appeal and community health, which supports the community's general welfare, property values and its ability to attract new residents. It is important to community members that the city's code enforcement officers are proactive in enforcement activities and provide follow-through to ensure requirements are being met.

Another desirable safety feature residents mentioned is a community law-enforcement presence. Many residents asked for the re-establishment of a downtown police presence, whether through a substation or more foot and bicycle patrols. Many feel that a street-level connection between community and law enforcement helps deter negative behavior. Increased communication between neighborhood associations and higher-education institutions can also help ensure a safe community.

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Coordination between code and law enforcement for public safety

Many in the community desire increased coordination between code and law enforcement. The community may want to consider the benefits of creating a Public Safety Program that creates and fosters this collaboration and coordination. Such a program can aid in establishing the concept of community-based law enforcement services, channeling the efforts of community, law enforcement, education, probation, prosecution, courts, and social services toward a common objective.

The goal of developing a Public Safety Program should be to find effective solutions to neighborhood concerns of crime, vandalism, juvenile delinquency, narcotics activity, and the general quality-of-life issues in the community. Through a progressive mix of services, interagency partnerships, and community support and cooperation, this program could regularly resolve many neighborhood issues before they require a law enforcement response. Other activities could include informational outreach to the community on public safety matters, conducting high-visibility patrols of community parks, facilities, neighborhoods, and the commercial and business areas, as well as coordinating and responding to requests for safety services and information. Initiatives that could be created and aligned through this effort include Community Watch and Neighborhood Associations.

Emergency Preparedness

The city has an All Hazard Mitigation Plan (AHMP), created in 2005 after floods inundated a large portion of the community. However, the city does not have an Emergency Management Plan. It is recommended that the city create one in order to better anticipate and prepare the community for emergencies. The city could then create an emergency preparedness guide to help educate citizens about what to do in case of floods, energy disruptions, winter weather, drought, extreme heat, severe wind and other emergencies. The

plan should incorporate up-to-date climate science so citizens can get a sense of the risks associated with climate change, as well as understand Keene's climate-related vulnerabilities. Other emergency preparedness and adaptation measures from the 2005 All Hazard Plan and the 2007 Climate Adaptation Plan should be identified and incorporated into municipal decision-making, inclusive of the Capital Improvement Program and budget processes.



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Leadership

Keene is a tolerant community in which conflicts are resolved peacefully and individuals' rights and responsibilities are understood and accepted. Conflict resolution is an opportunity to improve the fabric of the community and to ensure that all voices are heard during the resolution process. The community and local governments support mutual understanding and respect, harmony and cooperation among all citizens.

► Leadership Strategies

Municipal Government

It is a goal of city government to provide transparent and responsible leadership. Therefore, it is imperative that we communicate effectively and share useful information with community members to help them participate in decisions that affect their well-being. Information should be accurate, timely and in plain language.

The City of Keene should continue to strive toward a user-friendly, interactive website that provides useful, well-written and easily understood information. The website should also allow online access to government services, such as paying water and sewer bills. The city can also pursue educational opportunities among the county, school district, and city boards and commissions to facilitate collaboration and information exchange, as well as continuing to provide access to city meetings through local television, webcasts and various other media.

The city will continue to plan, prioritize, finance and implement projects that support long-term quality of life for the community and will seek out collaborations and grant opportunities to maximize levels of service and reduce financial burden on taxpayers.

An Engaged Community

The community should identify and implement strategies to encourage all its members to be involved citizens. Highlighting success stories through various media of citizen engagement will help sustain high levels of community involvement. We should also continue to identify new “community sparkplugs,” leaders who can volunteer time on city boards and commissions.



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Reaching out to high-school and middle-school students to involve them in local decision-making will help create tomorrow's local leaders, even as we ensure their representation in the decisions of today. Continually communicating news, information and opportunities for involvement to community groups, schools, businesses and other organizations will help achieve a higher level of civic engagement in the community. We should encourage community associations and stakeholders to play a greater and more representative role on city boards and commissions and in community matters in general.

Decision Making

Collaboration

Seeking out public participation should become part of our process for major decisions that impact the community's well-being. Creating a citizen engagement policy is one way the city can facilitate this. We must continue to find opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing to ensure efficiency and progress in achieving community goals. Creating a participatory budgeting process is one possible way to foster community collaboration and decision-making. Developing communication strategies to inform residents will help ensure collaboration. We should strive to ensure that decision-making is geographically appropriate (neighborhood to citywide) for the issue at hand.

Transparency

We should continue to ensure that all people have equal opportunity to participate in decision-making before the decision is made, by using timelines and other constraints that are clear, fair and unambiguous. Officials, administration and the public should help create a "City Report Card" that explains how City Council, Planning Board and City Hall decisions address public expectation and meet, support and implement the community's vision for the future.

Simplicity and Clarity in Process

We should strive to make citizen participation in municipal decision-making as easy and clear as possible. Clear rules and regulations with easy-to-understand guidelines and timelines will be useful to those that want to invest in the community. Balancing state requirements placed upon the city with the goal of making community processes and procedures easy to follow will continue to be a challenge. Where possible, we should facilitate easy access and use of city government services and processes by the community.

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Arts & Culture

The community boasts a variety of venues, organizations, and talented artists, performers and cultural programming. It has been proven time and again that communities consistently investing in the arts also gain benefits in job creation, economic growth, and a sustained quality of life. Artistic expression and cultural diversity can flourish in Keene; it is up to us to find ways that this part of our vision can be supported, financially and philosophically, by the entire community and region.

► Arts & Culture Strategies

Arts and Cultural Collaborative

A new collaborative entity called Arts Alive! has been created to support arts and culture within the Monadnock Region. This group is poised to lead the support, coordination and promotion of arts and culture within Keene as well. It could offer artists or groups assistance and training in the business aspects of their creative pursuits, maintain a database directory, help coordinate event calendars, take on promotion and help solicit external funding for the community. The community should support Arts Alive! with financial and other resources to ensure the group's longevity and success in growing the creative economy of Keene and the region.

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Rochester, NY – Neighborhood of the Arts (NOTA): Home of ARTWalk

When plans were announced in 1998 to reconstruct a popular avenue, residents, business owners, artists, city officials and design consultants collaborated on an innovative design plan to highlight the areas artistic assets while creating a walkable neighborhood. That work led to ARTWalk and the development of the Neighborhood of the Arts (NOTA).

ARTWalk is a wide, decorative sidewalk stamped with artistic designs creating an aesthetically lovely trail that connects cultural institutions, studios, galleries and shops in the vibrant district. Public art, music, dance, poetry, and gardens flourish along the public walkway.

“Art in Transit” highlights three artistically designed bus shelters along the avenue and a sculpture exhibit called ROSE (Rochester Outdoor Sculpture Exhibit) extends up and down the avenue, commissioned and rotated on an annual basis.

NOTA came about through the utilization of vacant warehouses and neglected buildings in the heart of Rochester’s cultural district. These buildings were adaptively reused and renovated, creating low-cost studios and affordable live/work places for artists, musicians and other creative professions. The creative community in NOTA meets regularly to network and discuss how to strengthen the neighborhood and its assets.

Public Art

Public art demonstrates a community’s commitment to arts and culture, creating lively and attractive urban streetscapes and a unique sense of place. Keene already features a variety of murals and banners; however, opportunity exists to add to Keene’s public art – through sculpture, placement of pieces in redeveloped areas, and through creation of a distinctive outdoor experiential art museum that links public art with tourism and economic development. Public art can be facilitated through Planning Board regulations, creation of a community arts council, and the collaboration of existing arts and cultural organizations, such as galleries and non-profits.

Space/Infrastructure

The community should evaluate available space and needs for exhibition, galleries, performance or other types of arts and cultural space and infrastructure. This would allow creation of a concrete development strategy to ensure that Keene has the variety of types and sizes of space that the arts and cultural community requires. We could also provide technical assistance, incentives and other support to facilitate redevelopment of existing community buildings to provide space for artists to live and work. We should encourage businesses, schools and non-profits to provide meeting, display, performance, and storage space to the artistic and cultural community and young artists, either as a donation or at very low cost.

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Affordable Artist Live/Work Space

We should address issues and barriers within our land-use regulations that may deter the ability of artists to live in the community, as well as working with appropriate housing agencies to encourage development of affordable housing specific to this demographic. Live/work opportunities should be explored that will allow for artists to live and work within the same location, similar to what has been developed in Portland, Maine.

Youth & Education

Art education is vital to our community and its children. It helps build academic skills, increases academic performance, improves self-esteem, and builds creative skills that are increasingly important in a competitive workplace environment. We should actively work with the school system and institutions of higher education to create innovative programs for young people to engage in arts and cultural internship opportunities that can also satisfy academic credits. This would allow for connections with our existing arts community and help foster the next generation of local artists.

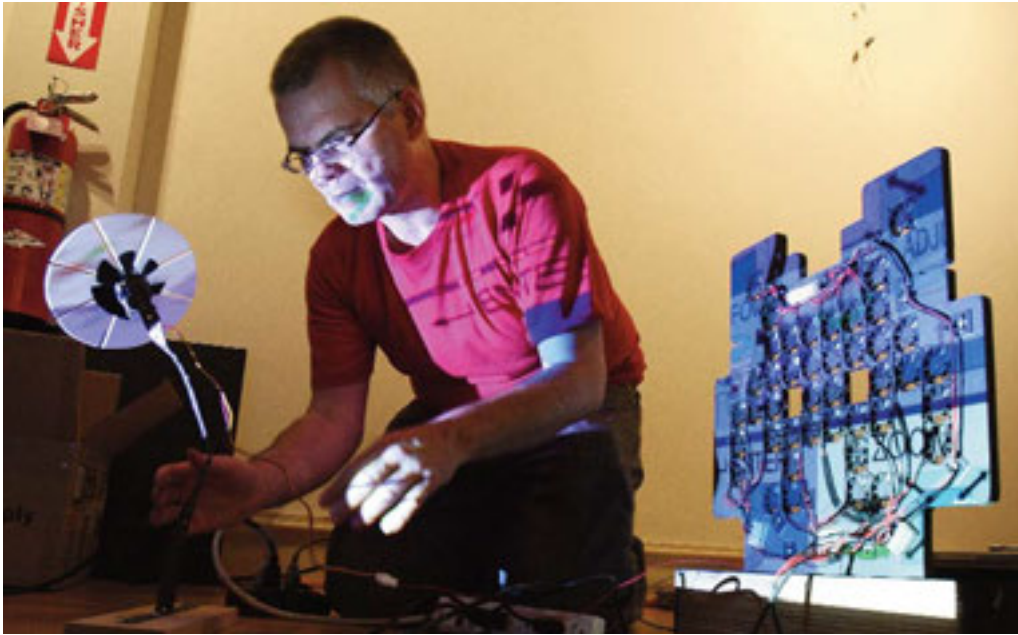
Community arts groups should work to encourage the use of the statewide arts curriculum learning standards as a guide to create arts and cultural activities within each of our schools so that every child has the opportunity for creative expression every school day.

Marketing/Community Identity

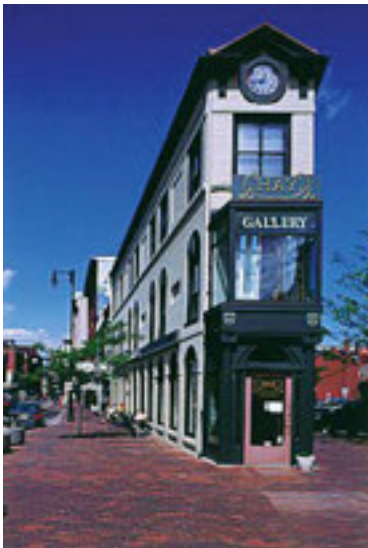
It is easy to remain unaware of the artistic and cultural richness of the region where we live. Remaining a dynamic center of cultural activity requires active promotion of cultural assets, which in turn takes commitments of time and money and collaboration between various groups. We should promote our arts and cultural opportunities to residents and tourists by engaging the Chamber of Commerce, using joint advertising, using various media to disseminate information



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highlighting cultural and artistic attractions, and create an overarching identity for the region's arts and culture that can be used to brand and market the area. Any marketing strategy should use the recent Americans for the Arts Economic Impact Study to promote the economic impact and vitality of our region's arts and culture and to promote our quality of life.



Arts & Land Use & Economic Development

We should consider creating an arts district within the community that would specifically support artistic and creative opportunities. This area could include the development of galleries, museums, cultural centers, civic arts facilities, and residential uses along with supportive community uses such as coffee shops, artist lofts, delis, etc. Gilbo Avenue may be an area worth exploring for this kind of redevelopment district. There is also the opportunity to create festivals, fairs and other arts and cultural activities that could serve as economic generators.

The community should explore recruiting creative-economy businesses, from artisanal foods to screen printing, digital media, publishing or other creative businesses. Portland, Maine, is a great case study for economic development around arts and cultural opportunities. This would have the side benefit of helping achieve another goal stated in the planning process – retaining younger people within the community, as many are seeking these types of creative opportunities and amenities.

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Education

The community has access to various types of educational opportunities – public and private schools, higher education institutions, and continuing and technical education. However, opportunities exist for further educational collaboration and expansion to ensure that we continue to provide necessary skills and education. Our consistent aim should be to make available a range of educational choices for all learning abilities and ages.

► Education Strategies

Community-based Education

We should ensure the continued availability of a wide range of formal and informal, community-based, adult-education programs and resources, to ensure that all adults have opportunities to maintain and enhance their skills. We should actively pursue ways to encourage disadvantaged groups to participate fully in learning activities. Support of our library and its programs is integral to this strategy. We should encourage courses in creative arts, domestic arts, crafts, languages, health and well-being, and personal growth.

Youth and Educational Opportunities

We should find creative ways to ready our young people for school and career placement by supporting the exploration of education and career opportunities, offering volunteer and internship opportunities that include skills development, and encouraging youth-development programs that increase academic and social competence. Doing so may help us retain young adults as local professionals after they graduate from high school and college.

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Technical Training

Community members clearly articulated the need for expansion of technical training opportunities through the local community college or other educational institutions. Availability of a range of educational and employment training programs for those that are unemployed, underemployed or otherwise experiencing difficulties in the labor market will be critical to ensuring our community's long-term social and economic success. Surveying samples of the population on their technical-education needs may assist in tailoring programs for both employers and potential employees.

Lifelong Learning

An important element of this educational ethic is recognizing the role of post-secondary organizations and institutions in creating lifelong learning opportunities for community members. We should ensure that opportunities for learning are widely available and easy to use by improving pedestrian,



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bicycle and public-transport access to learning destinations, reaching new audiences through technical media, and adding satellite campuses or community hubs within the region.

It is also important to promote relations between cultural facilities and other knowledge entities such as colleges and universities, libraries and research companies.

Educational Institution/City Collaboration

Throughout the planning process, community members consistently identified the need to foster strong partnerships with the school district and with our colleges and universities in order to meet our community's educational goals and address quality-of-life issues.

While the presence of higher-education institutions raises a number of town-gown issues common to all college communities, the community and these institutions derive great benefits from one another. We should continue a constructive dialogue and look for ways to partner on mutually beneficial goals. Collaborative efforts could focus on win-win projects – creating better pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, sharing recreational resources, and addressing student and faculty housing needs.

We should continue to foster a close relationship and open dialogue among the school board, local government and the community to help align their future goals for education and community.

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Diversity

Keene has a history of economical, social and cultural diversity. This diversity takes form in where we live, our occupations, educational backgrounds, ethnic heritage, religious beliefs, political views, thoughts and feelings, and other qualities. While some base the definition of diversity solely on race or ethnicity, the concept is much more tied to acceptance and respect. It means understanding individual differences and exploring these differences in a safe, positive and nurturing environment. It is about moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating diversity's many dimensions throughout our community.

► Diversity Strategies

Celebrate and Educate about Diversity

Many people do not know who Jonathan Daniels was, or his connection to the civil rights movement or to this community. We should seek out ways to raise awareness of his life and legacy in a way that embraces his vision and educates the public about his life and civil-rights contributions. Other ways to celebrate diversity include festivals and events, art shows and cultural activities, and sustaining an active dialogue throughout the community on diversity issues.

Create an Environment of Tolerance

We will work to provide outreach and education to all citizens to create an ethic of tolerance and general respect for others. Civic groups and other organizations, including higher education institutions, can help educate the community on these issues.

We can also work to develop leaders from community groups supporting social and cultural diversity and include them in decision-making and dialogue on issues of equity and diversity.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CHESHIRE COUNTY

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Municipal Governance and Financial Stability

The city recognizes its responsibility to help create a sustainable community. Part of that responsibility is to evaluate the role of municipal government in providing community services and to align organizational goals, projects and finances with the community's vision for the future and the strategies in this plan. Specifically, municipal government should consider:

Minimizing the Adverse Municipal Fiscal Impacts of Development

Our municipal government should minimize the adverse municipal fiscal impacts of development by only allowing development where existing community infrastructure already exists. If infrastructure is expanded, the city should continue with the policy that the developer bear the cost of the expansion, unless the development is part of a planned, collaborative project to generate skilled, living-wage jobs, lower taxes and raise quality of life. The City of Keene should consider preparing a fiscal-impact assessment to determine the current costs of development and an appropriate impact assessment and fee program to address shortfalls if other social and economic goals are not met. It may also be prudent to consider expansion of the Tax Increment Financing District and/or use of other incentives to improve local projects, provide encouragement to developers and improve the community's tax base.

Diversifying revenue streams to support municipal operations

The City of Keene already seeks alternative revenue streams. This effort should continue and expand. The city may, for example, want to consider matching land-use changes and improvements with the ability to raise revenue through Payment in Lieu of Taxes. The city also could consider leading an effort at the state level to increase authority for municipalities to develop and implement non-property-tax local revenue sources. Regardless of the tactic, the city will remain committed to exploring the development of additional revenue streams in an equitable and consistent manner for all.

Economic Development

Keene should proactively work with planners and developers to identify areas in the community that are appropriate for redevelopment and will substantially improve the tax base by attracting new industrial uses, light manufacturing and other highly skilled, high paying jobs. The development of large-scale retail, while



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somewhat desirable, should not be the primary type of economic development pursued. Such development provides few living-wage jobs, limits employee benefits, and creates part-time jobs that are not sustainable for the livelihood of employees. Oftentimes, large-scale retail development costs more in community services than the gain in tax revenue. The community and city should set the bar high to attract and recruit living-wage jobs and focus on economic-development opportunities that maximize benefits to both the quality of life and the tax base.

City and School District Budgeting

While the City of Keene and the school district are separate entities, it is recommended that municipal government collaborate with the school board to align city and school budgets with the community's vision for the future, land-use goals, and overall community financial needs.

Social Services

Keene agencies provide a variety of social services to address issues of homelessness, poverty, fuel assistance, hunger, substance abuse, domestic violence, dental health and mental illness, to name a few. Since the community already provides an extensive network of services, it could benefit from greater collaboration and communication among providers, the community and the region in general.

► Social Services Strategies

Poverty

Success will require implementing strategies to create sustainable work that pays living wages, as well as providing access to affordable housing and health care, transportation, education and training, and healthy and affordable food. We should continue to collaborate and share resources that will help these strategies succeed.

Hunger & Food Security

Hunger and food insecurity are derivatives of poverty, which limits a household's ability to purchase food. Research shows that the lower a household's income, the greater the likelihood that members of the household will have insufficient food. Adequate nutrition is critical for healthy living, yet the ability to access and purchase healthy food can be limited for people with low incomes.

Strategies to address hunger and increase food security include enabling food stamps to be accepted at the farmer's market, creating a mobile food pantry to serve residents without transportation to food assistance agencies, creating more efficient tools to connect individuals and families with food assistance, and creating opportunities for fresh and nutritious foods to be made available at local pantries and food banks. Another possibility is linking economic-development and educational programs to the issue of food security by creating experiential and learning opportunities through social-enterprise businesses based on organic agriculture.

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Homelessness

Adequate affordable housing is vital for eliminating housing instability and homelessness among extremely low-income households. However, the current demand for affordable housing in Keene dwarfs the supply, and consistent shortfalls and funding reductions for housing assistance have prevented local programs from helping all those who require it.

Homelessness does not discriminate. People from all walks of life can find themselves faced with a crisis that leads them to become homeless. Often homelessness stems from a convergence of a number of interrelated factors; for example, the inability to secure a job or permanent housing following a release from prison; or, for a low-wage, single working mother with no benefits or savings, an illness of a child requiring a hospital stay could put both at risk of homelessness.

Nevertheless, certain populations are impacted by homelessness at greater rates. Young people, victims of domestic violence, those with severe mental illness, people with mental or physical disabilities, people with substance abuse disorders and the formerly incarcerated all have an increased risk of homelessness.

We should consider creating a plan to end homelessness that would identify key system improvements, build up community collaboration and political will to address the issues, and direct community resources efficiently. We can work with private-market landlords to increase access to units for low-income households. This could be facilitated by developing a program that makes contact with private landlords and property-management companies in the communities for families in need. Such a program could include regular rent payments and a landlord contingency fund to cover any damages incurred. It should provide tenant education services to improve a family's understanding of its lease and rights as well as being a liaison between the tenant and landlord.

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Future Land Use & Policy

The Future Land Use Map is an illustrated community vision for the future that will guide Keene's physical growth and change. This map provides the city with a basis for making consistent decisions on capital investments, and it is a tool for potential developers to use in creating their development proposals.

Specific land-use development proposals are not automatically compatible with surrounding development simply because they fall within a broad land-use designation. The scale of the proposal, intensity of use, proximity to other uses, access, water management, probability of alternative development scenarios on the site, and influence on traffic patterns and other aspects of the physical environment are just some of the site factors that have to be considered through the Planning Board site plan and subdivision review process.

Since the Future Land Use Map reflects preferred land-use patterns and general community connections, it is not site prescriptive. Specific development proposals are judged against the pattern as well as the standards for site plan and/or subdivision, or other applicable regulations at the time of submission.

The map may be amended over time to maintain consistency with the community's vision for the future. It also provides a measurement of success in the completion of the master plan. Zoning-map amendments should be anticipated as part of implementing the Future Land Use Map and this master plan. We anticipate that changes to policies and land-use regulations will also be implemented to achieve the kind of community envisioned by citizens of Keene and the region. With consistent use, the Future Land Use Map will result in an aggregation of decisions that support the master plan's strategies.

The Future Land Use Map shows:

- The concentration of high-density, mixed-use development and high- to medium-density neighborhoods in the urbanized area within the Bypass; noted as the primary growth area on the map.
- Secondary growth areas that consist of single-family, low- to medium-density development.
- Expansion of mixed-use areas for commercial and industrial economic development.
- Areas for continued preservation of open space, agriculture and rural-residential uses.

Given limited supply of large areas of readily developable land and the community's desire to

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concentrate land within existing developed areas, land-use issues are mainly concerned with redeveloping and enhancing the existing available land and infrastructure. In some areas, recommendations focus primarily on maintaining or enhancing existing conditions: residential neighborhoods, downtown, and existing commercial areas. Public input revealed a strong desire for change in some of these areas, particularly along main community transportation corridors leading to downtown, within neighborhoods, along West, Winchester and Marlboro streets, Gilbo Avenue and the commercial area south of 101 between routes 10 and 12.

Future Land Use Map Categories

Conservation Residential Development and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Sending Zone – These are outlying areas that generally have moderate to severe environmental limitations, including steep slopes, rock and ledge close to the ground surface, large intact forest and agricultural ecosystems, rich wildlife and flora, and critical scenic resources. In these areas, the conservation of land is prioritized. There are many areas that are appropriate for Conservation Residential Development (CRD) designed to be compatible with conservation purposes coupled with the provision of important community identified amenities. Within these areas are opportunities to transfer the right to develop parcels to other areas in the community that are more appropriate for development.

Traditional Neighborhood, Mixed-Use Areas and TDR Receiving Zone – These areas of the community are the most developed and the best able to accommodate carefully planned growth and density. These areas can be the target of the vast majority of new smart-growth residential and mixed-use development, but only with design standards to ensure that it maintains the quality of existing neighborhoods, blends seamlessly and transitions into the existing downtown, mitigates traffic and parking issues, and provides for a healthy diversity of the built form that respects Keene’s aesthetic appeal.

More focus on design details, compatibility with historic areas, provision of green space and quality of life within these areas are key elements for encouraging a population density consistent with the principles of smart growth. Opportunities exist to transfer development rights from Residential Conservation Development regions into these areas.

Mixed-Use Commercial Areas – These are the current and proposed commercial areas of the community. The desired “level of mix” in these areas depends on their location. A plan is strongly encouraged in these areas that situates housing on buildings’ upper floors, with serv-

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ice retail and service uses on the first floors. It is important to focus on providing human scale and amenities, including various pedestrian, bicycle and transit options. Including alternative transportation elements along designated mixed-use commercial area corridors is consistent with Keene's desire to provide more transportation choice and create visually appealing gateway corridors. Mixed uses on each lot and within buildings are strongly encouraged. Design details and pedestrian, bicycle and transit options are most important. Regulations should focus on design, mixed use, street orientation, access management and mitigating traffic impacts – parking requirements, minimum setbacks and traditional dimensional requirements are less important in these areas.

Business, Industrial, and Live/Work – Industrial and residential areas were historically isolated from each other for health and safety reasons. However, many modern industrial users are much better neighbors than their predecessors were. Manufacturing is a particular target market for an emerging green economy, and these facilities are likely to be very good contributors to the local economy. Still, it is most often the case that large-scale heavy industrial operations should not be allowed in residential areas.

Access and the potential to build off of other industrial users make these areas of the community an ideal location for some of the new potential industrial users. Areas identified on the map along Key Road, Optical Avenue, Marlboro Street, as well as other business and industrial areas, are appropriate for this type of mixed use. Residential use should be allowed only as part of live/work and artists' space, where the primary use is business, but where business owners and workers may live on the premises. Design details, mitigating traffic impacts, sensitivity to surrounding neighborhoods, and a high level of connectivity to the rest of the community are the most important development standards.

Institutional users include city offices, health care facilities, county facilities, school property, and other non-profit land users. These entities provide vital services and jobs to the community. The location and functionality of institutional land uses should be focused near downtown or, where it fits the need and scale, in village/neighborhood activity centers. Churches as an institutional use are largely compatible with any land-use type.

Manufacturing and Industrial (non-residential) – These are the traditional industrial, research and business-park sites that should be preserved for business and industry not compatible with residential areas, though they may be located within walking distance. Traffic mitigation, transit, and site plan requirements are important in these areas.

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Strategic Planning Areas

Though a small New England community, Keene has various components that, when growth and change occur, should have different foci than other areas. The characteristics of these areas and community amenities are described below. It is recommended that as the community moves forward, specific strategic area plans be developed for each.

West Keene Strategic Planning Area

Characterized by a mix of older, suburban neighborhoods that transition to Keene's traditional agricultural and forested hillside areas. Focus should be on maintaining these neighborhoods, creating the ability for trail/pathway connections, and bolstering neighborhood/village activity centers that provide small scale neighborhood goods and services to this area (e.g. hardware stores, veterinary offices, laundromats, small markets, etc.). As West Keene transitions eastward, densities should increase, which is consistent with the pattern established today, and the scale of streets and blocks should reflect a highly walkable community that blends seamlessly and transitions into the urban core commercial and neighborhood areas. In particular, sections of the 2002 Transportation Plan that reference Park Avenue and Maple Avenue should be referenced and implemented (pages 56 – 58).

Winchester/Marlboro Street Strategic Planning Area

This planning area and transportation corridor should be studied for its entire length within the urbanized core. There are opportunities for a mix of higher density housing and provision of retail and community services that transition to the Key Road commercial area along Winchester Street towards Keene State College and the Blake Street Neighborhood in the direction of Main Street. To the east side of Main Street, along Marlboro Street, there are similar opportunities to balance higher density housing with the existing single- and two-family residential neighborhoods. There is also the opportunity to extend light commercial uses from the Main Street roundabout to the Public Works Facility just before Optical Avenue. As this area transitions towards the Optical Avenue gateway into the community from Route 101, the inclusion of a higher density of industrial/manufacturing/business/office uses should be pursued with the provision of connections to adjacent neighborhoods, creating a walkable area. Pages 39-47 of the 2002 Transportation Plan should be referred to for this area as well.

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South of 101 Strategic Planning Area

This area should receive a high level of planning and focus as it is an economic redevelopment area for commercial, manufacturing and industrial uses. Focus on the provision of high-quality, living-wage industries should prevail over expansion of low-wage retail and service development. The city and community should explore ways to create a mixed-use area for these industries, in conjunction with managing appropriate access and providing community connections via sidewalk, pathways, bridges and trails north towards downtown and south towards other regional trails or bicycle routes. A safe crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists at the intersection of Lower Main Street, Route 101 and Route 12 South is a high priority. A pedestrian or bicycle pathway within this strategic planning area is also planned for 2013 that will provide a safe crossing from the trail by the Keene State College fields across 101, to the other side of the regional trail. Preservation of an existing small neighborhood area for possible live/work development should also be considered. Balancing development of this area with natural environmental features is also a high priority.

West/Gilbo/Ralston/Emerald Street and Downtown Strategic Planning Area

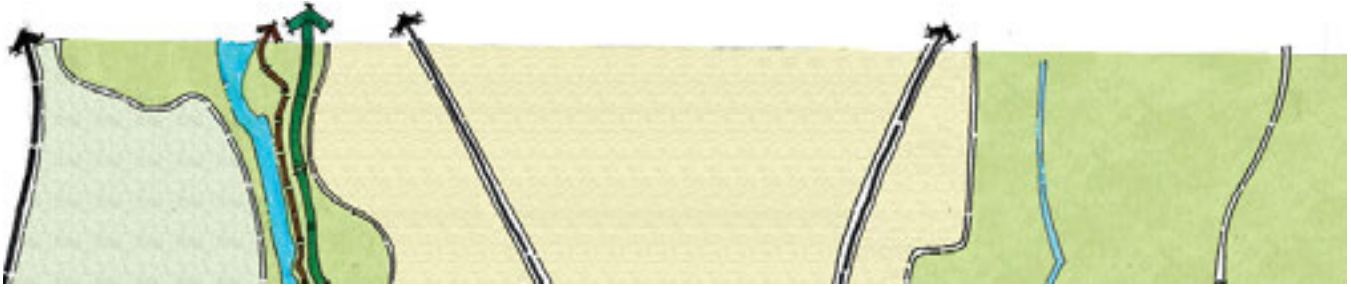
This area is ripe for redevelopment and downtown expansion. Focus should be on providing mixed uses that include higher-density residential, retail, office, light commercial and manufacturing, arts and cultural uses as well as institutional uses. Opportunities for creative infill exist; in particular, attention should be paid to transitions between existing neighborhoods, proposed higher densities and the downtown core so that the built pattern functions well and supports a walkable, bikeable dense core area.

Downtown Neighborhood Strategic Planning Areas

As the community moves forward, specific core downtown neighborhoods should receive specific strategic planning because each deals with different issues, concerns and consists of different uses and built form. Focus should remain on walkability, bikeability and neighborhood vitality. The six neighborhoods identified (names are official or unofficial) through the planning process are:

1. *Southeast Keene Neighborhood* – Located roughly to the east of Main Street, South of Marlboro Street and North of Route 101, this neighborhood has an active association

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that is working with Keene State College and Keene Police to address neighborhood quality-of-life issues. This neighborhood should be the first to undergo a neighborhood strategic planning effort.

2. *North Central Neighborhood* – This neighborhood is located roughly in the triangle area between Court and Washington streets. It has seen a large amount of infrastructure investment in the last few years by property owners and through the city’s street and utility improvement program. This area has a neighborhood association and should also be among the first to undergo a neighborhood strategic planning effort.
3. *East Side Neighborhood* – Located roughly east of Washington Street, Roxbury Court, and Carpenter Street, down toward Eastern Avenue, this neighborhood consists of many of Keene’s older single, two- and multi-family homes. Several community amenities are located in this neighborhood, including the Carpenter Street Fields and Robin Hood Park.
4. *West Side/Ashuelot Neighborhood* – This neighborhood is nestled between the Ashuelot River, Court Street and north of West Street. It is comprised of a mix of office and commercial uses that transition to residential uses, combined with open space and trail amenities. This area traditionally provided housing for many of Keene’s mill-workers.
5. *Winchester Street/Blake Street/KSC Neighborhood* – Another traditionally blue-collar neighborhood, this area has undergone dramatic change due to the influence and growth of Keene State College. Focus should be on maintaining neighborhood integrity, balancing the needs for high-quality affordable homeownership with the need for high-quality affordable rental housing that serves various portions of Keene’s population, including students and faculty. This area may be ideal for a neighborhood-watch program combined with a neighborhood association. This area is also ripe for redevelopment in areas, with the opportunity to provide higher density, privately managed student housing, creating neighborhood reinvestment while also creating incentives to promote energy-efficient and green building. This neighborhood has the potential to be a shining example for the community as a mixed-use, mixed-income and mixed-age, energy-efficient, well-maintained neighborhood that supports overall community vitality and strengthens campus-community relations.

The Plan



6. *Key Road Neighborhood* – This neighborhood has potential to become a quality live/work community with connections to retail and commercial uses. Creating walkability and community connections is important for this neighborhood, especially as it is also an area where mixed-income and mixed-age housing could be located. City Express transit stops should be considered and incorporated. As redevelopment occurs here, increased density for both residential and commercial uses should be considered. Parking should also be addressed through creative means that will eliminate surface lots by providing structured, multi-use parking facilities combining retail, office and even residential uses.

Community Connections

The Future Land Use Map highlights general community connections that should be pursued through transportation and land-use planning redevelopment and in coordination with trail, path and bicycle planning and Parks and Recreation Resource master planning. The locations shown on the map are approximations and should not be interpreted as exact. Achieving these goals will take leadership, willing landowners and collaboration. The community connections shown on the map include trails throughout the region that connect natural resources and amenities to neighborhoods and the community's downtown; possible park locations; trailhead parking and other trailhead amenities; greenway connections along major waterways or existing regional trail systems; and gateways that are important entrances from the region into the community; which deserve particular attention to maintain a rural character that transitions into the small, New England community of Keene.

Neighborhood/Village Activity Centers

The Future Land Use Map indicates a number of neighborhood and village activity centers. These areas range in scale of neighborhood services provided – from just a market, to a mix of uses that includes a market, hardware store, offices, etc. Each area should be supported in a manner that allows it to remain viable and, where possible, even expand to offer residents services that are accessible via walking and bicycling. Review of each of these areas should be incorporated into each strategic planning area planning process. As the community undergoes land-use regulation and code revisions, it is imperative that these areas be incorporated into those documents to allow their uses and support their form and function.

The Plan

Land Use Plan Strategies

Rewrite the Land Use and Zoning Code

The community's land-use and zoning ordinance provides the detailed regulations that implement the land-use plan. It regulates uses, height, bulk, area, setbacks, parking, signage and other requirements. Changes will be recommended to the zoning ordinance in order to align it with the intent of the Future Land Use Map. These will include changes to the city's official zoning map. As the community moves forward with this revision, other types of land-use regulations should be considered that will incorporate walkability, green infrastructure, sustainable building, a smart-growth principle and other features outlined in this plan. Performance zoning is one type of code that should be reviewed as part of this process.

Consider the Creation of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program

As part of the community's land-use and zoning code update process, the creation of a TDR program should be considered. A TDR program aims to: provide land owners with the ability to purchase and sell development rights; preserve sensitive and highly valued natural resources in the community (e.g. hillsides, agricultural lands, surface waters, etc.); and focus development towards areas that are better suited to accommodate increased levels of development, such as in mixed-use areas, the downtown core, and commercial or residential areas – all where existing infrastructure is located. Keene is well-positioned to create such a program given its existing developed and open space land-use patterns which in turn create clear areas for sending and receiving zones for development rights. TDR programs have been successfully applied in similar communities throughout the U.S., and such a program could be an influential land-use tool in assisting Keene towards achieving its vision for the future.

Revision of Site Plan Regulations and Creation of Subdivision Regulations

The Planning Board's site plan regulations will require updating to align development standards with the master plan's development strategies and with the Future Land Use Map. The creation of separate subdivision regulations is also recommended to address land subdivision in a way that is supportive of the strategies in this plan and the land-use section. Considerations of street trees, alternative stormwater management, sustainable site design and walkability are just a few aspects that should be incorporated into updated development regulations.

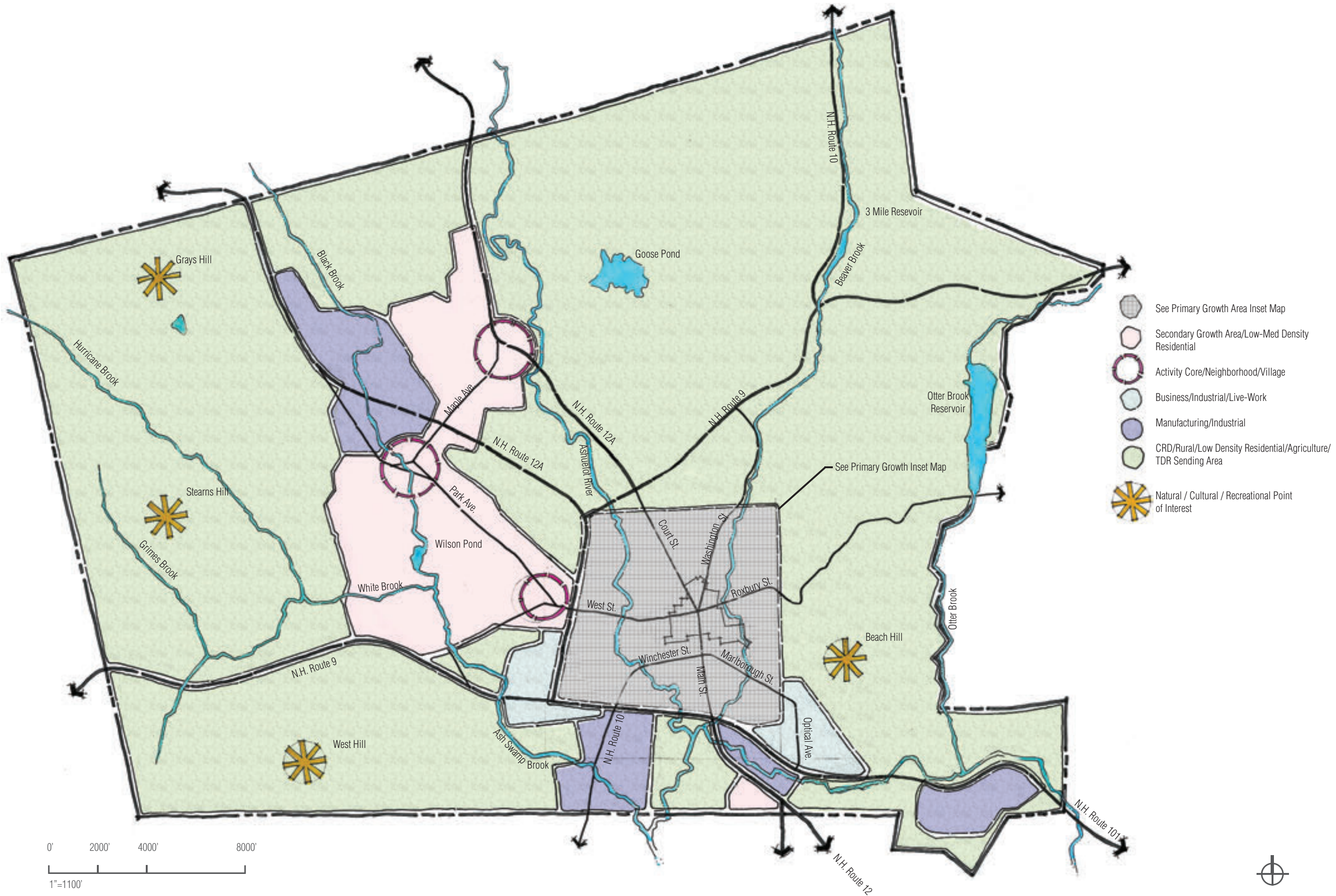
The Plan

Community Building Codes

The community's building codes should also be updated to encourage both energy efficiency and sustainable building and rehabilitation. Keene has consistently adopted the State Building Code, and the city and community may want to consider how the code might help in achieving the strategies of this plan.

Encouraging Quality Design

Though codes and regulations are designed to regulate uses, they may not be an effective way to encourage quality design. This can be accomplished through several means, such as dedicated design review, use of design guidelines, or use of performance zoning that focuses not on the parcel's use but its performance and how it relates, interacts with and impacts surrounding areas.



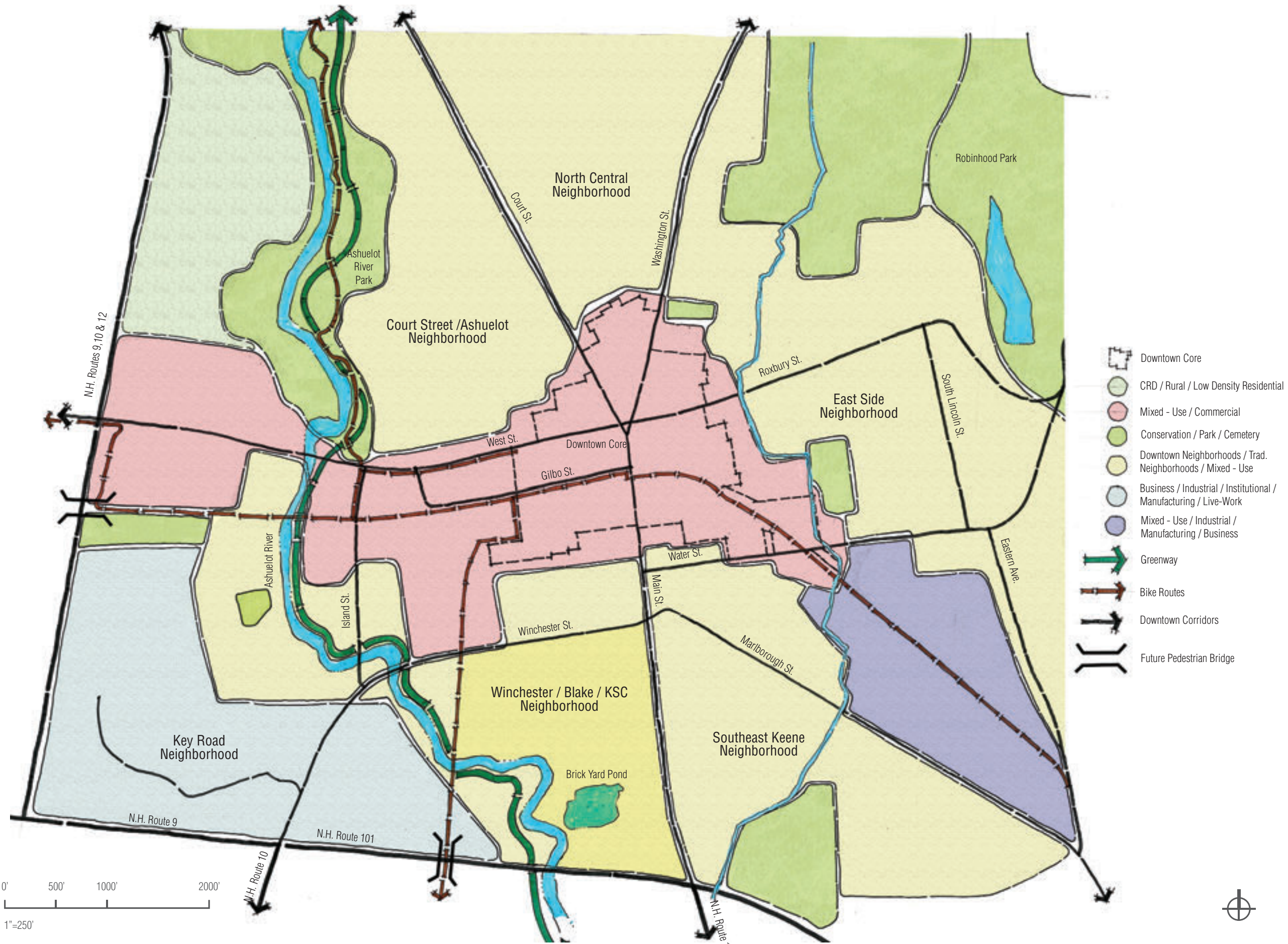
-  See Primary Growth Area Inset Map
-  Secondary Growth Area/Low-Med Density Residential
-  Activity Core/Neighborhood/Village
-  Business/Industrial/Live-Work
-  Manufacturing/Industrial
-  CRD/Rural/Low Density Residential/Agriculture/TDR Sending Area
-  Natural / Cultural / Recreational Point of Interest

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0' 2000' 4000' 8000'
1"=1100'

FUTURE LAND USE MAP
City of Keene, NH

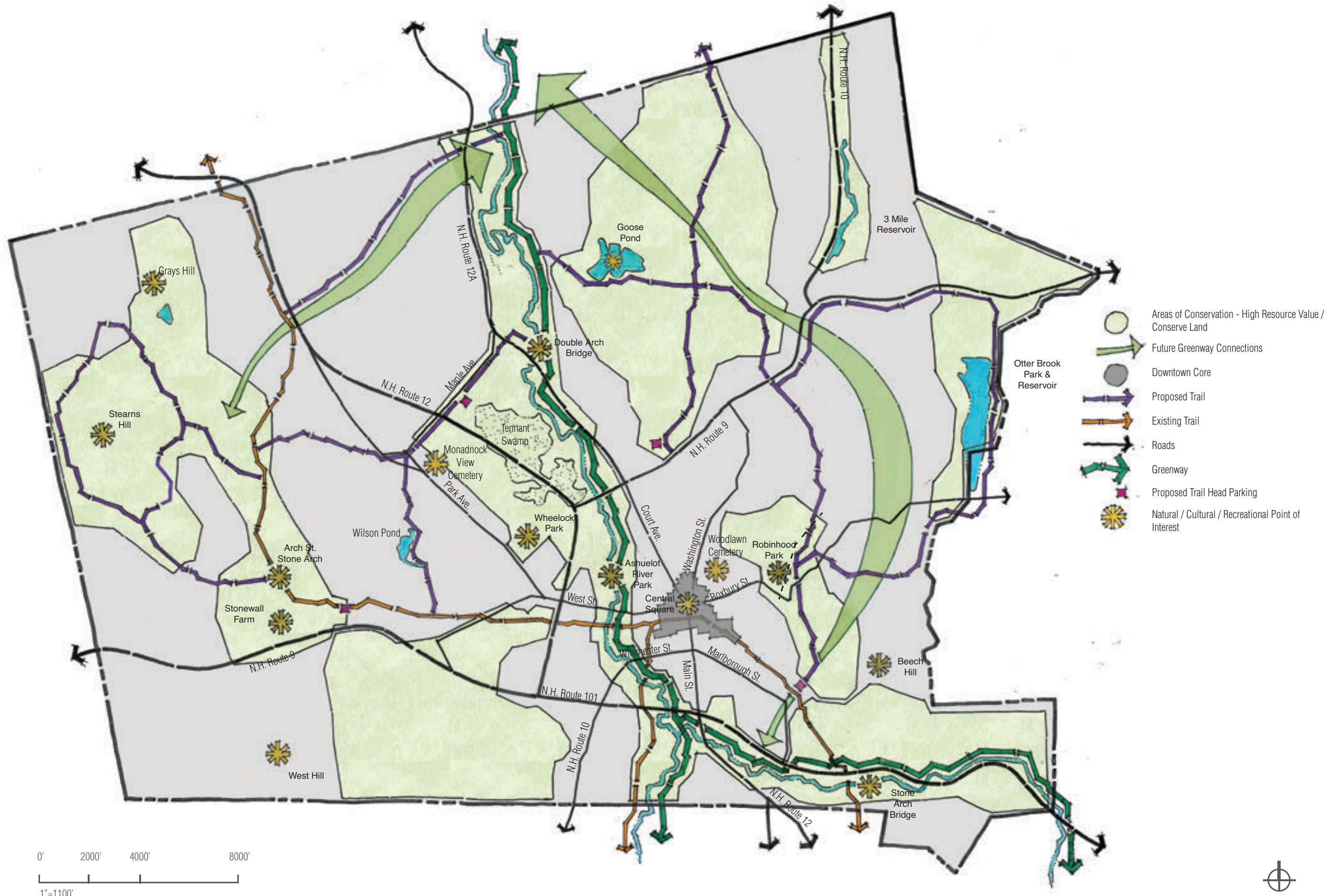




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PRIMARY GROWTH AREA INSET MAP

City of Keene, NH



trim to 16 inches; fold at 8.5-inch width

PROPOSED FUTURE TRAILS, GREENWAYS AND CONSERVATION AREAS

City of Keene, NH

Master Plan Implementation

This plan is a living document that should evolve to respond to changing circumstances and new and unexpected challenges and opportunities. To ensure the plan's success and longevity, the city and community should establish a way to monitor progress made in implementing the goals and strategies.

Schedule for Revisiting

This plan should be reviewed on an annual basis, preferably timed before the creation of the community's Capital Improvement Program and Operating Budget. This allows for an assessment of progress, reporting that progress throughout the community, identification of collaborative partnerships, and the ability to adjust selected implementation items to reflect progress, new and revised priorities and changing circumstances.

Over the long-term, to avoid conflicts and to adequately address changes in the community, this plan should be thoroughly reviewed, revised and updated every five to seven years.

Responsibility for Implementation

The State of New Hampshire gives the authority to review, update and implement a master plan to the Planning Board. Because Keene's Master Plan has been developed through a broad participatory process and because its successful implementation depends upon the continuing engagement of citizens and organizations in a variety of sectors, it is in the best interest of the community to explore the creation of a master plan implementation process. This process should have broad representation from various stakeholders throughout the community and provide a dedicated forum for reviewing, coordinating and identifying progress throughout the community in executing the goals and strategies outlined in this plan. As implementation occurs and successes are made, this process likely will prove invaluable to future community master plan updates.

One possible vehicle for this process would be for the joint monthly meetings of the City Council Planning, Licenses and Development Committee and Planning Board to serve as a forum for a series of public presentations and discussions regarding plan implementation. At these sessions, relevant stakeholder groups – including City staff, boards and commissions as well as a variety of nongovernmental organizations focused on specific areas covered by this plan – could present updates about their work as it relates to plan implementation.

Implementation

Top Strategies for Implementation

Rewrite the City's Land Use and Zoning Regulations to Proactively Achieve the Community's Vision for the Future

The community can address a number of land-use concerns through a land-use and zoning regulations review, assessment and update. This would take the form of a complete code rewrite guided by the observations of the assessment. For years, community members and local elected officials have pointed out that the community's codes are outdated and unwieldy and often conflict with desired development patterns. A rewrite should ensure that they are written as simply and plainly as possible, providing clear processes and expectations. This update should be the top priority for implementation of this master plan.



JOEL ST. JOHN

Continue to Manage and Improve the Community's Transportation Network

The City of Keene should continue to make needed improvements to its roads, bridges, and intersections based on the 2002 Transportation Plan. These projects should include improvements to infrastructure to bicycling and walking. To support alternatives modes of travel, the city should adopt a "Complete Streets" policy and design program.

In addition, the city should join the Monadnock Region Transportation Management Association (TMA). There is a growing regional need for improved and increased transportation services, be they volunteer, public or for-profit service. Increased use of automobiles and trucks has led to air-quality problems, sprawling development patterns, roadway congestion, and dependence on nonrenewable resources. The TMA will explore alternative transportation options other than the personal passenger vehicle to improve environmental quality, personal health and well-being.

Implementation



JOEL ST. JOHN

Make Use of the Community's Parks and Trail System Easier

Even though Keene has one of the best systems in the region, many people are not aware of the full extent of the recreation, travel and exercise opportunities along the community's trail and sidewalk network. Promotion of these opportunities would encourage more residents and visitors to use these amenities. This low-cost strategy is easily implemented by the community in conjunction with local arts, health, cultural and historical organizations.

Develop and Adopt Neighborhood Plans

Specific area plans for neighborhoods should be developed in collaboration with neighborhood associations and residents. These plans should address the unique issues facing each area related to the built environment, natural systems, provision of public utilities and amenities, land-use change, and quality of life questions such as safety, law enforcement, and leadership. Two neighborhoods in Keene are represented by active associations and should be the first areas for this type of planning. These are the Southeast Keene neighborhood and the North Central neighborhood.

Establish a Community-Wide Home Weatherization Program

Much of Keene's housing was built before modern energy codes, and great opportunity exists to reduce carbon emissions and save money and energy through building weatherization and retrofitting. In many cases, small, inexpensive changes can substantially increase the energy efficiency of homes. In collaboration with providers of weatherization programs and services, the city should prepare a program to make money available for home weatherization to those who do not currently qualify for comparable low-income programs. Grant funding should be pursued for this purpose.

Implementation

Adopt Low Impact Design (LID) standards in Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations

Work with the Planning Board to adopt specific standards to minimize the discharge of stormwater from newly developed sites. This approach should be accompanied by an education and information program regarding LID techniques including the use of porous pavement and concrete, rain gardens, and other best management practices.

Adopt a City Council Resolution to become a “Champion” in the Council for a Healthier Community’s Vision 2020 program

Provide city leadership to the Vision 2020 community-wide health initiative designed to actively engage the citizens of Cheshire County with the goal of becoming the nation’s healthiest community by 2020.

Continue to Monitor, Revise, Update and Implement Keene’s Climate Change Plan

The city should continue to update the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory on a regular basis, identify new measures for energy conservation and greenhouse gas reduction, as well as implement various measures relating to adaptation, as identified in the 2004 Climate Action Plan and the 2007 Climate Resiliency Plan. The GHG inventory should be utilized in a manner that informs policy, purchasing and programming decisions. Emissions reductions targets should be reviewed and amended to align with the state’s goal of reducing emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. Coordination with regional climate groups, Keene’s Cities for Climate Protection Committee and the city’s internal Green Team, as well as working with the State of New Hampshire, will be imperative towards achieving Keene’s climate and overall sustainability goals.

Develop an Implementation Plan

In conjunction with the City Council, the Planning Board should develop a specific implementation plan for the strategies and actions identified in this plan including a schedule of regular updates and progress reviews.



MIKAELA ENGERT

Conclusion



JEFFREY NEWCOMER

Keene is a unique community that residents are proud to call home. Although the conveniences and attractions of large metropolitan areas are close at hand, the community maintains a solidly residential working-class character, complemented by a landscape of rural areas, farms and open space. The heart of the community is its historic and vibrant downtown core. In an age when many communities are losing their “sense of place,” Keene has a firm sense of its identity, built on a foundation of the past and a clear vision of the future.

Each generation of Keene residents has left its mark on the community and helped make it the place it is today. Through this plan, today’s generation of residents have the chance to write new pages in the community’s history. This responsibility and privilege cannot be underestimated; nor can the ability of residents to rise to the occasion. Time and again, they have demonstrated a commitment to the community’s high quality of life and unique character through hard work and dedication.

This process can best be described as the imperfect art of “place making.” At the heart of this is a community’s collective ability to address tough questions that often are without simple answers. Recognizing that nearly every solution has a trade-off, the community has nonetheless continually embraced the future through its proactive planning efforts.

The community conversation about what creates a sustainable community may be the biggest legacy of all. Throughout this project, participants pointed to each other – the people of Keene and the Monadnock Region – as the community’s single greatest attribute. By working together to solve common problems and shared opportunities, residents have not only invested in the community, but in themselves. Looking ahead, the implementation of the Comprehensive Master Plan will provide a new opportunity for residents to engage with one another and chart the course for the future of the region and the community.

Together, we move forward from here toward a sustainable community.

APPENDIX A

Transportation Plan

2003

City of Keene Transportation Master Plan

2002



Keene Planning Board
City of Keene, NH

Date of Public Hearing: *September 23, 2002*
Approval by City Council: *November 21, 2002*
Formal Adoption by Planning Board: *November 25, 2002*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vision Statement

Develop and maintain an integrated transportation plan and system that meets the socio-economic needs of the community. The plan and system should encourage diversity and efficiency, reflect the needs of the region and the environment in its design and execution and integrate passenger motor vehicle, motorized public transportation, pedestrians, and bicycle transportation in a network of services and facilities.

Purpose and Role of Plan

This Transportation Master Plan is intended to replace the Keene Transportation Plan; Phase One: Downtown, which was adopted by the Planning Board on November 22, 1993. The plan presents new and revised goals, strategies and recommendations for the Planning Board and the Keene City Council that will guide Keene's future transportation planning and capital improvement programs. It also sets new directions for planning and improving Keene's transportation systems as Keene enters the 21st century.

Key Findings

This Master Plan emphasizes that transportation is more than just moving motor vehicles, it is also about moving people in an efficient, convenient and environmentally friendly manner. To achieve these goals, a variety of strategies are needed. Some of these strategies include the provision of:

- (1) Safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle accommodations and facilities designed to enhance access and improve connections within Keene and between adjacent communities.
- (2) Convenient and efficient public transportation systems and facilities designed to make the best use of existing facilities, strengthen the connections between various modes of transportation, and expand alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle.
- (3) Strategically located and cost-effective park and ride facilities, designed to serve commuters in downtown Keene and other destinations within the region.
- (4) Travel demand management measures such as the implementation of reduced fees to encourage greater use of long-term parking lots with access to transit services.
- (5) Improvements in traffic signal coordination and signal operations.
- (6) Traffic calming techniques, including the use of modern roundabouts where appropriate.

- (7) Streetscape improvements designed to improve and enhance the function, health, appearance and visual quality of Keene's major streets and gateways.
- (8) Concentrated and compact urban land use patterns and mixed-use neighborhoods, designed to encourage people to walk and bicycle between home and work.

This Master Plan recommends that alternative transportation be incorporated in transportation and land use planning activities and decisions. Keene should provide a variety of opportunities for transportation.

Toward this goal, this Master Plan encourages Keene to strive to become a Park and Walk community. A Park and Walk community is a community where residents and visitors park in defined locations and find convenient and pleasurable transportation during their day by means of public transit, walking and/or bicycling.

Equally important to the Park and Walk concept is the notion of corridor planning and the implementation of a street classification system. A street classification system is a useful planning and management tool for prioritizing future street reconstruction and repair, sidewalks and other improvements based upon the function of the street within Keene's transportation network. It is also helpful in implementing zoning ordinances. The system recommended by this plan consists of: Limited Access Highway, Controlled Access Highways, Major Streets, Collector Streets, and Local Streets.

Also contained within this Master Plan are corridor management plans for all the Major Streets and Collector Streets located within Keene. These plans also include Central Square and other areas, which have transportation related activities. The corridor plans are divided into two sections: Downtown Corridors and Gateway Corridors. The main highlights of each plan are summarized below:

- Main Street serves as the main gateway to the Downtown providing access to Keene State College and to residential, commercial and industrial development within the historic core of Keene. Presently, the Main/Winchester and Marlboro intersection and Central Square operate at failed conditions. It is recommended that a major reconstruction of the Main/Winchester and Marlboro intersection be designed and completed. There are no specific recommendations for addressing traffic around Central Square.
- The Railroad Property is a significant area for future Downtown redevelopment. The impact of redevelopment will directly affect the Main Street corridor and Central Square. It is recommended that 93rd Street from Railroad Street to Water Street be extended as part of the redevelopment of the property.
- Emerald Street is recommended to be incorporated in function and appearance as part of the central business district. It is also recommended that improvements be made to the intersections along the street as well as the extension of Emerald Street to Island Street.

- This Master Plan recommends that Foundry Street be extended to Emerald Street as a one-way street southbound using the former B&M railroad right of way and that Ralston Street be converted into a one-way street in the northbound direction.
- It is anticipated that Island Street will receive increased traffic as a result of the Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project. Vehicles will be directed onto Island Street instead of Winchester Street to reach the Downtown. It is recommended that the northern section of Island Street be widened and that the Island/West Street intersection be improved.
- The West Street corridor is a major gateway consistently experiencing the highest traffic volumes within Keene. This Master Plan recommends the execution of a final engineering design plan to widen and improve the street in key locations and include computer controlled traffic signal coordination.
- The Upper Winchester Street corridor extends through the northern portion of Keene State College providing access to Main Street. This Master Plan recommends streetscape, lighting and pedestrian amenities found on Main Street be continued along Winchester Street to the Ashuelot River Bridge.
- Court Street is a major street connecting Downtown Keene to the Cheshire Medical Center and northern residential areas. The City of Keene and the Cheshire Medical Center are currently sharing in the cost of installing a modern roundabout at the main access to the medical center.
- Marlboro Street is expected to see increased traffic with the construction of the connector road at Optical Avenue. Marlboro Street is sufficiently wide to handle the anticipated increase in traffic, but the existing Marlboro Street and Optical Avenue intersection may need to be improved.
- Washington Street traffic volumes have been constant over the past 5 years. No major changes are recommended.
- Park Avenue and Maple Avenue function together as a single collector street providing access to West Keene. The intersection of West and Park Avenue will be improved in the future as a result of the Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Keene's Transportation History

The City of Keene, located near the geographic center of New England has long been a transportation and employment center for the Southwest Region of New Hampshire. Located within the heart of Cheshire County, Keene is known for its beautiful Main Street, natural and cultural endowments, and vistas of surrounding hillsides. Rural in its hinterlands with much of the population and commerce centered in the low valley areas, the City still exhibits the charm and character of the classic New England setting.

Much of Keene's charm today is linked to its past. Historically, many of the streets in the city were laid out in a radial and grid pattern linking Central Square to the hinterlands of the community (see map showing the layout of the Village of Keene in 1850 on page 4). Today, a different street layout exists, which consists of many circuitous streets and cul-de-sacs. The result is a change from a grid style street network, which formerly diffused and dispersed traffic throughout Keene to a system that now channels traffic from various neighborhood streets and concentrates it onto collector streets and arterials.

The role and function of the turnpike and the railroad is also clearly evident in the layout of Keene and the architectural styles of the buildings within the community. The Third New Hampshire Turnpike, which operated between Boston and Bellows Falls, Vermont was one of the most important transportation systems in place in the region at the time. This turnpike was incorporated in Keene in 1799 and later became the route of the Cheshire Railroad, which connected Keene with Boston in 1848. By the end of the 19th century, Keene was served by four railroads, the Cheshire Branch, the Ashuelot Railroad, the Manchester and Keene Railroad, and the Connecticut River Railroad.

These railroads have played a pivotal role in Keene's history. While all the rail lines and many of the former railroad buildings have been removed or converted to other uses, the rail beds and most of the stone bridges, which supported this infrastructure still remain. Today, these resources provide Keene and the Southwest Region with important linear trail corridors, connections and linkages to surrounding towns and states.

Previous Transportation Plans

Keene's 1975 Master Plan included a transportation chapter, which was updated in 1984. That plan contained several recommendations for the downtown area, including:

- Establishing a new West Street/Winchester Street connector east of the existing Island Street;
- Key Road should not be connected to West Street;
- Reduce curb cuts on West Street; and,
- Construct a new east road from Optical Avenue to Main Street

In 1984, Keene's Land Use Map was updated to incorporate the Transportation Plan, and it included numerous roadway improvement proposals. A key concept in both the Land

Use Map and the Transportation Plan was to eliminate upper Main Street, replacing it with a ring road and converting the downtown into a pedestrian mall. However, the 1984 Transportation Master Plan did not provide a cost estimate for these proposed improvements. Nor was there any effort to “test” these improvements with a computer model to evaluate the actual traffic impacts. As a result, community acceptance of the concept was marginal.

In 1990, Keene adopted a new Downtown Master Plan which proposed a strategic development plan that would focus all future large-scale commercial and office development within the state bypass system. The Downtown Master Plan emphasized the importance of an adequate road network to support this development strategy. To assure adequate capacity to accommodate increased office and commercial growth, the Downtown Master Plan recommended that high priority be given to the preparation of a traffic study which would evaluate the downtown road network. This study is known as the *Traffic Report for Review, Analysis and Concept Designs for Keene, New Hampshire* prepared by the Louis Berger Group, Inc. (LBG) in December 1999.

Keene’s 1993 Transportation Master Plan (Phase One) speaks directly to the capacity and upgrade of the downtown corridors in Keene. These corridors include: a) a proposal for an East Side Connector; b) West Street; c) Winchester Street; d) Main Street; and, e) Emerald Street. At the time the plan was prepared, it was envisioned that subsequent phases of the plan would address the state bypass system, Keene’s major gateway corridors and intersections located outside of the downtown area, the possible development of public transit services, and the need for a bicycle path system.

Since the adoption of the 1993 plan, Keene has actively worked with the NH DOT on the Keene/Swanzey Bypass Project – a major upgrade of the bypass system; developed engineering design plans for improving West Street; identified various intersection improvement needs; funded and installed OPTICOM equipment (a traffic signal device used for the preemption of emergency vehicles) at all the signalized intersections (only NH Rts. 9/10/12/101 remain to be done); completed and adopted corridor plans for Main Street, Lower Winchester Street and Route 101 and a new Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Master Plan; and, constructed the Downtown Cheshire Trail and the Keene Industrial Heritage Trail bicycle/pedestrian paths. Keene’s 1999 Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Master Plan, 1995 Main Street Corridor Plan, 1997 Lower Winchester Street Corridor Plan, and 2000 Route 101 Corridor Plan are hereby incorporated by reference to this Master Plan.

Transportation in Keene Today & Tomorrow

Transportation in Keene is an important and critical element of the community. The pending construction of the Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project (a major upgrade and reconstruction of the state bypass system surrounding Keene) will have a significant and lasting impact in terms of traffic patterns, urban growth and development, and community appearance. At the same time, many existing streets and intersections are not adequate to handle current traffic volumes.

Automobile ownership and use is on the increase within the community. Today, Keene is dependent upon motor vehicles and trucks for access and mobility. There is no public rail service currently available in Keene and there are no commuter airlines to the airport. Confronted with these transportation problems how should Keene begin to prepare for the future? What are the most important transportation needs and priorities? Should Keene increase funding and accelerate local highway and intersection improvements or is the community willing to accept current levels of traffic congestion, longer waits and slower travel times? Are other alternatives available?

New Directions in Transportation Planning

This Master Plan identifies new and revised goals, strategies and recommendations for planning and improving Keene's transportation systems. The vision is to move people as well as motor vehicles and to develop and maintain an integrated transportation plan and system that meets (1) the socio-economic needs of the community, (2) encourages diversity and efficiency, (3) reflects the needs of the region and the environment in its design and execution; and, (4) integrates motor vehicles, public transportation and alternative transportation into an effective network of transportation facilities. This vision can be best expressed by:

- Recognizing that transportation is an essential and necessary element of the community's infrastructure, economy and daily life.
- Offering the citizens of Keene an appropriate diversity of transportation choices, including public transit, biking and walking.
- Making all forms of transportation efficient and convenient to use.
- Understanding that transportation is both a regional and a local land use issue.
- Ensuring that the environment is protected as new transportation facilities are built and existing systems are improved.

The Transportation and Land Use Connection

Inherent in this vision is the relationship between transportation and land use. As Keene continues to grow and develop, there may be increasing demand for new and improved transportation facilities. Concurrently, as land use changes occur, the impacts of new development on existing transportation systems need to be adequately identified. This interdependency between transportation and land use is critical to comprehensive planning.

As referenced in the December, 1999 *Report to Governor Shaheen on Sprawl* (pg. 19), the design of transportation systems directly affects where and how people live, and their reliance on automobiles and/or other forms of transportation for mobility and access.

“New approaches to transportation are recognized as being a key to our future. The transportation system of the past several decades focused on making travel by automobile fast, cheap, convenient, and almost exclusive. This created an environment conducive to sprawl. Now we need to develop a transportation system that works, but includes options for how we choose to get around. And we need land use planning that goes hand in hand with transportation planning so that communities and the transportation system they depend on share common goals.”

Changing Federal and State Policy

Transportation systems have had a profound effect – both positive and negative – on community character and development trends. The horse and buggy and the railroad were instrumental to the early growth of America through the mid to late 1800’s. Today the automobile and the interstate highway system plays a large part in influencing much of the sprawling and homogeneous development patterns now seen nationwide.

Society’s embrace of the automobile channeled transportation planning efforts in the past to focus mainly on expanding highway capacity. Today the public has become increasingly concerned about the consequences of accommodating the demand for highway capacity. The loss of open space, environmental degradation, automobile dependency, increased traffic congestion and higher highway expenditures are all factors which work to define sprawl-related growth and its negative impacts.

These concerns are currently reflected in recent federal legislation – The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). These acts are working to change and usher in a new period in transportation planning, where choices and connections between various transportation modes, and the containment of costs – financial, environmental and community – have become national priorities.

Currently, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) is funding highway corridor planning work with regional planning agencies and municipal officials to address traffic, land use management, mass transit, and other related issues. The effectiveness of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures has also been recognized by the Governor as an approach to reducing both short and long-term traffic congestion, and for presenting alternative transportation options (Executive Summary, *Managing Growth in New Hampshire: Changes & Challenges*, December, 2000). Additionally, the State is recommending that communities develop inter-modal transfer stations, i.e. centers where people can change from one type of transportation (car, bicycle, or walking) to another (bus, trolley, or train). By creating these facilities, viable options to car-only travel become available.

Regional Problems and Regional Solutions

Transportation is truly both a regional and a local issue. This Master Plan envisions that the City of Keene will continue to serve as the Southwest New Hampshire commercial and business hub, providing opportunities and services to benefit the entire region. Much of Keene's traffic today is generated by residents of neighboring communities and by commuters and visitors. In a recent origin and destination study conducted in 1998 by the Southwest Region Planning Commission, it was estimated that roughly 20% of the traffic on NH Route 101 was "pass through" traffic, which simply passes through Keene on its way to other destinations (Southwest Region Transportation Plan, 2001 Update). At the same time, increasing commercial development adjacent to the state bypass system is attracting additional traffic.

The Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) assists local communities in prioritizing future transportation improvements in the region. The NH DOT allocates federal and state transportation funds to communities within the region, based upon the SWRPC's recommendations. If regional solutions are going to be effective, priorities must be given to solutions, that address associated land use issues and proportionately represent the citizens of Keene.

Keene continues to work with the SWRPC and the State in planning and maintaining project support, scheduling and funding in the Statewide 10-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Keene also continues to provide funding to Home Health Care for the City Express as well as local matching funds for necessary bridge replacement, street resurfacing and reconstruction projects, and new sidewalk improvement program with an annual funding appropriation.

Keene's transportation efforts are supported by both regional and state transportation plans. These plans generally embrace the need for an integrated transportation and land use approach to transportation planning, but remain targeted to the automobile and only partially embrace this Master Plan's goals in calling for increased attention to alternative modes of travel. Currently, the total financial burden listed in the state-wide ten year FY 2003-2012 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) required to address all the transportation improvements identified within Southwest New Hampshire alone totals more than \$160 million (SWRPC). Only 1.98 % of this budget is dedicated to public transit and transportation enhancements (SWRPC).

Priorities, Principles & Goals

One of the major priorities and principles common to most, if not all, Keene's existing Master Plan goals is to encourage (1) future office and retail development to concentrate within the bypass system (e.g. to encourage compact urban growth patterns); and, (2) mixed use neighborhoods to allow people to walk and bicycle between home and work. This is an essential priority in the master plans, which should be upheld in all Keene's future land use and transportation decisions.

This Master Plan recognizes that while there is a need to improve the capacity and efficiency of the major gateway corridors leading to the Downtown (i.e. Main Street, West Street and Winchester Street), there is also an associated need to protect and enhance the overall appearance of these gateways and to provide for continued redevelopment within the bypass system. To accomplish this requires sophisticated planning and adequate traffic mitigation. The following transportation oriented goals are excerpted from 1995 Keene Community Goals.

- 1) Traffic patterns should be designed to allow “through” traffic to flow smoothly (e.g. capacity improvement of limited access highways) around the city core, while traffic patterns within the city should be structured to minimize congestion and encourage alternatives to the automobile (bicycle, pedestrian, bus).
- 2) Intersections with historic and chronic congestion problems as well as congested thoroughfares require continuous evaluation and construction solutions must be vigorously pursued and implemented.
- 3) Inner city bus transportation, designed to support goals of reduced pollution, congestion and injury as well as efficiency must be expanded.
- 4) The City of Keene should encourage alternative public transportation systems, and the ultimate use of alternative fuels (propane, electricity, etc.) when they become commercially viable. The design, support and promotion of a city-wide bicycle and pedestrian pathway system is one example.
- 5) The availability and quality of air transportation facilities should be promoted as a resource to recruit new businesses to the area, assist existing businesses in the region, and to access the global marketplace.

PART 2: PEOPLE, CARS & CONGESTION

Regional NH DOT Traffic Counts

Each day more than 38,000 vehicles travel in and out of Keene. Traffic volumes recorded on the four major highways are tabulated in the table below.

Table 1: NH DOT State Bypass System Traffic Counts

<u>Location (State/Road Segment)</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>%Growth</u>
NH 9 Chesterfield	10,214	11,725	14.8%
NH 10 Swanzey	9,597	10,190	6.2%
NH 101 Marlborough	8,360	8,997	7.6%
NH 12 Westmoreland	6,551	6,993	6.7%

Source: Continuous Traffic Count Recorders, Historic Average Weekday
NH Department of Transportation

It is anticipated through the Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project that improvements to the State Bypass system surrounding the city will enhance traffic flow. While the Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project has not yet been fully designed and implemented, there remains and continues to be a need for improvements to address local traffic congestion within the community. A number of existing projects for improving Keene's streets, intersections and bridges are identified and described in this Master Plan.

Keene's Population Growth

The City of Keene's current population (as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census) is 22,563 people. Between 1960 and 2000, Keene's population grew at a rate of roughly 0.28% per year. However, over the past ten years, Keene experienced a zero population growth rate. In comparison to other surrounding towns, Keene's growth rate is lower.

At one time, Keene made up most of Cheshire County's total population. However, from a high of 40% in 1950, today Keene's share has decreased to 31.6% of the County's total population as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census. While it is projected that there will be continued population growth in Cheshire County, Keene's share of the County's total population is projected to remain relatively constant (see population estimates/projections prepared by the NH Office of State Planning in Figure 2 on the following page).

Table 2: City/County Population Estimates/Projections

	<u>City of Keene</u>		<u>Cheshire County</u>
2000	22,563	(30.6%)*	73,825
2010	24,524	(31.4%)	77,885
2020	25,835	(31.3%)	82,605

*Note: Percentage of Keene's population to Cheshire County's population

Source: NH Office of State Planning

Growing Automobile Ownership & Use

People in Keene are registering more vehicles each year. In 1996, there were a total of 20,999 motor vehicles registered in the City of Keene. In 1999, the total number of registered vehicles increased to 21,436, which represents a gain of 2% (City of Keene, City Clerk's Office). In 2000, Keene State College reported 2,377 registered vehicles on campus.

Most of Keene's residents use their personal vehicle as their primary means of transportation to and from work, business, and shopping destinations (see Figure 3 below). When the 2000 transportation census data becomes available, it will be incorporated into this Master Plan.

Table 3: Travel to Work Data

	<u>% of Keene's Population</u>
Drives Alone to Work	73.1%
Carpool	11.5%
Walk	9.9%
Work at Home	3.2%
Bicycle	1.4%
Public Transit	< 1.0%

Source: 1990, US Census Data

Keene's Traffic Growth

Over the past several years, the actual recorded traffic volumes at various locations in the City of Keene have remained fairly constant. Traffic volumes vary in both space and time. The typical daily traffic volume on a road is represented by the Average Daily

Traffic (ADT) which is the total volume during a given period of time (in whole days greater than one day and less than one year) divided by the number of days in that time period. There are also Average Weekday Traffic (AWDT) counts, which are similarly calculated. Recent traffic counts conducted by the NH DOT are shown in the following table.

Table 4: Historic Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts at Selected Locations

<u>Location (street/road segment)</u>	<u>1989 to 1995</u>	<u>1996 to 1998</u>
West Street (E. of Bypass)	21,000 (89)	22,000 (98)
Winchester St (N of Bypass)	20,000 (94)	20,000 (98)
Main Street (N of Winchester)	20,000 (95)	20,000 (97)
Court Street (N of Square)	11,000 (90)	11,000 (96)
Winchester (W of Main St.)	n.d.	11,000 (96)
Washington St. (N of Square)	11,000 (95)	11,000 (95)
Marlborough St. (E of Main St.)	8,700 (95)	8,600 (98)
Island Street (S of West Street)	8,500 (90)	8,800 (98)
Maple Ave. (E of Court Street)	7,000 (95)	7,700 (98)
Washington St. (S of Rt. 9)	4,600 (94)	4,900 (98)
Water Street (E of Main St.)	4,900 (93)	4,800 (97)

Source: NH DOT Traffic Volume Reports, AADT counts in various years: 1989 through 1998

Most transportation and land use decisions made by the City and State are based on a Level of Service (LOS) analysis. LOS is a rating system reflecting the capacity of an intersection and is reported on a scale of A to F reflecting time delay. The highest or best LOS rating is an A, the lowest LOS rating is an F. Intersections are typically designed to operate at a LOS D or above. Volume to capacity (v/c) ratios are considered in addition to LOS when evaluating the operation of signalized intersections. The v/c ratio represents the ratio of traffic volume to the physical capacity of the intersection. The closer the v/c ratio is to 1.0, the nearer the lane is to capacity. A map showing Keene's signalized intersections is contained within the Appendix.

The most recent analysis of intersection level of service was calculated in 1999. This study (*LBG Traffic Report for Review, Analysis and Concept Designs for Keene, New Hampshire*) was calculated for 20 intersections that are not part of the NHDOT Bypass Project. This study indicates that there are a total of eight (8) intersections, which currently have a LOS of E or F. For the year 2015, this same study projected that eleven (11) intersections will experience a LOS of D or less. The location and LOS of these intersections in 1999 and 2015 are depicted on the following maps. Note that not all intersections are included in the LBG analysis.

(Insert LOS Analysis, 1999 Map)

(Insert LOS Analysis, 2015 Map)

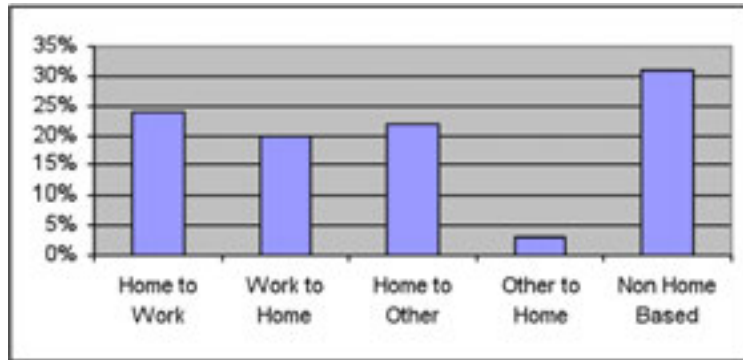
Traffic Patterns

Over the past decade, the number of nonresidents commuting to and from Keene has increased and fewer residents are commuting outside of Keene for work (1990 US Census - see Figure 5 below).

Commuters Traveling <i>Out of</i> Keene	909
Commuters Traveling <i>Into</i> Keene	4,915
	+ Plus 4,006
Source: 1990 US Census, New Hampshire Commuting Patterns	

In a survey of the distribution of trips taken within Keene in 1990, it was found that non-work related trips (home to other, other to home and non-home based trips) is the largest percentage of all trips made within the community (see chart below – travel diary - Transportation Master Plan, Keene Modeling Report, 1990).

Figure 1: Distribution of Trips



Source: Transportation Master Plan, Keene Modeling Report, 1990

Accident Data

The accident data collected by the City of Keene Police Department for this Master Plan is based upon both reportable and non-reportable accident reports for various corridors between 1997-1999 (see Figure 7). The data collected for each street was averaged over a three-year period. These averages show that the most accidents between 1997-1999 occurred on Main Street followed by West Street, Winchester Street, Rt. 101, Rt. 9, Rt. 12, Court Street, Washington Street, Island and Roxbury Streets, Central Square and Park Avenue.

Table 6: City of Keene Accident Statistics 1997-1999

Accidents reported to the Keene Police Department are not all-inclusive.
 Threshold for inclusion in this study - minimum of 2 accidents a year average
 during past three years.

Street names represent corridors not intersections.

	R=Reportable		N=Non-reportable				Total	3-yr Avg.
	1997		1998		1999			
	R	N	R	N	R	N		
Arch	3	6	3	3	1	5	21	7
Ashuelot	-	2	-	2	-	3	7	2
BaseHill	2	3	-	-	-	2	7	2
Central Square	2	11	3	6	-	10	32	11
Church	1	2	2	3	1	-	9	3
Court	7	15	9	19	4	14	68	23
Davis	-	2	2	3	1	3	11	4
Elm	1	4	2	-	1	2	10	3
Emerald	-	1	3	3	1	3	11	4
Gilbo	1	5	-	4	2	6	18	6
High	-	4	-	1	-	-	5	2
Hurricane	-	2	-	1	-	4	7	2
Island	3	14	6	4	1	8	36	12
Key	-	9	2	2	2	5	20	7
Main	30	78	25	50	22	44	249	83
Maple	1	2	3	2	6	4	18	6
Marlboro	-	5	1	4	3	2	15	5
Old Walpole	-	2	-	3	-	3	8	3
Optical	-	3	-	2	-	3	8	3
Park	3	9	4	2	4	9	31	10
Pearl	2	3	-	3	3	1	12	4
Ralston	1	-	4	-	4	9	18	3
Roxbury St.	5	8	6	6	4	7	36	12
Rt. 10	2	2	-	2	-	4	10	3
Rt. 101	8	29	11	31	12	17	108	36
Rt. 12	10	11	10	22	7	19	79	26
Rt. 9	23	22	13	18	11	16	103	34
School	3	4	3	-	3	5	18	6
Sullivan Ctr.	1	-	1	-	2	1	5	2
Summit	1	1	2	1	-	2	7	2
Swanzy Fact	-	1	-	4	-	-	5	2
Washington	5	6	7	12	10	10	50	17
Water	4	3	2	7	2	5	23	8
West Street	24	57	26	48	16	47	218	73
West Surry	1	2	-	1	2	-	6	2
Winchester	23	48	10	36	24	37	178	59
Total(s)	168	376	160	305	149	319	1,467	-

An accident analysis was also performed in the LBG study to determine the major intersections within Keene, which displayed a recorded safety concern. A total of eight (8) intersections yielded the highest accidents. These intersections are shown below.

Table 7: Intersections In Keene With Highest Accidents

Intersections (In descending order of incidence)

West Street at Island Street
 West Street at Gilbo Avenue
 Main Street at Central Square
 West Street at School Street
 Main Street at Winchester & Marlboro Street
 Winchester Street at Ralston Street
 Maple Avenue at Court/West Surry Road
 Main Street at Davis Street

Source: LBG Traffic Report for Review, Analysis and Concept Designs for Keene, New Hampshire

Keene's Transportation Problems & Issues Today

As Keene's major streets become congested, motorists seek out alternative routes that often involve the use of local residential streets. Residential streets are not designed to accommodate through traffic and residents have complained about increased traffic volumes, higher travel speeds, increased noise, and diminished safety.

Typically, the heaviest traffic congestion found within Keene occurs on Main Street, Winchester Street and West Street during the PM Peak Hour. Other areas include the road segments leading up to and including existing intersections, which are currently at a LOS of E and F. Maple Avenue is included because it has experienced increased traffic growth in relationship with NH Rt. 12 and the recent development of the Blackbrook Industrial Park. A map identifying these areas in Keene can be found on page 21.

Traffic congestion in Keene is most acute when Keene State College is in full session and worsens during peak tourist periods. Traffic congestion in Keene is also compounded because many existing traffic signals are not coordinated in a fashion that would move the greatest number of vehicles (see map of traffic signal locations within the Appendix).

Keene has been attempting to keep pace with increased traffic volumes resulting from new development through traffic impact studies, many of which require traffic mitigation improvements. However, often these improvements are not sufficient in scope or scale to

address all of the capacity, intersection and geometric design problems that exist on the major streets and intersections.

Historically, the traditional way of solving transportation problems focused primarily on widening streets and adding capacity to ease and reduce traffic congestion. Today, this approach often requires the acquisition of right of way, which is costly and impractical to obtain. As a result, new and integrated transportation solutions are needed. These integrated solutions should continue to focus on necessary road and highway improvements where feasible, but also include traffic signal coordination, traffic demand management and alternative transportation.

(Insert Map – Problem Traffic Areas)

PART 3: ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

A Park & Walk Community

Walking is the most basic form of personal transportation. Sidewalks and crosswalks are used by all citizens and help to contribute to numerous trips. New sidewalks and repair of old sidewalks are supported through Keene's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

The bicycle is used by residents both within and outside Keene to get to work or school and for recreation. The bicycle provides an important mobility option for people without access to motor vehicles, and commuters who ride Downtown for work. Bicycling also benefits the entire community by helping to remove personal cars from the highway, thereby reducing traffic congestion and air pollution. Through the April 26, 1999 adoption of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Master Plan, Keene is building a dedicated bicycle path system.

Existing public transportation services include both public transit and privately owned taxi and van services. Public transit is currently provided by Home Health Care and Community Services with funding assistance from both the City of Keene and the State of New Hampshire. City Express has two primary bus routes operating within Keene and ridership is increasing (See copy of the expanded City Express Route Map in the Appendix). In the past, public transportation services were seen primarily as serving senior citizens and "transit-dependent" clients (those who have no means of transportation available). However, today this perception is changing.

This Master Plan envisions Keene served by a transportation system that integrates passenger motor vehicles, motorized public transportation, pedestrians, and bicycle transportation into a network of services and facilities. This network of services and facilities are encompassed in the Park and Walk Community concept. Such a network will provide mobility and access that are comparable to or greater than levels available in 2000. Public transportation, pedestrian and bicycle access should be incorporated in transportation infrastructure and land use planning decisions.

The concept of a Park and Walk Community involves a community where motorists park in defined locations and find convenient transportation during their day by means of public transit, walking and/or bicycling.

This concept enables a variety of benefits including:

- Enhanced mobility for residents and visitors.
- Reduced traffic congestion in retail areas.
- Reduced vehicle emissions.
- Promote private investment.
- Preserve public infrastructure investment.

Effective public transit service throughout Keene is essential to the success of the Park & Walk Community. To be effective, public transit must be available to move people when and where they wish to go. This may present a number of logistical and budgetary challenges for Keene's transportation decisions and the private sector's philosophy of providing access for employees and customers. Given the diverse trip characteristics of commuter, business and residential trips in the Keene area, the possibility of reducing the number of personal motor vehicles will require substantial public transit and/or vanpooling services.

Recommendations

1. Promote predictable traffic movement at uniform speeds appropriate to the integration of bicycles and pedestrians with motor vehicles through the application of traffic calming techniques.

Draft and adopt a neighborhood-based traffic calming policy and program. An example is the *Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy* available from the City of Asheville, North Carolina (see summary of policy provided within the Appendix).

2. Increase funding for new sidewalks and the repair of existing sidewalks.

As part of the Capital Improvement Program, Keene maintains a list of sidewalks in need of repair and areas identified for new sidewalk construction. Present funding for the repair of existing and the construction of new sidewalks is inadequate to satisfy increasing pedestrian activity. Additional funding in Keene's CIP would help accelerate programs in this area.

3. Plan and fund the development of back lot pedestrian ways or plazas for the movement of people on foot and bicycle away from traffic.

Possible locations for these new paths and spaces, primarily within the Downtown are identified on the attached Downtown Walkways map (see page 26). As part of redevelopment projects, new path and pedestrian spaces should be coordinated and implemented. In the short term, the City of Keene should identify and construct pedestrian connections between public parking lots and public spaces.

4. Encourage the placement of bicycle racks in public places and the incorporation of bike racks on public transportation vehicles and facilities. Also require as appropriate the provision of bike racks in Site Plan Review.

Bike racks or bicycle storage lockers should be required in multi-family residential developments based on the total number of units approved, and in industrial and

commercial projects based on a percentage of the total number of parking standards required by zoning. Example zoning ordinance requirements for the provision of bike racks are included within the Appendix.

5. Continue to support the development of off-road bike paths in accordance with the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Master Plan.

The planning and development of on and off-road bike path facilities is guided by the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Master Plan. As part of the implementation of this plan, it is recommended that a new bike path route be located on the north side of West Street connecting Ashuelot River Park to Keene's existing bike path at the intersection of West Street and NH Rts. 9/10/12.

6. Implement a roadside bike safety program for pavement marking, highway shoulder widening, and elimination of structural hazards.

The Public Works Department should incorporate roadside bike safety measures in the design, reconstruction and repaving of all streets. The technical report on *Basic Improvements for Bicyclists* by John Williams should be considered as a guide (see copy of report in Appendix).

The Public Works Department working together with the Keene Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee should also consider adopting a Spot Safety Improvement Program, which includes public request forms (see example forms in the Appendix). Also included within the Appendix is a letter and map from the SWRPC regarding the eligibility of roads within Keene for federal funding. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements within the right of way of these roads are also eligible for federal funding.

A copy of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee's policy and a list of the key bikeway corridors in Keene are included in the Appendix of this plan. As part of this program, the City should continue to install "Share the Road" signs.

7. Continue to support local public transportation and implement strategies designed to enhance travel demand management.

Local businesses and employers should be encouraged to support staggered work hours and flex time as an effective travel demand strategy. The long-term parking lots and spaces in Keene should be adequately signed to encourage people to park and walk in the Downtown or park and use public transit.

A map of the City's long term, free and reserved parking in Downtown is included in the Appendix of this plan.

- 8.** Enhance regional public transportation by participating in regional planning, including development of a park-and-ride network at the periphery of Keene.

There is currently only one State of New Hampshire Park and Ride lot located within southwest New Hampshire. This facility is located on NH Rt. 9 at Chesterfield Gorge. Additional facilities should be developed closer to Keene.

- 9.** Develop trailhead-parking facilities for access to the state-owned rail corridors located outside of the Downtown. These trailhead parking facilities could be located on or adjacent to Krif Road, Whitcomb Mills Road and Swanzey Factory Road.
- 10.** Develop and sustain a public information program regarding alternative transportation benefits, opportunities and facilities within the region and the City of Keene.

The Southwest Region Planning Commission should develop and implement information programs, which promote alternative transportation for the region and the community. Information about example programs can be found in the Appendix.

(Insert Downtown Walkways Map)

PART 4: STREET CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Keene's streets provide two essential purposes: access to property and mobility between destinations. While many roads attempt to serve both functions at the same time, they often do neither well. For example, traffic can be slow on a street that has lots of curb cuts and driveways (access to property is high, but mobility is low). A limited-access highway on the other hand, such as NH Route 101 provides a higher level of mobility, but by definition offers little access to adjacent property. NH DOT has the authority to control access to and from state routes. The City of Keene has the authority to control access to city streets through the driveway permit and site plan review process.

To help facilitate proper planning and decision making, this report classifies Keene's streets based on the function within the transportation system. This classification system consists of the following categories: Limited Access Highways (state control), Controlled Access Highways (state control), Major Streets, Collector Streets and Local Streets. A Street Classification Map is included on the following page. This street classification system should be used in planning future highway improvements to reflect street function and objectives, ensure continuity between streets of similar classification, and provide compatibility with state/federal functional classifications. It should also be used by the Keene City Council to make existing city codes and ordinances consistent. The street classification system follows the definitions below.

Limited Access Highways: These highways are designed to carry large volumes of traffic between major points within or outside of the city, primarily serving as the principal access routes from adjacent communities. They provide mobility over access and are designed for through or circumferential traffic. Parking and curb cuts are not permitted. Access is provided at intersections or interchanges. Portions of the bypass system around Keene meet this definition. There are no city streets designated as Limited Access Highways.

Controlled Access Highways: These highways are designed to carry large volumes of traffic. Pre-determined points of access are negotiated between NHDOT and adjacent property owners. NHDOT purchases frontage for the remainder of the property. Very large properties may only be permitted one or two points of access.

Major Streets: These streets provide the principal means of access between various sections and neighborhoods within the city. They are designed as a continuous route with some control of access. Parking is permitted where feasible. Curb cuts are discouraged. Examples include Court Street, Main Street, West Street and Winchester Street.

Collector Streets: These streets gather traffic from local streets and feed it onto major streets. They provide access and mobility functions. Parking is permitted on collector streets where that portion of the street is not strictly needed for the movement of traffic. Examples include Roxbury Street, School Street and Arch Street.

Local Streets: These streets are mainly residential in character and they are intended to serve the land that directly abuts them. They facilitate the movement of vehicles to and from collector or major streets. Parking, biking and other public uses of the street are encouraged. Through traffic on local streets is discouraged.

(Insert Street Classification Map Here)

PART 5: CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT

Regional Gateways to Keene

As Keene and southwest New Hampshire grow, the need for convenient access to markets within and outside the region will continue to be important. Currently, there are four primary region wide transportation-oriented GATEWAYS, which connect Keene to the rest of the world:

- NH Route 9 from the West and East
- NH Route 101 from the East
- NH Route 10 from the North and South
- NH Route 12 from the North and South

These GATEWAYS, like many of the former railroads, all converge in Keene forming a bypass system around the central core. Traffic from Vermont, Massachusetts and other parts of New England must travel through Keene and southwest New Hampshire along these highways to access other areas and communities. In addition to these regional gateways, there are important local streets in Keene that serve as corridors and gateways. These corridors are organized for the purpose of this Master Plan as Downtown Corridors and Gateway Corridors.

Downtown Corridors:

- Upper Main Street and Central Square
- Emerald Street/Ralston Street/Foundry Street
- Island Street

Gateway Corridors:

- Marlboro Street
- Winchester Street
 - Lower Winchester Street (the Bypass to Swanzey town line)
 - Upper Winchester Street (the Bypass to Main Street)
- West Street
- Court Street
- Park Avenue and Maple Avenue
- Washington Street

Downtown Corridors

The specific downtown corridors considered in the 1993 Transportation Master Plan included the following: West Street, Winchester Street, Main Street and Emerald Street. This plan updates these corridors and also includes a review of the following downtown street corridors: Upper Main Street and Central Square, Emerald Street/Ralston Street/Foundry Street, and Island Street.

- **UPPER MAIN STREET AND CENTRAL SQUARE**

Main Street serves as one of Keene's most important and visible corridors. It serves as the main gateway to the Downtown, providing access to Keene State College and to residential, institutional and commercial development within the central historic area.

Main Street was originally laid out 1738 and plays an important part in the history of Keene. Main Street was also used as New Hampshire Route 9 prior to the construction of the Route 9/10/101 Bypass in the 1970's. The street currently extends north from NH Route 101 to Central Square and south to the Swanzey town line. It provides direct access to the Downtown and offers travelers and visitors a first impression of Keene.

Main Street is also the widest street in Keene having a right-of-way width of 132 feet. A typical street right-of-way in Keene is 50 feet. This additional width gives Main Street an expansive boulevard look. The street pavement is 58 to 65 feet in width north of the Winchester/Marlboro Street intersection. In this area, the street has 12 foot wide traffic lanes and 2 foot wide paved shoulders in both directions. Parallel parking spaces start at Dunbar Street and Emerald Street and extend south to Appleton Street and Baker Street. The street has granite curbing with large grassed areas and sidewalks. Many street trees have been planted within these grass areas. At one time, most of the trees lining Main Street were stately American Elms. However, due to Dutch Elm disease, many of these trees had to be removed. In 1987, Keene spent two million dollars to beautify Main Street north of Eagle Court and around Central Square creating a special pedestrian environment.

This corridor analysis primarily examines the section of Main Street north of the Marlboro/Winchester Street intersection to Central Square. The Planning Board adopted the Main Street Corridor Plan, affecting lower Main Street in December 2000. That plan is included in this Transportation Master Plan by reference.

Land Use

The Main Street Corridor north of the Marlboro/Winchester Street intersection supports a mixture of office, financial, institutional, retail, residential and government uses. In this corridor small businesses coexist with residential dwellings and apartments. Retail and office related uses can be found in many of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors of the buildings facing Main Street. Senior citizen apartment buildings and residential condominiums are also located in the area, providing diversity in land use. Most of the properties on Main Street are zoned Central Business. This zoning does not require on-street parking. Except for the City-owned railroad property located on the south side of Railroad Street, there are few undeveloped tracts of land located within Downtown Keene. Refer to map on page 36.

Current Traffic Conditions

Main Street is identified as a Major Street according to the Street Classification System. Main Street also serves as a major collection point for the integration of various modes of transportation, including public transit, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Based on NH DOT recorded traffic count data, the traffic volumes on Main Street since 1995 have remained fairly constant.

<u>Traffic Counter Location</u>	<u>1993</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1997</u>
Main Street North of Marlborough	15,000	20,000	20,000

Source: NH DOT recorded traffic count data.

In the 2000 Louis Berger Group (LBG) intersection report, a Level of Service (LOS) analysis of the major intersections along Main Street was conducted for the years 1999 and 2015. There are two signalized intersections on Main Street at Winchester/Marlboro Street and at Central Square. All of the other intersections are unsignalized. The 2015 analysis assumed that the proposed Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project improvements would be completed. The following table represents this analysis.

<u>Intersection</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2015</u>
Main Street at Winchester & Marlboro	F	F
Main Street at Cypress Street	B	B
Main Street at Eagle Court	C	C
Main Street at Emerald Street	B	B
Main Street at Water Street	E	E
Main Street at Central Square	F	F

Source: 2000 Louis Berger Group Intersection Report.

The analysis demonstrates that the signalized intersections at Winchester/Marlboro Street and Central Square operate at failure in both 1999 and 2015. Additionally the LBG study discovered that the traffic operations experienced at both these intersections affect the traffic operations along the entire length of Main Street between these intersections. The study found that the long queues from these two intersections affect the traffic operations of adjacent intersections such as Emerald Street and Eagle Court. Both of these intersections operate at a LOS F when the Main Street Corridor is analyzed as one complete system. The long queues on Main Street impede side street traffic from turning onto Main Street causing delays on the side streets.

Main/Marlboro/Winchester Intersection

Improvements are needed to bring this intersection into a satisfactory operating condition. Funding for the re-design of the intersection has been approved. The concept of a modern roundabout at this location was initially researched and included in the *1994 Alternative Planning & Transportation Perspective* report prepared for the City of Keene, by Michael Wallwork. The report concluded that a two-lane roundabout would operate at a LOS A at this intersection.

One advantage of a modern roundabout at this location is that it would provide an opportunity for reversing direction on Main Street, particularly working together with the existing traffic circle at Central Square. Presently, it is difficult to reverse directions on Main Street traveling in the southbound direction.

An important consideration with regard to this intersection is pedestrian crossings. The concentration of pedestrians is due to the proximity of the intersection to Keene State College, the US Post Office, a church and an elementary school.

Main Street

The Main Street beautification project increased pedestrian mobility by including wide concrete sidewalks and adequate pedestrian crossings. The construction of the bicycle/pedestrian path provides access to the Downtown.

An extension of the existing landscaped median from Emerald Street would prevent left turns and continue the Main Street theme south to the intersection of Main, Winchester and Marlboro Streets. This would aid traffic flow, provide a more pedestrian oriented environment, and could also provide more opportunities for on-street parking.

A pedestrian activated traffic signal exists in front of the U.S. Post Office. This signal interrupts the flow of traffic on Main Street to serve school-age children who need to cross for access to St. Joseph School. In the future, its location may be altered with the reconstruction of the Main/Marlboro/Winchester Street intersection and the extension of the existing upper Main Street median. No additional traffic signals are suggested for Main Street.

Keene's Transportation Center, located at the corner of Main Street and Gilbo Avenue presently serves as a multi-modal transportation facility. The bicycle/pedestrian path network provides direct access to and from the Transportation Center.

Central Square

Central Square has been the subject of numerous studies, each of which has concluded that with minor adjustments, it is best left alone. However, with continued traffic growth, there is clearly a need for additional review.

In the 1993 Transportation Master Plan, Phase One: Downtown, it was suggested that additional study be given to Central Square. At the time that master plan was prepared, the following four observations were made.

1. A technical study should be undertaken to evaluate the effects of installing signals at the intersections of Washington Street and Court Street with the circle.
2. Re-striping the circle should improve the flow of traffic.
3. The red light controlling the right turns onto West Street should be pedestrian initiated.
4. Consideration should be given to the direction of traffic on Winter Street.

The 1994 Wallwork report also identified three options for Central Square:

- Option 1: Keep Central Square as it is and undergo increasing congestion.
- Option 2: Modify the circle by changing the approaches to roundabout conditions and remove the signals as per Option 1.
- Option 3: Create a roundabout at the main intersection as per Option 2.

The Keene City Council did not accept the following recommendations of the 2000 LBG intersection study:

- Eliminate eastbound traffic to Central Square via West Street.
- Eliminate the existing right turn signal from Central Square onto West Street.

As a result, no recommendation for Central Square has been identified. This is an area that Keene will need to address in future transportation planning activities. If the City of Keene begins to construct roundabouts in place of signalized intersections greater experience will be gained which could apply Central Square.

The Future

Main Street is expected to see increased traffic if the projections of the LBG study hold true. Most of the increased traffic will be due to the reconstruction of the Main Street, Winchester and the Optical Avenue intersections as part of the Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project. It is anticipated that community efforts to enhance and retain the economic vitality of Downtown Keene will continue. Eventually the railroad property will be redeveloped and the 93rd Street extension will provide a needed connector between Marlborough and Roxbury Streets.

Commercial and office uses are predominant land uses along the corridor north of the Main/ Marlboro/Winchester intersection and the balance of the corridor south of this intersection remains a mix of residential, professional office and institutional use. The expansion of commercial uses south of this intersection would adversely affect the historic character of the corridor.

Significant efforts have been made by the City, Keene State College, and private entities to make Main Street the gateway entrance to Keene. Signage should be installed on the State Bypass System to direct motorists to access Keene State College and the Downtown.

Recommendations

1. Keene's transportation center located at the corner of Main Street and Gilbo Avenue should continue to serve as a multi-modal transportation center for the community.
2. A modern roundabout should be considered as part of the design and reconstruction of the Main/Marlboro/Winchester Street intersection.
3. The existing landscaped median on Main Street should be extended to continue the Main Street theme south to the intersection of Main/ Marlboro/Winchester Street.
4. 93rd Street should be extended south to Water Street directly across from Grove Street.
5. Commercial and office uses on Main Street should be restricted to the corridor north of the Main/Marlboro/Winchester Street intersection.
6. Signage should be installed on the State Bypass System to direct motorists to access Keene State College and the Downtown using Main Street.

(Insert Existing Land Use Map – Main Street)

- **EMERALD/RALSTON/FOUNDRY STREETS**

Keene's 1993 Transportation Plan considered Emerald Street to be an important collector street in the downtown network and recommended that this street be incorporated in function and appearance as part of the central business district. This Transportation Master Plan reiterates the community interest expressed in the 1993 plan to extend Emerald Street to Island Street. This master plan recommends that an engineering design study be undertaken to accomplish the integration of Emerald, Ralston and Foundry Streets.

Between 1996 and 1999, the average annual daily traffic count on Emerald Street increased by 700 vehicles from 4,600 to 5,300. This traffic has placed increased pressure on the School/Emerald Street intersection as well as the Main/Emerald Street intersection. Davis Street is also being used as a cut through to Winchester Street and traffic accidents are increasing. Ralston Street has become a major north/south connector between Emerald Street and Winchester Street providing an alternative route to Downtown Keene, but its capacity is limited and it may be expensive to upgrade.

Foundry Street runs nearly parallel to Ralston Street and is presently a dead end street located along the former B&M railroad right-of-way. This right-of-way provides an opportunity to extend Foundry Street to Emerald Street and connect to the bicycle/pedestrian pathway located south of Winchester Street. The connection of Foundry Street to Emerald Street should relieve pressure on Ralston Street and divert some traffic from the Winchester/Main Street intersection.

The School/Emerald Street intersection currently does not have adequate capacity for existing or projected traffic volumes. Sight distances are poor for vehicles waiting to turn from School Street onto Emerald Street. As congestion on West Street, Island Street and Main Street increase, this intersection may receive additional pressure. Consideration needs to be given to upgrading this intersection.

Presently, Emerald Street lacks curbing, standard sidewalks and green space. The utility poles are located too close to the street. This plan recommends that these conditions be improved by installing curbs, sidewalks and landscaping with utility lines buried underground.

A number of studies have identified soil and ground water contamination issues from Ralston Street west to the end of Emerald Street at Mill Creek. These studies have documented the existence of hazardous wastes that have been released from industrial and commercial uses. Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH) is currently working on a remediation plan for the former manufactured gas facility at the end of Emerald Street. Keene should continue to apply for brownfields funding to assist in the remediation.

Recommendations

1. Emerald Street should continue to be recognized as an important collector street in the downtown network. The function of this street as an east/west corridor is dependent upon improvements being made to the street.
2. The Keene City Council should purchase the former B&M railroad right-of-way along Foundry Street owned by the State of New Hampshire.
3. An engineering design study should be undertaken to determine the need and cost of improvements to Emerald Street, including:
 - a) the Main Street intersection,
 - b) the School Street intersection,
 - c) the Ralston Street intersection,
 - d) the proposed Foundry Street extension, and
 - e) the extension of Emerald Street to Island Street.

This study should take into account:

- Soil contamination issues.
- The location of the bicycle/pedestrian path along Foundry Street and Emerald Street.
- Wider sidewalks and bike lanes.
- Curb cut management.
- Burying electrical and communication utility lines.
- Street light improvements.
- Addition of curbing and landscaping, as well as safety improvements to the intersections.
- Building encroachments within the existing right-of-way.

Specific measures for improving the safety and character of these streets should be considered, including, but not limited to:

- Roundabout designs.
- Traffic calming.
- Inclusion of a 10-foot wide bike path connecting Emerald Street and Winchester Street.
- Making Foundry Street a one-way street in the southbound direction with right turn only at Winchester Street and making Ralston Street a one-way street northbound.

- **ISLAND STREET**

In 1978, after considerable discussion on how best to improve Island Street, Keene requested that NH DOT design and construct a new Island Street corridor. This corridor concept included an improved intersection at West Street, a wider Island Street and an extension of Emerald Street westerly to connect with Island Street. At Winchester Street, a new bridge was proposed to replace the existing temporary bridge and the present Island Street was proposed to be dead-ended. After the State completed final design plans, the City Council formally rejected the project in June of 1982. No further work has been done, although a number of concept plans have been prepared showing how Emerald Street could be extended to Island Street.

Keene has prepared preliminary engineering plans for improving the Island/West Street intersection. This intersection is proposed to be improved as part of the West Street Gateway Project. Between 1993 and 1998, the average annual daily traffic on Island Street increased from 8,600 to 8,800 vehicles.

Recommendations

1. As part of the Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project, the existing intersection located at Winchester/Pearl and Island Street is proposed to be upgraded and reconstructed. The Keene City Council has recommended that NH DOT prepare engineering plans for a modern roundabout design at this intersection. Additionally, NH DOT has included the design and replacement of the bridge over the Ashuelot River on Island Street.
2. The West/Island Street intersection currently operates at a LOS of D. Dedicated left turn lanes are proposed for the northbound approach to the intersection on Island Street.
3. New sidewalks should be installed on both sides of Island Street from West Street south to connect to the existing sidewalks.

The Gateway Corridors

As part of this Transportation Master Plan, the following gateway corridors are addressed and summarized: Marlboro Street, Winchester Street including Lower Winchester Street and Upper Winchester Street, West Street, Court Street, the Park Avenue and Maple Avenue corridors, and Washington Street.

• MARLBORO STREET

Marlboro Street is classified as a “Major Street” in this Transportation Master Plan. It is approximately 1 mile long and extends from Main Street to NH Route 101 via Optical Avenue.

Marlboro Street was laid out in 1740 with sections added throughout the 1800’s. A portion of Marlboro Street today uses the right-of-way of the Third NH Turnpike Road. In the past, Marlboro Street served as a main route to communities east of Keene until the NH Route 101 Bypass was constructed in 1958. The intersection of Main Street with Marlboro Street was relocated in 1968 to facilitate the construction of the Federal Post Office.

For three-quarters of the length of the street, the right-of-way is approximately 66 feet wide and includes two 12-foot wide travel lanes and 6-foot wide shoulders. There are 5-foot wide sidewalks located on both sides of the street as far as Martin Street, where that sidewalk ends.

Marlboro Street is expected to see increased use with the construction of the Keene-Swanzey Bypass project. A new connector road from NH Rt. 12 will be built to bring northbound traffic to a reconstructed four-way intersection at NH Rt. 101 and Optical Avenue. This new connector road will place increased pressure on the Main Street and Marlboro Street intersection and on properties that abut Marlboro Street.

Between 1993 and 1998, NH DOT counts show that average daily traffic volumes have decreased slightly along Marlboro Street (see table below).

Location	1993	1995	1998
East of Main St.	9,800	8,700	8,600
West of Optical Ave.		6,400	5,200
South of Kelleher Street	6,300		

In the 2000 LBG intersection report, average annual daily traffic volumes were estimated for 1999 and 2015 (see table below). The 2015 year traffic anticipates increased traffic volumes on Marlboro Street due to the proposed extension of Optical Avenue.

Location	1999	2015
East of Main St.	8,960	12,902
West of Optical Ave.	5,165	7,024

For a discussion of the Marlboro/Main and Winchester Street intersection, refer to page 33 of this Transportation Master Plan. The Marlboro Street and Optical Avenue intersection is presently laid out at an angle with a stop sign on Optical Avenue. While the intersection was operating satisfactorily in 1999, the 2000 LBG study anticipates that it will degrade to a LOS of C by the year 2015. If this forecast is found to be accurate, Keene should engage an engineering study to redesign and reconstruct the intersection.

Land Use

The Marlboro Street corridor supports a mix of residential, commercial and industrial land use. The street provides access to large residential areas. Wheelock Elementary School is also located at the intersection of Marlboro and Adams Street. There is a concern that commercial uses and activities could encroach upon established residential areas located on the south side of the street. These neighborhoods should be protected. There has been ongoing redevelopment of property and reuse of the existing buildings along the street. The City of Keene is redeveloping a large former warehouse into a new municipal facility at 350 Marlboro Street. Refer to map on page 43.

Pedestrian Access

The sidewalk on the north side of Marlboro Street connects to the sidewalk located on the west side of Eastern Avenue. This enables pedestrian access to the Keene Industrial Heritage Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail, but additional points of access are needed along Marlboro Street. One such point of access could occur at Keene's new police, fire and public works facility located at 350 Marlboro Street. This location could be a park and walk site.

There is also a concern for safe pedestrian crossings at the Grove and Adams Street intersections due to Wheelock Elementary School. It is recommended that signage and/or devices such as a "wink-o-matic" be installed at these intersections to alert motorists. As Keene performs future road overlay projects on Marlboro Street, a safe riding surface should be provided and bicycle-friendly storm drainage grates installed.

Recommendations

1. There should be a safe pedestrian crossing provided at Grove and Adams Street.
2. A “wink-o-matic” or other similar blinking warning device should be considered at this intersection to alert motorists to pedestrian crossings.
3. Install a point of access for pedestrians from the new municipal facility on Marlboro Street to the Keene Industrial Heritage Trail.
4. Consider the development of a park and walk site at 350 Marlboro Street.
5. Bicycle friendly storm drainage grates should be installed when a road overlay project on Marlboro Street is performed.

(Insert Existing Land Use Marlboro Street Map)

• WINCHESTER STREET

Winchester Street is classified as a “Major Street” by this Transportation Master Plan. Winchester Street from the Swanzezy town line to the west side of Main Street was laid out in 1833 at width of 49.5 feet. The layout was modified in 1909 as part of the New Hampshire west side boulevard. Sections of the street were widened and straightened between 1909 and 1981. For the purposes of this plan, Winchester Street has been divided into two sections: lower Winchester Street (route 10), which extends from the State Bypass to the Swanzezy town line; and upper Winchester Street, which runs from the State Bypass system to Main Street in Downtown Keene.

Average annual daily traffic volumes on Winchester Street are shown in the following table based upon NH DOT recorded counts.

Location	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
West of Main Street				11,000				
East of Ralston Street		12,000			12,000			11,000
At Ashuelot River Bridge	14,000		15,000			15,000		
Key Rd. Intersection				22,000			20,000	
North of State Bypass				21,000			21,000	
South of State Bypass				18,000			14,000	16,000

LOWER WINCHESTER STREET

Lower Winchester Street south of Route 101 (State Bypass system) is another important gateway leading into and out of Keene. Similar to West Street, the Lower Winchester Street corridor is experiencing serious traffic congestion at several points. The Route 101/Winchester Street intersection is a major choke point. This intersection currently operates at a LOS of F during the peak hour. During peak hour conditions, there are serious traffic issues at Kit Street and at Bradco Road as motorists attempt to access Winchester Street.

In 1987, Keene contracted with the consultant Storch Associates to prepare a study of the Winchester Street corridor from Main Street to the Swanzezy town line. That study, Winchester Street Corridor Study (1988), included a number of recommendations. Most significant and costly were proposals to reconstruct the Winchester Street intersection with Main and Marlborough Streets, and the recommendation that the Winchester Street/Route 101 intersection be reconstructed as a grade separated diamond interchange. The total estimated cost of all these improvements was \$10,203,500 in 1987 dollars. Approximately, \$6,000,000 of this represented the estimated cost of the Route 101 overpass. Most of the recommendations of the Storch Report, with some modifications were incorporated into the City’s CIP to be completed over several phases. As part of its overall downtown traffic analysis, Resource System Group (RSG) evaluated these

recommendations and they concluded that the recommendations were appropriate and necessary. In 1990, the first phase was completed, between Route 101 and Krif Road, with the installation of a third, exclusive left turn lane, and the installation of a new drainage system. However, due to budget constraints, no additional phases of this project have been undertaken.

Presently, as part of the Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project, NH DOT is preparing design plans for reconstructing the Route 101/Winchester Street intersection, and widening Winchester Street south to Matthews Road. In 1997, the Lower Winchester Street Corridor Plan was prepared by the Planning Department. This plan identified several issues most of which related to left turn problems. The plan also recommended Kit Street be extended south through Fairbanks and Wetmore Streets to a new intersection with Winchester Street (see Appendix for the preliminary plan showing this concept). The Planning Board adopted the Lower Winchester Street Corridor Plan on July 28, 1997, and it is incorporated by reference in this Transportation Master Plan.

UPPER WINCHESTER STREET

Upper Winchester Street moves high volumes of traffic between the State Bypass system and downtown Keene. The street also provides access to commercial developments at the Key Road/Riverside Plaza intersection and allows access to the Keene State College Campus. Upper Winchester Street presently has a right-of-way width of approximately 66 feet and narrows from four lanes at the intersection of Rt. 101 to two lanes between the Ashuelot River bridge and Main Street. From Key Road to Main Street there are sidewalks located on both sides of the street.

In the 2000 LBG intersection study prepared for Keene, it was reported that the Average Annual Daily Traffic along Winchester Street at the Ralston Street intersection was 14,083 vehicle trips per day. This volume of traffic is expected to experience a slight decrease after improvements are completed as a result of the Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project.

The intersections along Upper Winchester Street have been experiencing varying degrees of pressure. In general, the intersections have been operating at Level of Service (LOS) F as summarized in the following table.

Intersection	1993 NH DOT Analysis	1999 LBG Study
State Bypass	F	
Key Road	C	
Ralston Street		F
Main Street		F

Land Use

The portion of Winchester Street between the intersection of NH Rts. 10/12/101 and the Ashuelot River Bridge serves as an access to two large commercial areas. Key Road is lined on both sides with commercial and retail uses and it serves as the only access to several multi-family residential complexes. Opposite Key Road is the Riverside Plaza shopping center, which has direct access onto Winchester Street. This plaza includes a supermarket, restaurants and retail stores.

Between the Ashuelot River Bridge and Main Street, Winchester Street serves Keene State College and a mixture of small commercial activities and some residential homes. Between Ralston Street and Main Street, it is primarily residential on the north side and institutional, Keene State College on the south. The integrity of the residential neighborhood north of Winchester Street and east of Ralston Street needs to be maintained. Efforts should be made to avoid “cut through” traffic in the residential neighborhoods of Blake, Wilson, and Davis Streets.

The presence of Keene State College and the large student population along Winchester Street has resulted in several pedestrian crossings and a posted speed of 25 mph in that section. There is heavy pedestrian activity between Ralston Street and Main Street, due to students walking from the campus to housing in the surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas. Pedestrian crossing is controlled at the signalized intersections at Main Street and Key Road.

The Future

It is anticipated the traffic volume on Upper Winchester Street will remain unchanged. There will be significant physical changes to Winchester Street between NH Rt. 101 and the Ashuelot River Bridge as a result of the Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project.

Recommendations

1. “Cut through” traffic through the residential neighborhoods on Blake, Wilson and Davis Street should be monitored and limited.
2. New or expansion of existing retail or commercial uses between the Ashuelot River Bridge and Main Street should be thoroughly reviewed to mitigate traffic impacts.
3. Upper Winchester Street should remain pedestrian friendly through the provision of improved crosswalks.
4. Vehicle speeds should be regulated in the low (25 mph) range.
5. Sidewalks should be maintained.
6. The Main Street lighting style should be extended along Winchester Street.
7. Utility lines should be installed underground.
8. Continued cooperation and partnership arrangements between the City and Keene State College should be encouraged.

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(Insert Existing Land Use Winchester Street Map)

• WEST STREET

West Street is classified as a “Major Street” in this Transportation Master Plan. In 1995, Keene conducted a study of West Street. The study recommended that comprehensive improvements to the entire length of the corridor be made, including widening and the provision of a median, the addition of a fifth lane or left turn lane, the addition of a two-way road parallel to West Street, and the installation of a one-way loop (see Ad Hoc Transportation Committee – West Street Recommendations dated May 5, 1995). The community however did not find these recommendations acceptable.

In 1977, Keene retained the consulting firm Earth Tech to prepare preliminary engineering plans to improve the corridor. These plans show improvements to West Street at two key locations as well as improvements to West/Island Street intersection. As part of the project, Keene requested NH DOT approve and fund the development of a computer controlled signal coordination system for the corridor. A section of West Street near the overpass will be widened as part of the Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project.

NH DOT has reviewed these preliminary engineering plans and is requiring updated traffic counts and a traffic signal progression analysis before Keene can prepare final engineering plans. The West Street Gateway Project is currently scheduled in the State 2003-2012 TIP for construction beginning in FY 2006.

The most up to date average annual daily traffic volumes on West Street are shown in the following table based upon NH DOT recorded counts.

Location	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
West of NH 9, 10,12			13,000			14,000	
East of NH 9, 10, 12 Ramps				21,000			21,000
West of Avon Street			21,000		20,000	21,000	
At Ashuelot River Bridge	21,000	21,000				22,000	
West of Court Street			11,000			12,000	

Recommendations

1. Include and implement a computer controlled traffic signal coordination system from Central Square to the State Bypass as part of the West Street Gateway Project.
2. Complete necessary traffic analysis and authorization from NH DOT to develop final engineering plans for improvements to the two key sections of the corridor.
3. Include as part of final engineering plans, a concept for beautifying West Street with street trees and wider sidewalks. Require utility lines be placed underground as

individual development plans are submitted for review and approval. These plans may be implemented one step at a time, but the goal should remain to bury all the utility lines.

4. Include 14 foot wide outside travel lanes in the final design plans to improve bicycle safety along West Street;
5. Develop an additional safe pedestrian crossing point on West Street at a location between the State Bypass and Island Street.
6. Consider relocating the sidewalks from the inside to the outside of the existing railings on the Ashuelot River bridge to provide additional lane width for both motor vehicles and bicyclists.

• COURT STREET

Court Street is classified as a “Major Street” under the Street Classification System of this Master Plan. The street provides the principal means of access to the Cheshire Medical Center and to residential areas between Central Square, Maple Avenue and West Surry Road.

Early records show that Court Street was not officially laid out until January 25, 1868, but that a road existed traveling from Ash Swamp Brook up the Ashuelot River prior to 1745. This road was laid out on the east side side of the river and continued nearly to the Surry town line. Court Street later became a part of the Third New Hampshire Turnpike in 1785. The Third New Hampshire Turnpike was given up as a turnpike in 1822, and then the Town laid out a road over the same course four rods wide (66 feet). This layout established Court Street in its present location.

Court Street begins at Central Square and continues north ending at the Maple Avenue and West Surry Road intersection. It provides direct access to professional, legal, medical and business offices and the residential uses located along the corridor. Court Street has on-street parallel parking and sidewalks located on both sides of the street from Central Square to the vicinity of the medical center. North of the medical center, there is a sidewalk located only on the easterly side of the street to Maple Avenue.

On October 31, 1995, the Mayor and City Council appointed an Ad-Hoc Court Street Traffic Study Committee to study traffic flow entering and exiting the Cheshire Medical Center. A number of short and long term recommendations were made as a result of the study. The short term recommendations include:

- Addition of more visible hospital zone and speed limit and emergency vehicle entering signs.
- Addition of pedestrian crossing pedestals.
- Installation of a blinking light at the intersection of Allen Court and the Clinic driveway.
- Use of better paint or thermoplastic for pavement markings.
- Monitoring access to Court Street from the bypass to determine if traffic becomes a problem in that area.

The long term recommendations included:

- Provision of ambulance access to the Emergency Room at the Hospital from the rear parking lot.
- Addition of a traffic signal at the Allen Court – Clinic driveway intersection when traffic signal warrants are met.
- Installation of Opticom system when a traffic signal is installed.
- Combining the entrance of the Hospital and Clinic to one location, together with a traffic signal and realignment of Allen Court.

- Provision of access between the rear parking lots of the Hospital and Clinic and the provision of an alternative access to the Acrebrook Road area.
- Study means for access from Court Street to the bypass through the feasibility of a service road to the Hospital and Clinic as well as the overall traffic patterns of the city.

Today these recommendations are being addressed through improvements to and the expansion of the Cheshire Medical Center.

Traffic volumes on Court Street between Central Square and the Cheshire Medical Center have been increasing slightly. The average annual daily traffic falls between 8,200 and 12,000 vehicles. Shown below are the NH DOT recorded average annual daily traffic (AADT) counts for Court Street between 1993 and 1999.

Location	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
North of Central Square			9,700	11,000			
North of North Street.		11,000			12,000		
North of Evergreen Ave.	8,500		9,400			9,100	8,200

Keene’s transportation planning model was used in the 2000 LBG intersection study to calculate the AADT on Court Street for 1999 and 2015. The 2015 projections reflect the improvements proposed as part of the Keene/Swanzey Bypass Project. These projections indicate that there will be an increase in traffic at the intersection of Maple Avenue, NH Rt. 12A and West Surry Road, but no change in traffic volumes on Court Street north of the medical center. The results are shown on the following table.

Location	1999	2015
North of Medical Center	9,770*	9,770*
W. Surry/Maple Ave./Rt.12 A Intersection	10,371	11,408

*Note: There was no change in volume due to an error shown in report.

LBG also performed a LOS analysis of the unsignalized intersection of Court Street at Allen Court and the Cheshire Medical Center entrance. The analysis found LOS E in 1999 and LOS F in 2015. To improve the LOS at this intersection, Keene and the Cheshire Medical Center have jointly agreed to design and construct a new roundabout at this location. This roundabout will be the first modern roundabout in Keene.

Land Use

Court Street supports a mix of commercial uses, professional offices and single-family and multi-family residences, including the Cheshire Medical Center located just to the north of NH Rt. 9/10. Toward the upper end Court Street near Maple Avenue, there is also a bank, a convenience food store, a small retail complex, a club, a high density multi-family apartment building, two townhouse developments, a nursing home, and a mobile home residential neighborhood. Refer to maps on pages 55 and 56.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety

Court Street presently serves as a main route for bicyclists between Downtown Keene and areas north and west of Keene. There is currently very little if any paved shoulder along the street to accommodate both bicyclists and motorists in the same lane. This is particularly true in areas where there is on-site parallel parking.

The Future

There may be increased traffic volumes experienced along Court Street as a result of future commercial and office-related development and potential increased residential development along Old Walpole Road. This residential development is contemplated by the City's Land Use Plan. However, for the most part, no significant land use changes are expected along the street, except for the expansion of the Cheshire Medical Center. The majority of the street has been developed. There may be additional conversions of large residential dwellings to professional offices.

The Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project is not expected to have a major impact on Court Street. There may be community pressure for access from NH Rts. 9/10 to the Medical Center. Currently, there is a gated emergency access road from NH Rts. 9/10, which is used by police, ambulances and other emergency vehicles only.

Recommendations

1. Court Street should be improved to accommodate bike lanes on both sides of the street including existing on-street parking.
2. Protection of the existing residential neighborhoods located along Court Street is a major goal of this corridor plan.
3. Zoning requests and site plans should be reviewed to avoid encroachment of conflicting activities with existing residential neighborhoods.

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(Insert Court Street Corridor – North Land Use Map)

(Insert Court Street Corridor – South Land Use Map)

• **PARK AVENUE AND MAPLE AVENUE**

Park Avenue and Maple Avenue are classified as “Major Streets” in this Transportation Master Plan. They also function as a single corridor, providing access to West Keene.

Park Avenue was part of what was known as the Country Road that ran from the junction of West Street to the Surry Town Line, near the Summit. Sections of Park Avenue were first laid out in 1760. Additional adjustments to the width of Park Avenue occurred through the 1800’s into the 1950’s. From approximately the intersection of West Street to the intersection of Arch Street, Park Avenue has an approximate right-of-way width of 66 feet and from Arch Street to Summit Road, a width of approximately 40 feet. Park Avenue served as a connector to NH Rt. 12 via Summitt Road until the State Bypass system was constructed.

Maple Avenue, formerly Woodward’s Road, was laid out in 1789. Alterations were made to the layout of Maple Avenue in the 1800’s. Maple Avenue is 2 rods wide (33 feet) with 15 feet added to the southern side in 1947 with the layout of the Monadnock View Cemetery. The pavement width is 24 feet wide with 2-foot paved shoulders. There is a sidewalk on the southern side that extends from the intersection of Park Avenue to the NH Rt. 12 south access ramp. A sidewalk then starts on the north side near the southbound off ramp of NH Rt. 12 and extends to Court Street.

Park Avenue has sidewalks on both sides until approximately Royal Avenue. From Royal Avenue to Maple Avenue the sidewalk is located on the east side.

Based on NH DOT recorded counts, the average annual daily traffic volumes on Park Avenue have been fairly stable as shown in the table below.

Location	1994	1997	1998	1999	2000
South of Olivo Rd.	4,500	4,300			5,000
North of Arch St.	6,800		6,700		
South of Arch St.	9,500		11,000		
North of West St.	10,000		12,000		
South of Maple Ave.				2,900	

Similarly, based on NH DOT recorded counts, the average annual daily traffic volumes on Maple Avenue have been stable as well (see table below).

Location	1994	1995	1998	1999
East of Park Ave.	4,200		5,200	
West of NH Rt. 12A		7,000	7,700	7,300
At Black Brook	1,800		2,300	2,200

The 2000 LBG intersection report calculated average annual daily traffic for the years 1999 and 2015 on Park Avenue and Maple Avenue (see tables below).

Table 19: Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes for Park Avenue		
Park Avenue	1999	2015
North of West Street	13,170	17,108
North of Arch Street	7,627	9,152

Table 20: Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes for Maple Avenue		
Maple Avenue	1999	2015
At Park Avenue	6,026	7,487
At Court Street	8,612	12,746

The LBG report also performed a Level of Service (LOS) analysis for the year 1999 for several intersections on Park Avenue. The results were as follows.

Table 21: Level of Service (LOS) for Park Avenue	
Location	LOS
At Arch Street	C
At Maple Avenue	A

Land Use

Park Avenue is primarily residential in character, including single-family neighborhoods and apartment complexes. There are also pockets of commercial and retail activity. Park Avenue provides access to Wheelock Park, one of the largest recreational areas in Keene as well as Alumni Field and Keene High School via Arch Street.

Maple Avenue contains a mixture of residential, office and institutional uses. These uses include churches, a large insurance office building, apartments, a school and a mobile home park. It provides access to NH Rt. 12. Future development opportunities along the corridor are limited due to the existence of city-owned land and Dinsmoor Woods. Refer to map on page 61.

The Future

The intersection of West Street and Park Avenue will be reconstructed as part of the Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project. No other plans are scheduled to upgrade or improve Park Avenue. Continued development of corporate park uses may require upgrades to the intersection of Maple Avenue and Route 12. It is expected that traffic volumes will continue at the same levels. Most residential areas in West Keene supported by Park Avenue are fully developed. However, there are some tracts of land located on Summit Road, which may see future residential development.

Pedestrian/Bicycle

There is adequate pedestrian access along Park and Maple Avenue. A sidewalk extends from the West Street intersection all the way to NH Rt. 12. Keene's Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee has identified Maple and Park Avenue as major bicycle corridors and "Share the Road" signs have been installed to alert motorists and bicyclists alike of this dual use.

Recommendations

1. Any work proposed for Maple and Park Avenue should include paved shoulders and the installation of bicycle friendly storm drainage grates.
2. Four (4) foot wide bicycle lanes should be considered for Maple Avenue.

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(Insert Existing Land Use Park Avenue Map)

• **WASHINGTON STREET**

This Transportation Master Plan classifies Washington Street as a “Major Street”. It collects traffic from the northeastern quadrant of Keene and Central Square to NH Rts. 9/10. Washington Street was one of the first roads laid out in the City of Keene by the original proprietors in October 1738. Washington Street provided access to Gilsum and to communities to the north and east. Originally, sections of the street were laid out in eight-rod (132 ft) widths from approximately Central Square to just south of the current Recreation Center. It was reduced to four rods (66 ft) from that point and beyond. The width of Washington Street was adjusted several times. The first change was in 1815 when one rod (16 feet) was sold from the westerly edge of the street from the Jail (Recreation Center) north to the Gilsum Road. Adjustments continued through the late 1890’s. Today the right-of-way is 81.5 ft wide at City Hall and 104.5 feet at Cottage Street.

Washington Street has concrete sidewalks varying in width on both sides of the street from Central Square to approximately Washington Avenue. From Washington Avenue north, a sidewalk exists on the east side terminating at the Old Concord Road.

There is on-street parallel parking on both sides, from the Keene Middle School north to the intersection of Gilsum Street.

The average annual daily traffic on Washington Street has been fairly constant. This can be seen in the NH DOT counts taken between 1996 and 1999 in the following table.

Table 22: Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes for Washington Street				
Location	1996	1997	1998	1999
South of Rt. 9	4,700			
North of Old Concord Rd.			4,900	5,000
South of Old Concord Rd			5,000	5,100
South of Wilford St.		6,300	6,700	

Land Use

There is a variety of land uses and activities on Washington Street. A number of schools and municipal facilities, including City Hall and the Recreation Center are located on Washington Street. The Central Square area is a concentration of commercial and small retail activities. Between Vernon Street and High Street, many large houses have been converted to professional offices or multi-family units. From High Street north to NH Rt. 9/10, there are several commercial areas among the residential dwellings. Refer to map on page 64.

The Future

No major changes are expected along Washington Street within the next five to ten years. There may be a slow conversion of remaining large residential dwellings to professional offices or multi-family and some future multi-family construction. The Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project is not expected to have an impact on Washington Street. The only traffic issue is at the intersection with Central Square, which experiences queuing problems.

Pedestrian Access

The existing sidewalks provide a safe environment for pedestrians. Keene's Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee has designated Washington Street as a major bicycle corridor and "Share the Road" signs have been installed. This Transportation Master Plan recommends that when Keene performs a major road overlay project on Washington Street, the shoulders be widened and paved to provide a safe riding surface and bicycle-friendly storm drainage grates be installed.

Recommendations

1. The shoulders on Washington Street should be widened and paved to provide a safe riding surface.
2. Bicycle safe storm drainage grates should be installed.

(Insert Existing Land Use Washington Street Map)

Part 6: Transportation Action Plan

Action Item	Lead Agency
Short Term Actions (1 to 2 Years)	
1. Support the implementation of a Keene-Swanzey Bypass Project design, which will best serve and address the needs of the community, the region and the vision of this plan.	City Council
2. Improve the flow of traffic on the major gateway corridors leading Public Works & to and located within the Downtown. These corridors include West Street, Main Street, Marlboro Street and Winchester Street.	Planning
3. Prepare plans for upgrading and improving the Main, Winchester and Marlboro Street intersection. These plans should include the feasibility of installing a modern roundabout as part of the design for the reconstruction of this intersection.	Public Works & Planning
4. Acquire the former B&M Railroad right-of-way owned by the State of New Hampshire located along Foundry Street between Emerald and Winchester Streets.	City Council & City Manager
5. Prepare final engineering plans to upgrade West Street to include intersection improvements, computer controlled traffic signal coordination, improvements to Island Street, sidewalks and landscaping amenities.	Public Works & Planning & Police
6. Extend 93 rd Street through the redevelopment of the City's Railroad Property from Railroad Street to Water Street across from Grove Street	City Council & City Manager
7. Continue to support and fund the City's road improvement program to levels necessary to address the recommendations of this Transportation Master Plan.	City Council
8. Increase funding for new sidewalks and repair of existing sidewalks.	City Council
9. Continue to fund and support public transportation and use of the City's Transportation Center as a multi-modal facility.	City Council
10. Update the City's 1990 Traffic Planning Model with new traffic data and capabilities.	Planning

Transportation Action Plan

Action Item	Lead Agency
Short Term Actions (1 to 2 Years)	
11. Continue to support and participate in the State's 10-Year TIP through the SWRPC's Transportation Advisory Committee.	Planning & Public Works
12. Continue to support and implement Keene's Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Master Plan.	City Council
13. Continue to seek funding through the NH DOT Transportation Enhancement Program to implement the recommendations of Keene's Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Master Plan.	City Council & Planning
14. Encourage the placement of bike racks at public places, on public transportation vehicles and at new transit facilities.	Planning
15. Require the provision of bike racks as part of the required parking standards in the City's Zoning Ordinance.	City Council & Planning
16. Adopt and implement the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee's <u>Bikeway Corridor Policy</u> , which requires that all proposed resurfacing or road reconstruction projects located on the key bikeway corridors be reviewed for the inclusion of bicycle safety improvements.	City Council, Public Works & Planning
17. Incorporate a Street Classification System into all applicable existing and proposed City codes and regulations.	City Council & Planning & Public Works

Transportation Action Plan

Action Item	Lead Agency
Medium Term Actions (3 to 4 Years)	
1. Prepare preliminary engineering plans for improvements to Main & Street, Winchester and Emerald Streets to facilitate and improve traffic flow and pedestrian access.	Public Works & Planning
2. Prepare engineering plans to extend the existing landscaped median consisting of lighting, paving, curbing and landscaping on Main Street south to the new reconstructed intersection of Main/Winchester & Marlboro Street.	Public Works & Planning
3. Prepare an engineering design study to determine the need and cost of improvements to Emerald Street, including the Main Street Intersection and the School Street intersection.	Public Works & Planning
4. The Emerald Street design study should take into consideration roundabout designs, traffic calming measures, inclusion of 10-foot wide bike path connecting Emerald to Winchester Street, building encroachments within existing right of way, making Foundry Street a one-way street in the southbound direction with right turn only at Winchester Street, and making Ralston Street a one-way street northbound.	Public Works & Planning
5. Draft and adopt a neighborhood-based traffic calming policy and program.	Public Works & Planning
6. Plan and fund the development of back lot pedestrian ways or plazas for the movement of people on foot and bicycle away from traffic.	City Council & Public Works
7. Support a roadside bike safety program for pavement marking, highway shoulder widening, and elimination of structural hazards.	Public Works
8. Signage should be installed on the State Bypass system to direct motorists to access Keene State College and Downtown Keene.	Public Works & NH DOT

Transportation Action Plan

Action Item	Lead Agency
Long Term Actions (Over 5 Years)	
1. Conduct feasibility study and prepare engineering plans for the purpose of extending Kit Street south through Fairbanks and Wetmore Streets to a new intersection with Winchester Street.	City Council, Public Works & Planning
2. Conduct feasibility study and prepare engineering plans for the intersection of Marlboro Street and Optical Avenue.	City Council & Public Works
3. Continue to support local public transportation and implement strategies designed to enhance travel demand management.	City Council & Planning
4. Enhance regional public transportation by participating in regional planning, including development of a park-and-ride network at the periphery of Keene.	Planpping
5. Develop trailhead-parking facilities for access to the state-owned rail trails located outside of the Downtown, such as Krif Road, Whitcomb Mills Road and Swazey Factory Road.	Planning & Public Works
6. Develop and sustain a public information program regarding alternative transportation, opportunities and facilities within the region and the City of Keene.	Southwest Region Planning Commission

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(Insert Traffic Signal Locations Map)

(Insert City Express Route Map)

Neighborhood Traffic Calming Policy, City of Asheville, NC

Example Spot Safety Improvement Program

Memo from SWRPC on the Eligibility of Roads for Federal Funding

Map from SWRPC Showing the Eligibility of Roads for Federal Funding

Key Bikeway Corridors Policy

Map of the City's Long Term, Free and Reserved Parking in Downtown

This page is intentionally left blank.

(Insert Map of Proposed Kit Street Extension)

City of Boulder, Colorado – Bike Rack Zoning Provisions: 10% of all required parking spaces in a commercial or industrial development must be set aside as bicycle spaces. A bicycle space is defined as a minimum of 2 feet wide by 6 feet long and consists of either an anchored bike rack or a secure bicycle storage locker.

City of Boulder, Colorado

Go Boulder:

- Transportation Planning Teleworking Menu – provides information of various teleworking events, facts, workplace opportunities, references, links and news within the community;
- Boulder’s Walk and Bike Week – June 10-18. Community wide participation encouraged with awards given to commuters of the year, student commuters, best bicycle commuter, best bus riding commuter and best all around commuter

City of Seattle, Washington

Car Smart Communities:

- Way to Go Seattle – a new initiative to show people they can save money and make their communities more livable by making more conscious transportation choices, just as they do with recycling and water conservation. This program encourages neighborhood projects, which help residents use their cars less often for errands and other personal and family trips. The program also offers project ideas, challenge grants to implement projects, resources and links to groups and organizations within the community, which can help residents learn to be “car smart”, car smart tools and “how-to” information, and a bulletin board to share ideas with other communities;
- Carpool Parking in Downtown Seattle – this program provides carpool discounts to adults who commute to and from work together to sites located near a designated carpool parking area. It reduces the cost of the work-day commute;
- Metro’s Bike & Ride Program – now offers bike racks on public transportation at no additional cost to riders when traveling with a bicycle. Riders may load and unload their bikes at any Metro bus stop, except with the Ride Free Area in downtown Seattle between 6 AM and 7 PM. During these hours, loading and unloading bikes is restricted to a route’s first and last ride free stop as a safety policy to reduce the potential of many cyclists being between two buses in heavy downtown traffic;
- Seattle’s Bike Spot Improvement Program – also installs bicycle racks in neighborhood business districts to encourage bicycling for short trips and errands. The racks provide safe and convenient bicycle parking. Racks are installed at the request of property owners, or citizens. Several criteria used in siting the racks: racks are installed in public space, usually on a wide sidewalk with five or more feet of clear sidewalk space remaining, racks are placed to avoid conflicts with pedestrians and away from building entrances and crosswalks, and racks are installed at bus stops or loading zones only if

they do not interfere with boarding or loading patterns and there are no alternative sites. Racks on private property are paid by the property owner. The type of rack installed is a railing type rack, made of 2" galvanized pipe, 54 inches long, 32 inches high and holds two bikes. This rack is unobtrusive, aesthetically pleasing, has no sharp edges or moving parts, and requires little maintenance.

City of Laguna Beach, Alameda & Huntington Beach, California

Laguna Beach, Alameda and Huntington Beach California award prizes and discounts as popular economic incentives for employees to try alternatives to commuting by automobile. Laguna Beach, California, provides walking commuters with a \$50 annual shoe subsidy and free bicycles to bike commuters. Alameda, California, lends impounded but reconditioned bicycles to employees for commuting; after a designated number of commutes, the employee receives title to the bicycle. Huntington Beach, California, gives time-off credits and gift certificates for every commute done by carpool, transit, bicycle or walking.

City of Oakland, California:

In Oakland, California, a program supported by an International Council For Local Environmental Initiatives Solutions Grant, works with downtown businesses to offer Bike Bucks for their annual Bike-to-Work Day. Downtown business and bicycle shops throughout the city offer discount coupons. Merchants have also contributed prizes, including free lunches, kayak lessons and a free bicycle as grand prizes.

City of Denver:

The City of Denver, Colorado liked Oakland's Bike Bucks so much it copied the program's format for Denver's Bike-to-Work Month. One Denver retailer has even gone so far as to issue its own Bike Bucks for bicyclist customers.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Planning Board acknowledges the substantial contribution of time and energy volunteered by the members of the Transportation Master Plan Committee in the development of the Keene 2002 Transportation Master Plan. The Transportation Master Plan Committee was formed in 2000/2001 to guide the development of this plan. Three subcommittees were formed: Subcommittee A: Plan Update; Subcommittee B: Gateway Corridors; and Subcommittee C: Alternative Transportation. Each of the three subcommittees reviewed specific topics and prepared separate reports. These reports were then reviewed by the overall Transportation Master Plan Committee and have been incorporated into this plan. Citizen participation was facilitated and encouraged during all the meetings of the Transportation Master Plan Committee. Membership on the Committee is identified below:

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APPENDIX B

Friends of City Center Survey & Results

Friends of Center City
Downtown Keene Survey
Final Report

Prepared by Kari L. Blood
Antioch University New England
January 22, 2008

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Brief Downtown Survey History

In the spring of 2007, the Friends of Center City (FoCC) conducted a survey open to all interested residents, workers, and visitors to determine what people value about the city, as well as what they would like to see improved. By the end of May, 920 people had responded to the voluntary online survey. A statistical summary of the short answer questions was presented at the FoCC Forum in May 2007, but the 2,500 free-response answers had yet to be analyzed.

In addition to the original survey, Keene State College conducted a slightly modified version for their student body in August 2007. By the end of the summer, 885 students responded to the survey, which assessed what draws students into downtown, what they like best and least about the city, what would improve the city, and what retail stores they would like to see.

The following report provides an analysis of the results from both surveys, including all free-response comments, as well as the short-answer questions.

Survey Analysis Methods

The following procedures were used to analyze the results of the Keene Downtown Survey:

1. A preliminary read-through of all answers for all free-response questions in the primary downtown survey was conducted. During this process, any themes or ideas that occurred repeatedly in respondents' answers were noted and listed.
2. The themes were grouped into 9 related categories, each with 2 to 5 subcategories, for a total of 32 subcategories. The goal was to create a set of categories that would reflect every topic respondents mentioned in their answers. (See Survey Themes, next page.)
3. A second read-through was conducted to code every response according to its appropriate categories and subcategories. Single answers frequently discussed multiple issues and themes, so responses were placed in all appropriate categories or subcategories. Whenever possible, responses were also coded as positive (P) or negative (N), where generally P = Like as it is now or would like in future and N = Don't like as it is now or don't want to see in future.
4. After all responses were coded, they were sorted according to category/subcategory and the total number of responses for each category/subcategory was tallied.

5. The topics that generated the highest number of total responses were subjected to a third read-through to summarize the primary points of all respondents within each category/subcategory.

6. The short-answer questions were tallied by the top two levels of each answer (e.g. “strongly agree” and “agree”). The responses with the highest percentages were ranked in order from highest to lowest. In some cases, the bottom two levels were most significant (e.g. “disagree” and “strongly disagree”), so those numbers were tallied and ranked.

7. The same process was conducted for the Keene State College survey. The results of both surveys were compared and the most significant commonalities were noted. (See page 23.)

Themes for Free Response Analysis

CULTURE

- a. community events
- b. art/music
- c. theater/film
- d. library/museum

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

- a. small-town feel/social opportunities
- b. aesthetics
- c. architecture/historical value

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

- a. bars/dance clubs
- b. dining/restaurants
- c. sports/YMCA
- d. family activities
- e. event space

TRANSPORATION

- a. traffic
- b. parking
- c. public/alternative transportation (biking)
- d. walkability/pedestrian routes

HOUSING

- a. affordability
- b. availability

BUSINESS/RETAIL

- a. diversity/variety
- b. accessibility (cost/hours/location)
- c. ownership (local v. national)
- d. services
- e. grocery/farmers' market

(continued on next page)

ECONOMY

- a. employment
- b. development
- c. tourism
- d. city rules/procedures

SAFETY/NUISANCE

- a. police
- b. undesirable behavior
- c. lighting/noise

ENVIRONMENT

- a. greenspaces (parks, landscaping)
- b. sustainability issues (energy, recycling, green building)

Limitations

The survey was open and voluntary to all residents, workers, visitors, and students. As such, it was not possible to ensure that it was distributed evenly to all segments of the Keene population. Therefore, the results reflect the views of those who chose to answer the survey and not necessarily those of the entire population of Keene.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of respondents were people who work, live, visit, or use the services in downtown Keene several times a week to daily, providing them with informed opinions and a vested interest in any changes that occur in the downtown area.

Summary of Significant Survey Results

1. Transportation. The majority of respondents drive to get into town. Traffic in downtown is perceived as too congested and busy, and the rotary at the head of Main St. is confusing and potentially dangerous. Parking is a major concern: People feel that there is not enough parking available in downtown, and they believe parking meter fees and fines penalize downtown shoppers and visitors. Other respondents would like to use bicycles as transportation around the city, but they say downtown is not “bike-friendly” and they would support a more bike-friendly design in downtown. College students primarily walk to get into town, and support the idea of creating a better public transportation system within and around the city.

2. Walkability. Most respondents say downtown is pleasant place to walk, with convenient access to stores and businesses. They want this preserved and expanded to the side streets. Many say they would be more likely walk along the bike path from Main St. to Colony Mill if there were shops and restaurants along the way. A majority believes that improvements to sidewalks, benches, lighting and other pedestrian safety issues would benefit the city.

3. Community Character. The majority of respondents appreciate the small-town character or “New England charm,” or characterize downtown as a vibrant atmosphere with many social opportunities. They want Keene to keep that character and atmosphere. Many view downtown as attractive and well kept. A majority appreciates the historic character and architecture in downtown, and places a high priority on seeing this value maintained and preserved as development occurs. Many respondents do not want to see new buildings over 3 stories in downtown.

4. Retail. Many people like the current retail options downtown, but they also want to see more variety, especially less expensive, more “practical” stores, along with the “unique” shops. Many feel that downtown has too many non-retail businesses (real estate, loan shops, etc.) and not enough retail options. A majority believes that incentives for targeted businesses to locate downtown would benefit the city. Many want to see extended hours of operation for stores during evenings and weekends. Respondents generally support the idea of a small grocery store or food co-op in downtown and/or a permanent site for an expanded farmers’ market.

5. Entertainment/Cultural Events. Most respondents would like to see more festivals, concerts, music venues, and art galleries or art shows. Many like the variety of restaurants, coffee shops,

and other dining options in town currently, and are drawn to downtown because of them. A majority would like to see even more dining options, especially outdoor dining.

6. Environment. Many respondents like the trees and landscaped spaces in downtown, including the Central Square park/gazebo and other parks. They want to see more green spaces and parks in the downtown area, and better access to trails and parks from downtown. They believe this will add value to surrounding real estate. A significant number of respondents want to see more opportunities for recycling downtown. They say they would be willing to pay more to live in highly energy efficient “green buildings.”

7. Housing. Among respondents, support for increasing residential development and the number of people living downtown is neutral. A smaller number of respondents believe downtown would benefit from increasing affordable housing options and mixed-use buildings.

Demographics: General Survey

Profile of Typical Respondent

- ▶ Visits downtown frequently (at least twice/week, more likely daily)
- ▶ Works in Keene
- ▶ Lives more than 1 mile from center of town
- ▶ Earns slightly more than average Keene resident
- ▶ Owns a home
- ▶ More likely female, of working age (over age 25, under 60)
- ▶ Household of 3 or fewer people

Keene Population vs. Survey Respondents

(Demographics information obtained from 2000 U.S. Census)

Population

- ▶ **Respondents represent 2.5% of total Keene population**

Total Keene population: 22,563

Total respondents living in Keene: 564 (61% of respondents)

Gender

- ▶ **Respondents gender distribution: 39% male, 61% female**

Keene gender distribution: 47% male, 53% female

Age Groups

- ▶ **Respondents represent less than 1% of Keene's 15-25 age group**

Keene age 15-25 population: 6501

Respondents in under 25 age group: 44

- ▶ **Respondents represent approximately 6% of Keene's 25-45 age group**

Keene age 25-45 population: 5574

Respondents in 25-45 age group: 355

- ▶ **Respondents represent approximately 10% of Keene's 46-60 age group**

Keene age 46-60 population: 4026

Respondents in 46-60 age group: 390

► **Respondents represent approximately 3% of Keene's 60-85 age group**

Keene age 60-85 population: 3763

Respondents in 60-85 age group: 114

Keene Average Household Size: 2.27 people

► 40% of respondents live in 2-person household

► 45% respondents live in 3 or more person household

Income

► 82% of respondents earned more than \$30,000 as individuals

► 52% of respondents earned more than \$50,000 as individuals

Per capita income in Keene: \$20,544

Median household income: \$37,033

Median family income: \$49,935

Homeownership

► 51% of respondents are Keene homeowners

► 18% of respondents are Keene renters

Workers/Visitors

► 82% of respondents work within 2 miles of city center

► 21% respondents are visitors to Keene

Demographics: Keene State College Survey

Profile of Typical Respondent

- ▶ Female student, between age 18 and 21
- ▶ Lives on campus
- ▶ Does not work off-campus
- ▶ Visits downtown at least 2-3 time per week
- ▶ Walks to get to downtown

Student Population

- ▶ **Respondents represent 17% of total Keene State College population**

Total Keene State College population: 5,282 total enrollment

Total Keene State College respondents: 885 students

Gender

- ▶ **Respondents gender distribution: 27% male, 73% female**

Keene State College gender distribution: 42% male, 58% female

Age/Student Year

- ▶ 93% of respondents were between 18 and 21 years of age, evenly distributed for each age
- ▶ Slightly more freshmen responded, but all other years (sophomore, junior, senior) evenly represented

Work/Residence Status

- ▶ Majority (73%) live on campus
- ▶ 70% of off-campus students live within 1 mile of campus
- ▶ Majority (70%) does not have a job off campus

**General Downtown Survey:
Major Category Totals for Free Responses**

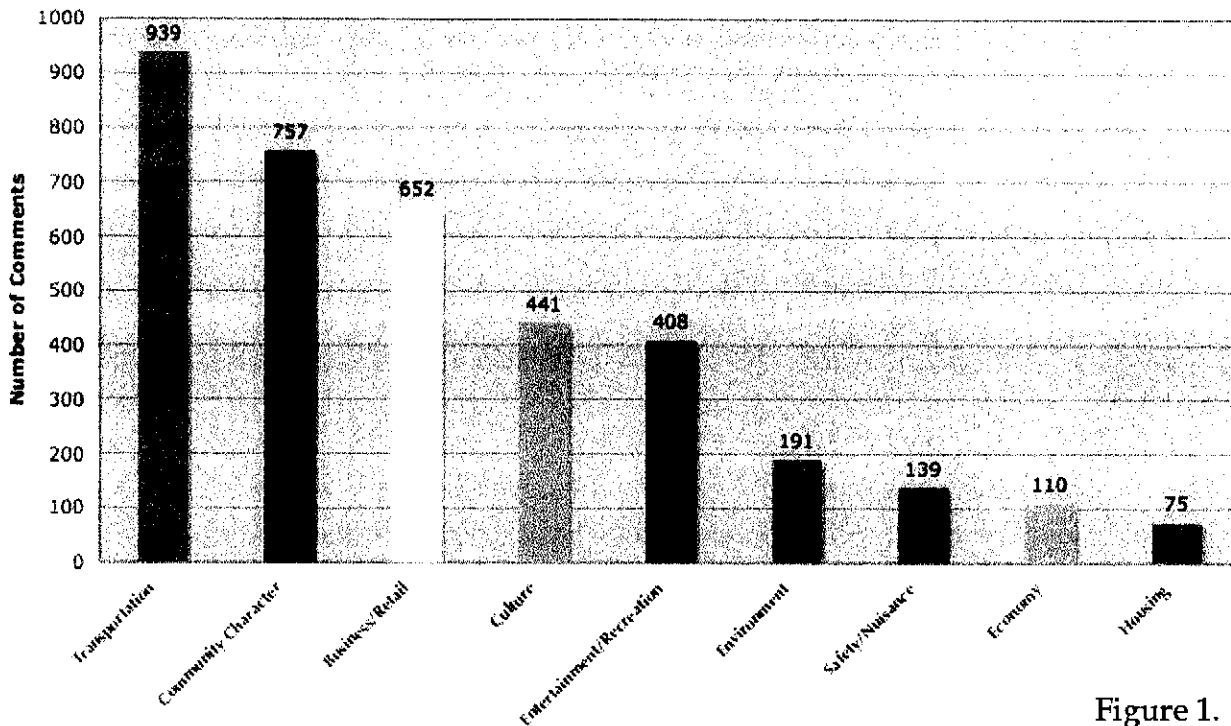


Figure 1.

**General Downtown Survey:
Subcategory Totals for Free Responses**

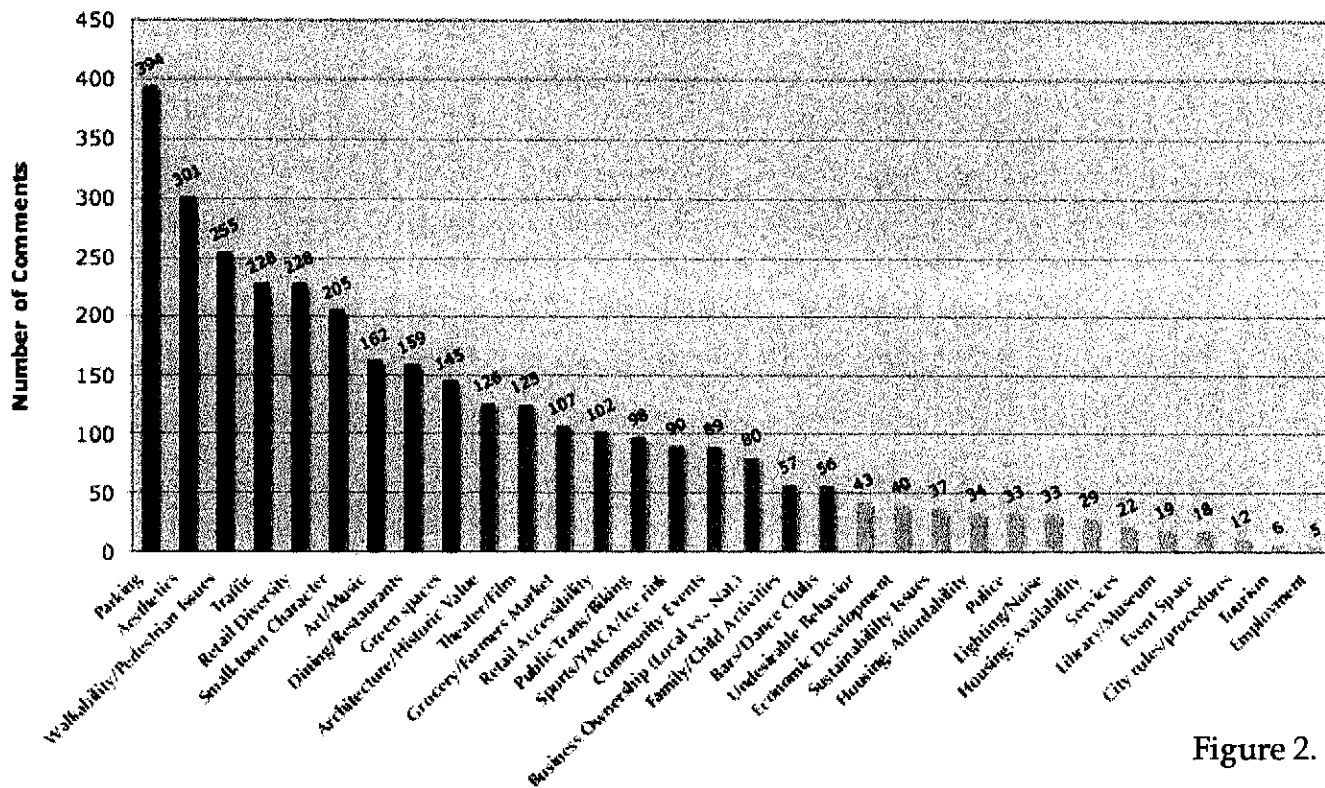


Figure 2.

Detailed Results Analysis: General Survey

Part 1. Free Response Analysis

Top three major categories receiving the most comments:

1. **Transportation** (Subcategories: traffic; parking; public/ alternative transportation; and walkability)

2. **Community Character** (Subcategories include: small-town feel/ social opportunities; aesthetics; architecture/ historical value)

3. **Business/Retail** (Subcategories include: diversity/ variety; accessibility (cost, hours, location); local vs. national ownership; services; grocery stores/ farmers' market)

Subcategories with high response rates (at least 100 comments) from other major categories:

4. **Green spaces**

5. **Art/music**

6. **Dining/restaurants**

Significant Issues Identified

1. *Transportation*

Note: Strong opposition to the roundabouts was voiced, almost universally, during construction. However, since this project has already occurred and opinions may have changed now that construction is completed, the roundabout comments were not included in the count with the other traffic issues.

- Downtown is too “congested” with traffic, particularly during rush-hours. The traffic circle around Central Square is confusing and hazardous, and should be improved. A number of respondents suggested there needs to be more education about how to navigate the traffic circles and more control of traffic speed in downtown. (25% of respondents commented on traffic, majority were negative comments)

- Majority felt that parking meter fees and parking ticket fines are burdensome and excessive, amounting to a penalty that discourages people from shopping or doing business downtown. People are more likely to go to big box stores where they can park for free. They also felt that downtown needs much more parking availability, perhaps in parking garages behind downtown buildings. A minority said that getting into and out of the parking spaces along Main St. is difficult or dangerous due to the traffic going by and that the rules for parking meters (when you need to pay, when you don't) are not clearly posted. (38% of respondents commented on parking, majority were negative comments)

- Majority believe that downtown is safe, pleasant place to walk around and they already do spend time doing so. They like the wide sidewalks and close proximity of shopping, dining, and entertainment (e.g. Colonial Theater). They want this aspect of the downtown to be preserved, improved, and expanded to side streets. A minority of respondents suggested turning Main St. into a pedestrian mall totally closed to auto traffic, like Burlington, VT. *(28% of respondents commented on walkability/pedestrian issues)*

- A minority of respondents said crosswalks do not feel safe for pedestrians, either due to poor street lighting, lack of visibility of crosswalks, fast-moving cars, short duration of time to cross safely at traffic lights. As drivers, they don't like having pedestrians step out into the street in front of them.

- Majority would like to use bicycles as transportation around the city. But, they say downtown is not "bike-friendly" because they have to ride in the street and there is a lack of bike racks. Accessing bike paths from Main St. is difficult and they would like better connections between bike paths and the city. Majority who mentioned biking like and use the current bike paths, but want more. A minority mentioned the need for better public transportation such as buses, trolley, shuttles etc. *(10% of respondents commented on public transportation/biking)*

2. Community Character

- 22% of respondents believe Keene has a small-town, quaint, New England charm that should be preserved. They don't want development to change downtown's atmosphere into that of a "big city." In addition, 14% feels Keene has a vibrant, lively, friendly atmosphere and they want to see that maintained. Many like the social opportunities of outdoor gathering places like benches and outdoor dining, and they want to see more of that because the limited outdoor seating/public benches/picnic tables get filled up quickly. *(36% of respondents commented on community character or the small-town, New England "feel")*

- 25% respondents say downtown is attractive or beautiful. They like the wide main street and the open, spacious feel it creates; the trees; the flowers; and the view toward the gazebo/church at the top of Main St. They also like that it is kept clean and the exteriors of the buildings are generally kept up. Vocal minority dislikes the new decorative lights on the tree trunks in the median, but generally liked to "old" lights in the branches.

- Majority appreciates the historic buildings and architecture in downtown and want to see this value maintained as development occurs. They also appreciate the renovation of other

downtown buildings (e.g. Woolworth's becoming Hannah Grimes Marketplace), which improved the appearance of the city. A minority feels that recent development has allowed for cheap-looking new office buildings and lack of a consistent aesthetic for the exterior of buildings (e.g. the brightly colored buildings on Main St.) *(13% commented on historical/architectural issues)*

3. Business/Retail

- Too many non-retail businesses (real estate, pawn/loan shops, etc.) and not enough retail options. 13% like the current mix of stores and businesses. However, 14% want to see more retail shops including a better mix of clothing and shoe stores, "unique" or "interesting" shops, bookstores, and other practical shopping needs. *(25% commented on diversity/variety of businesses/retail)*

- Majority would like to see longer store hours (evenings/weekends) for downtown businesses. Many shops are perceived to be too expensive for the average resident to shop at. They want more affordable options that are still "upscale." *(11% commented on business/retail accessibility)*

- Many respondents want to see a small grocery store or food co-op in downtown and/or a permanent, year-round home for the farmers' market. *(11% commented on grocery/farmers' market)*

- Majority of respondents support locally owned business and retail establishments and do not want to see national "chain" stores in downtown. *(8% commented on local vs. national business ownership)*

4. Green Spaces (parks, landscaping, trees)

- Majority of respondents like the trees and small landscaped spaces in downtown, including the Central Square park/gazebo and other parks. They want to see more green spaces in the downtown area, whether as pocket parks or as trees planted throughout a parking area. *(16% of respondents commented on green space)*

5. Art/Music

- Some respondents enjoy current music offerings, but majority feel there need to be more musical venues and outdoor concerts or music festivals. Many respondents also want to see more art shows, galleries, or other artistic venues. *(18% of respondents commented on art/music)*

6. Dining/Restaurants/Coffee Shops

• 12% like the variety of restaurants, coffee shops, and other dining options in town currently. Majority would like to see even more dining options, especially outdoor dining. (17% commented on dining/restaurants)

Part 2. Short Answer Analysis

Why do respondents go downtown?

1. Restaurants/bars (79%)
2. Shopping (66%)
3. Work (50%)

How do respondents get downtown?

90% drive and 49% walk

How likely are respondents to walk along the bike path from Main St. to Colony Mill?

48% likely or very likely

If there were attractive shops and restaurants in between? 73% likely or very likely

Attractions for which respondents are likely to visit downtown now or in the future:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Festivals and Events: | 85% likely or very likely |
| 2. Entertainment (concerts, etc.): | 81% likely or very likely |
| 3. Fine or family dining: | 79% likely or very likely |
| 4. Stores (music, clothing, books, gifts): | 78% likely or very likely |
| 5. Coffee Shops/Bakery: | 77% likely or very likely |

Note: Indoor farmer's market or food co-op: 68% likely or very likely even though it doesn't exist yet

What changes would benefit the city most?

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Protecting historic character of downtown: | 85% agree or strongly agree |
| 2. Encouraging a broader mix of retail activities: | 78% agree or strongly agree |
| 3. Improving access to parks and trails from downtown: | 77% agree or strongly agree |
| 4. Pedestrian improvements (sidewalks, crosswalks, benches, lighting): | 76% agree or strongly agree |
| 5. Providing incentives for targeted businesses to locate downtown: | 75% agree or strongly agree |

- 6. Providing additional **parking** and signage: 74% agree or strongly agree
- 7. Providing incentives for **historic preservation** and reuse: 74% agree or strongly agree
- 8. Adding more **green spaces/parks** to the downtown area: 73% agree or strongly agree

The least supported ideas to benefit the city:

- 1. Allowing for buildings over 3 stories in downtown 40% disagree or strongly disagree
- 2. Increasing the number of people living downtown 23% disagree or strongly disagree

Part 3. Environment Subset

41% of all respondents answered "Environment" question set

- 1. Open green space and parks add value to surrounding real estate:
92% agree/strongly agree
- 2. Want to see more pedestrian/bike friendly design in downtown:
87% agree/strongly agree
- 3. Would support a food co-op that sells locally grown food in town:
87% agree/strongly agree
- 4. It is important to have better recycling opportunities downtown:
81% agree/strongly agree
- 5. Would pay more to live in a well-insulated building with no heating/cooling costs:
80% agree/strongly agree
- 6. Want to see more green space in downtown:
78% agree/strongly agree

Part 4. Housing Subset

32% of all respondents answered "Housing" question set

- 1. A top priority should be developing more affordable housing:
73% agree/strongly agree

2. High density, mixed-use buildings should be encouraged in downtown area:

67% agree/strongly agree

3. More people living in downtown area will encourage more business in downtown:

66% agree/strongly agree

Part 5. Culture/Retail Subset

Less than 40% of all respondents answered "Culture and Retail" question set

- 40% are *most* likely to visit downtown for dining, and 46% are *least* likely to visit for bars/nightlife.
- 87% believe they are aware of local cultural events, performances, galleries
- 77% attend a concert, gallery, or performance at least once every three months, and 81% of these are in Keene.
- 73% currently get most of their food from Keene grocery stores.
- 79% visit farmer's market in Keene.
- 66% are interested in a food co-op.

**Keene State College Downtown Survey:
Major Category Totals for Free Responses**

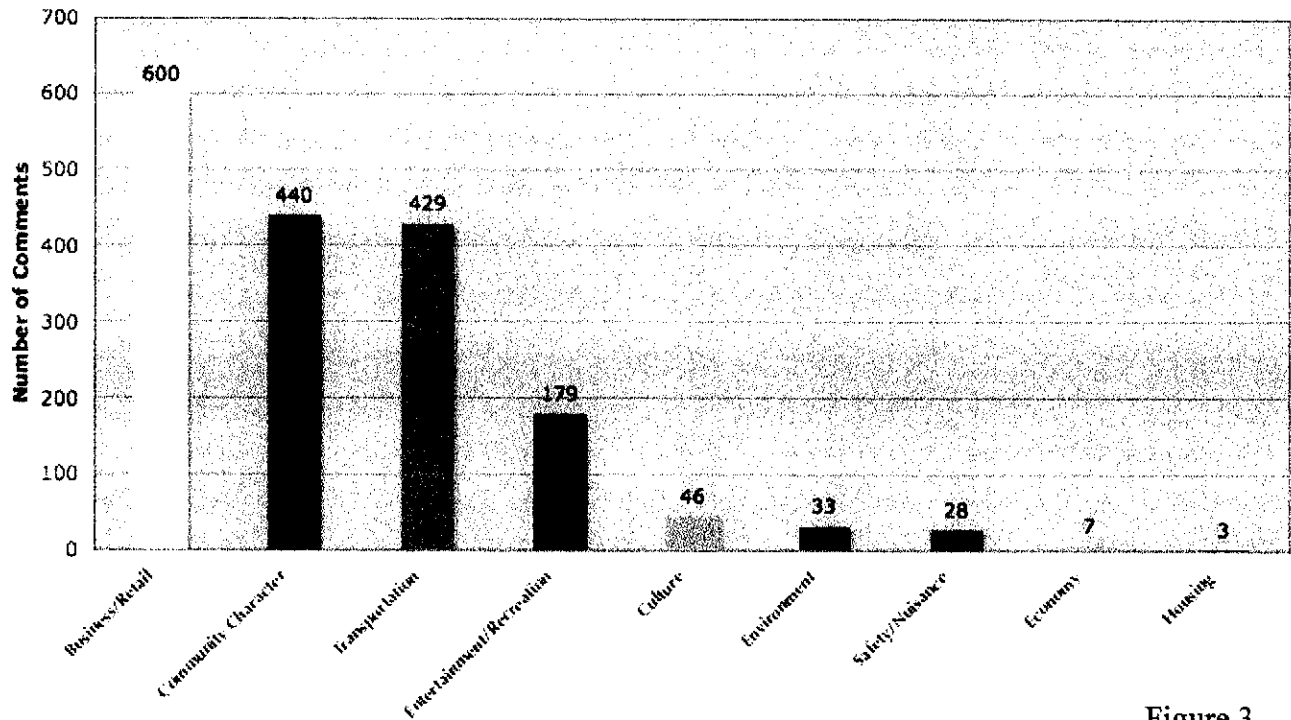


Figure 3.

**Keene State College Downtown Survey:
Subcategory Totals for Free Responses**

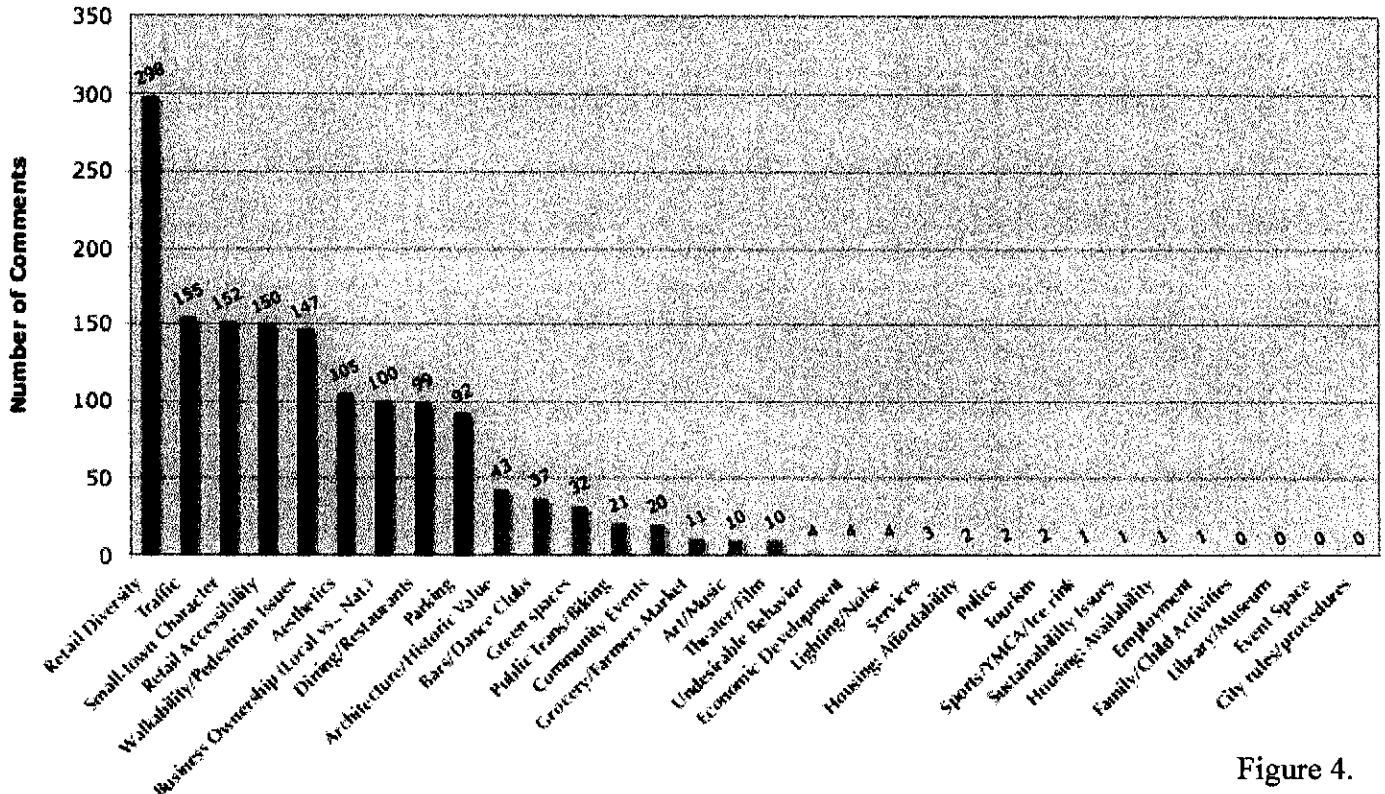


Figure 4.

Detailed Results Analysis: Keene State College Survey

Part 1. Free Response Analysis

Top four major categories receiving the most comments:

1. **Business/Retail** (Subcategories include: diversity/variety; accessibility (cost, hours, location); local vs. national ownership)
 2. **Community Character** (Subcategories include: small-town feel/social opportunities; aesthetics)
 3. **Transportation** (Subcategories: traffic; parking; and walkability/pedestrian issues)
 4. **Entertainment Recreation** (Subcategories: dining/restaurants; bars/dance clubs)
-

Significant Issues Identified

1. *Business/Retail*

- Slightly more than half of students who commented on retail diversity feel that downtown lacks retail stores of interest to young people, particularly clothing and music stores. The other half of respondents enjoy and appreciate the variety of unique shops currently on Main St., though many respondents would also like to see more stores in addition to what is there. *(34% of all respondents commented on retail diversity/variety)*

- Almost half of students who commented on retail accessibility issues said that most downtown stores are too expensive for them to shop at, and that stores close too early in the evenings, making it difficult for them to shop when they have free time. More than half of students commenting on accessibility said one of the things they like best about Keene is that downtown shops, restaurants, and services are centrally located in one area that is within walking distance to the Keene State campus. *(17% of all respondents commented on retail accessibility)*

- The vast majority of comments related to business ownership were strongly supportive of independent, locally owned businesses and retail shops. These students do not want to see national chain stores in the downtown area. However, some respondents acknowledged that chain stores would be desirable if they stayed on the outskirts of town. A small number of students commenting on this issue said that the downtown area would be improved by

bringing in more nationally known stores. (11% of all respondents commented on local v. national retail ownership)

2. Community Character

- The majority of student commenting on the character of Keene describe it as having a friendly, welcoming, home-like atmosphere, with the energy of a city but the comfort and security of a small town. (16% of all respondents made general comments about community character)

- 17% percent of all respondents like the “small-town, New England feel” that downtown offers, but many also believe that it provides the amenities of a city at the same time. They often described Keene as “quaint,” “cute,” “charming,” or “historic.” Some respondents also appreciate the sense of community and social interactions with other residents in town.

- The vast majority of students commenting on aesthetic issues described downtown Keene as clean and well-kept, and/or attractive (“pretty,” “beautiful,” “picturesque”) overall. The small number who commented on the Christmas lights all thought they make downtown more attractive. (12% of all respondents commented on aesthetic issues)

3. Transportation

- More than 17% of all respondents said that the traffic in Keene was what they liked least about downtown. They described it as “busy,” or “congested,” and the roadways “confusing.” A common concern was that drivers are going too fast and not paying attention to pedestrians in crosswalks. (17% of all respondents commented on traffic)

- 10% of all respondents said that parking was what they liked least about downtown. Students primarily expressed frustration with the lack of available parking spaces, but some also commented on the expense of parking meters. Fewer students noted that parking on Main St. feels difficult or dangerous because of having to back up into traffic to leave a space. (10% of all respondents commented on parking)

- Approximately 11% of all respondents feel that downtown is “pedestrian friendly.” They feel that it is “easy,” pleasant, and relatively safe to walk around, and they like the wide sidewalks. The close proximity of stores, bars, and restaurants makes walking a convenient means of getting around town. Many responded that they like walking around downtown just for fun and to visit the shops. The biggest concern of students (one-third of those who commented on pedestrian issues) was that crossing the street at the crosswalks is difficult and

they feel they are at risk of being struck by cars, especially at night and during heavy traffic. (17% of all respondents commented on walkability/pedestrian issues)

4. Entertainment/Recreation

- The vast majority of students commenting on dining said that they liked the variety of restaurants and coffee shops available to them in Keene, and this was one of the things they liked best about downtown. (11% of all respondents commented on dining/restaurants)

- 5% of all respondents said that there is not enough for college students under age 21 and those who don't want to go to the bars, to do at night for entertainment. They would like to see more dance clubs, pool halls, movie theatres, or stores open later. Only 2% of all respondents included the bars/ clubs as something they liked best about downtown. (9% of respondents commented on bars, clubs, or entertainment)

Part 2. Short Answer Analysis

Why do students go downtown?

1. Restaurants / bars (81%)
2. Shopping (71%)
3. Other (48%)

How likely are respondents to walk along the bike path from Main St. to Colony Mill?

42% likely or very likely

If there were attractive shops and restaurants in between?

82% likely or very likely

Attractions for which students are likely to visit downtown now or in the future:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Entertainment (concerts, etc.) | 89% likely or very likely |
| 2. More stores (music, clothing, books, gifts) | 86% likely or very likely |
| 3. Festivals and other events | 86% likely or very likely |
| 4. Coffee shop / bakery | 69% likely or very likely |
| 5. Bars / clubs | 67% likely or very likely |

What changes would benefit the city most?

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Holding more festivals and events downtown | 89% agree or strongly agree |
| 2. Encouraging a broader mix of retail activities | 83% agree or strongly agree |
| 3. Expanding the hours/days businesses are open | 83% agree or strongly agree |
| 4. Improving access to parks and trails from downtown | 80% agree or strongly agree |
| 5. Pedestrian improvements (sidewalks, crosswalks, benches, lighting) | 79% agree or strongly agree |
| 6. Creating a public transportation system between downtown and the rest of Keene | 77% agree or strongly agree |
| 7. Adding more green spaces/parks to downtown area | 77% agree or strongly agree |
| 8. Providing additional parking and signage | 75% agree or strongly agree |

Least supported ideas:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Increasing the number of people living downtown | 31% <u>disagree</u> or strongly disagree |
| 2. Allowing for buildings over 3 stories in downtown | 29% <u>disagree</u> or strongly disagree |

Stores most likely to visit if they were downtown:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| 1. The Gap | 71% |
| 2. American Eagle Outfitters | 66% |
| 3. Victoria's Secret | 62% |

Commonalities and Differences: General Population vs. Keene State Results

Primary Commonality: The three most significant categories among free responses were the same for the general survey and the Keene State survey: *transportation, community character, and business/retail.*

- **Traffic/Parking.** Traffic and parking were described in similar negative terms by both groups, though these issues were somewhat more important to the general population than to the students. The major concerns were traffic congestion and parking availability.

- **Walkability.** Both groups generally rated downtown Keene as a pleasant, attractive, convenient place to walk. The biggest criticism from both groups was the perception of crosswalks not being safe due to traffic speed or low visibility.

- **Community Character.** The “small-town” or “New England charm” of downtown Keene is recognized and enjoyed by both groups. In both cases, respondents felt strongly that any future development should preserve that unique character, appearance, and atmosphere. Both groups also generally described downtown as “clean” and “attractive.”

- **Retail/Business.** Respondents from both groups described a desire for additional retail stores, especially for clothing, while also expressing an appreciation for the current “unique” stores that are on Main Street. However, respondents among both the general and the student populations expressed a need for more “affordable” shopping options, suggesting that the unique stores tend to be “too expensive.” Both groups would like to see extended hours (evenings, weekends) for downtown businesses to improve shopping accessibility.

- **Business Ownership.** Supporting local, independently owned businesses was described as a high priority for both groups, with the students rating this issue even higher than the general population. Neither group wants to see an influx of national chain stores in the downtown area.

- **Dining and Entertainment.** Both groups generally like the variety of dining options (restaurants, coffee shops, cafés, diners) in downtown. In addition, both groups sited festivals, events, concerts, and other forms of entertainment as some of the strongest reasons they would be more likely to visit downtown.

- **Improving Keene.** When rating options that would benefit Keene, both groups said that ideas they were *most strongly against* were increasing the number of people living downtown and allowing for buildings over 3 stories. The idea that both groups *supported most* was encouraging a broader mix of retail activities.

Notable Differences

- Students are more likely to use current public transportation (bus, trolley) than is the general public and they rate the creation of a stronger public transportation system as a much higher priority than does the general population. As a group, students are much more likely to walk to get to town than the respondents in the general survey.
- Students place a higher priority on the creation of new entertainment options, including festivals and events, than the general public.

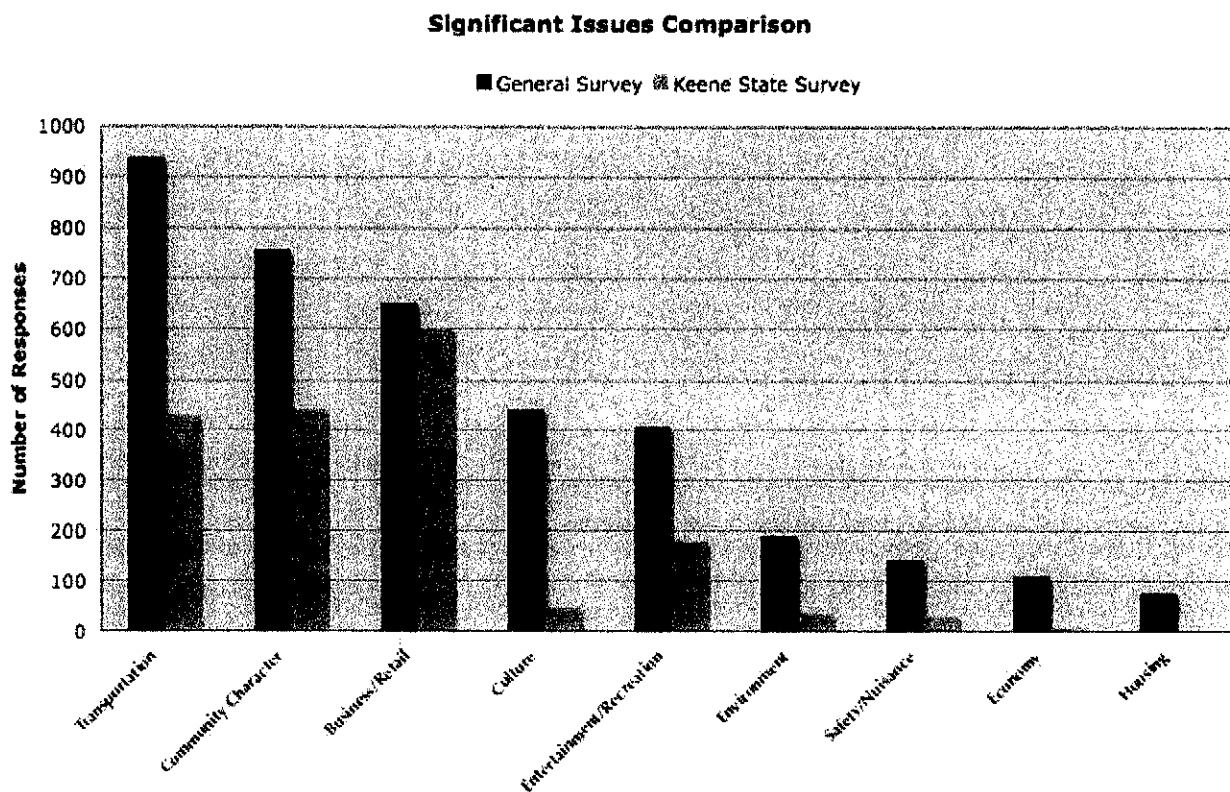


Figure 5.

Appendix

Downtown Keene General Survey Questions

1. How far from Keene's Central Square (where the gazebo is) do you live?
2. How far from Keene's Central Square do you work?
3. Gender
4. What is your age?
5. What is your income?
6. How many people are in your household?
7. Are you a Keene ... (please check all that apply)
 - Home Owner
 - Renter
 - Resident
 - Downtown property owner
 - Student
 - Visitor
8. How often do you visit downtown Keene?
9. Why do you visit downtown? (Please check all that apply).
 - Work
 - Restaurants/Bars
 - Shopping
 - Theatre
 - Municipal Offices
 - Other
10. To get downtown, do you ... (Please check all that apply).
 - Bike
 - Walk
 - Drive
 - Take bus or trolley
11. How likely are you to visit downtown for these current or possible future attractions?
 - More stores – music, clothing, books, gifts
 - Grocery market
 - Indoor farmers' market/local food co-op
 - Coffee shop/Bakery
 - Bars/Clubs

Fine Dining
 Family Dining
 Exercise/Health Club
 Museum/ Art Gallery
 Historic Architecture
 Festivals and Other Events
 Entertainment (concerts, etc)
 Recreational Facilities (park, etc.)
 Personal Services (salon, cleaners, etc.)
 Professional Services (Attorney, insurance, etc.)
 YMCA or similar type Community Center

12. What else would you like to see downtown?
13. Currently, how likely are you to walk along the bike path from Main Street to the Colony Mill?
14. How likely would you be to walk along the bike path from Main Street to the Colony Mill if there were attractive shops and restaurants in between?
15. Downtown Keene will benefit from . . . (Please check the answer that best represents your opinion).

Encouraging a broader mix of retail activities.
 Expanding the hours/ days businesses remain open.
 Encouraging new tourist focused businesses.
 Increasing the number of people living downtown.
 Providing additional downtown parking and signage.
 Pedestrian improvements (improved sidewalks, cross-walks, benches, lighting).
 Creating a public system that would provide transportation between downtown and the rest of Keene.
 Holding more festivals and events in the downtown.
 Providing incentives for targeted businesses to locate downtown.
 Encouraging downtown residential development.
 Providing incentives for historic preservation and reuse.
 Expanding downtown parking, lighting, sidewalks.
 Protecting the historic character of downtown.
 Improving access to parks and trails from downtown.
 Allowing for buildings over 3 stories in the downtown.
 Adding more green spaces/parks to the downtown area.

16. What do you like BEST about downtown Keene?
17. What do you like LEAST about downtown Keene?

18. Please add any other comments or suggestions you have about downtown Keene.

Environment Questions

1. Please click the answer that best represents your opinion.

Would you support a food co-op in downtown Keene that sold locally grown food?

Do you feel it is important to have better recycling opportunities downtown?

If you could live or work in a building that stayed warm in winter and cool in summer solely through the way it is built and insulated, would you pay a higher rent, knowing you would have no heating or air conditioning bills?

Do you want to see a more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly design to downtown Keene?

Do you want to see more greenspace in downtown Keene?

Would you like to see less automobile traffic in downtown Keene?

Do you believe open green space and parks adds value to surrounding real estate?

2. Are you familiar with the term "new urbanist design?"

3. Are you familiar with the term "green building?"

4. Please add any other comments about the environment of downtown Keene.

Housing Questions

1. Please click the answer that best represents your opinion.

A top priority for Keene should be the development of more affordable housing.

High density, mixed use buildings should be encouraged in the downtown area.

More people living in the downtown area will encourage more business in the downtown area.

2. Please add any other comments about housing.

Culture and Retail Questions

1. Are you aware of local cultural events, performances and galleries?

2. Approximately how often do you attend a concert, gallery, or other cultural performance/show?

3. If more than once a year, do these events take place in Keene?

4. What types of cultural activities would you like to experience in Keene?

5. Are you most likely to visit downtown Keene on a weekend for: (Please order these from 1 to 5, with 5 being the most likely, and 1 being the least likely.)

Shopping

Dining

Bars/nightlife

Cultural Activity

Other

6. Where do you purchase most of your food? (Please order these from 1 to 4, with 4 being the place you shop most often, and 1 the least often.)

Keene grocery store

Keene specialty food store

Out of town grocery store

Out of town specialty food store

7. Do you visit the Keene Farmer's Market in the summer?

8. Would you be interested in a food co-op?

Keene State College Downtown Survey Questions

1. What year are you?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

2. Do you live on campus?

3. If yes, what building?

4. If no, how far from campus are you?

5. Do you have a job off campus?

6. How far is your off-campus job from the school?

7. How often do you visit downtown Keene?

8. Why do you visit downtown? (Please check all that apply).

Work

Restaurants/Bars

Shopping

Theatre

Municipal Offices

Other

9. To get downtown, do you . . . (Please check all that apply).

Bike

Walk

Drive

Take bus or trolley

10. How likely are you to visit downtown for these current or possible future attractions?

More stores – music, clothing, books, gifts

Grocery market

Indoor farmers' market/local food co-op

Coffee shop/Bakery

Bars/Clubs

Fine Dining

Family Dining

Exercise/Health Club

Museum/ Art Gallery

Historic Architecture

Festivals and Other Events

Entertainment (concerts, etc)

Recreational Facilities (park, etc.)

Personal Services (salon, cleaners, etc.)

Professional Services (Attorney, insurance, etc.)

YMCA or similar type Community Center

11. Please indicate what stores you would visit if they were located downtown... (Please check all that apply)

Banana Republic

Gap

Abercrombie & Fitch

Old Navy

Eddie Bauer

Pacific Sunwear

J. Crew

DSW Shoes

Pottery Barn

Victoria Secret

American Eagle Outfitters

B. Moss

Bath & Body Works

Body Shop

Charlotte Russe

Verizon

Foot Locker

Forever 21

FYE

GQ Menswear

H & M

Hollister Co.

Hot Topic

Lids

Macys

New York & Company

Express

Express for Men

Sunglasses Hut

Brooks Brothers

Timberland

Apple

Bebe

J. Jill

Sephora

Urban Behavior

Yankee Candle

12. What other shops not listed above would you like to see downtown?
13. Currently, how likely are you to walk along the bike path from Main Street to the Colony Mill?
14. How likely would you be to walk along the bike path from Main Street to the Colony Mill if there were attractive shops and restaurants in between?
15. Downtown Keene will benefit from . . . (Please check the answer that best represents your opinion).

Encouraging a broader mix of retail activities.

Expanding the hours/ days businesses remain open.

Encouraging new tourist focused businesses.

Increasing the number of people living downtown.

Providing additional downtown parking and signage.

Pedestrian improvements (improved sidewalks, cross-walks, benches, lighting).

Creating a public system that would provide transportation between downtown and the rest of Keene.

Holding more festivals and events in the downtown.

Providing incentives for targeted businesses to locate downtown.

Encouraging downtown residential development.

Providing incentives for historic preservation and reuse.

Improving access to parks and trails from downtown.

Allowing for buildings over 3 stories in the downtown.

Adding more green spaces/parks to the downtown area.

16. What do you like BEST about downtown Keene?
17. What do you like LEAST about downtown Keene?
18. Gender?
19. What is your age?
20. KSC email address

APPENDIX C

New Hampshire Goals to Implement the State Vision

APPENDIX C: New Hampshire Goals to Implement the State Vision

The eight State smart growth principles are¹:

1. Maintain traditional compact settlement patterns to efficiently use land, resources, and investments in infrastructure;
2. Foster the traditional character of New Hampshire downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods by encouraging a human scale of development that is comfortable for pedestrians and conducive to community life;
3. Incorporate a mix of uses to provide a variety of housing, employment, shopping, services, and social opportunities for all members of the community;
4. Provide choices and safety in transportation to create livable, walkable communities that increase accessibility for people of all ages, whether on foot, bicycle, or in motor vehicles;
5. Preserve New Hampshire's working landscape by sustaining farm and forest land and other rural resource lands to maintain contiguous tracts of open land and to minimize land use conflicts;
6. Protect environmental quality by minimizing impacts from human activities and planning for and maintaining natural areas that contribute to the health and quality of life of communities and people in New Hampshire;
7. Involve the community in planning and implementation to ensure that development retains and enhances the sense of place, traditions, goals, and values of the local community; and
8. Manage growth locally in the New Hampshire tradition, but work with neighboring towns to achieve common goals and address common problems more effectively.

State of New Hampshire Goals to Implement the State Vision:

1. Foster the traditional character of New Hampshire downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods by encouraging mixed use development that is walkable, sustainable and conducive to community life;
2. Protect and preserve New Hampshire's land and water resources including farms, forest lands, wildlife habitats and other critical environmental areas;
3. Seek innovative approaches in transportation to address; safety; diverse geographic needs; accessibility for people of all ages; preservation of environmental quality; and alternatives that reduce energy consumption;

¹ From "Achieving Smart Growth in New Hampshire", Office of Energy and Planning. Available at http://www.nh.gov/oep/programs/SmartGrowth/about/documents/full_report_ver5.pdf

4. Promote stewardship of New Hampshire's resources for recreation and other activities that contribute to the health and quality of life for citizens and visitors in New Hampshire;
5. Advance state, regional, and local partnerships that create economic opportunities in a manner consistent with the community's master plan;
6. Preserve New Hampshire's historic and cultural resources that are an integral part of the state's quality of life, economy, and visual character;
7. Create a range of quality housing opportunities and choices for people of all income levels to ensure that communities maintain a diverse population;
8. Develop polices and actions necessary to assure safe and reliable utility services to better account for New Hampshire's changing demographics, and promote energy efficiency;
9. Link state investments in public facilities in a manner that fosters community vitality and efficient use of resources and energy;
10. Reduce the potential impact of natural hazards, particularly flooding and winter storms, on the State's citizens, guests, and natural and built environments.

APPENDIX D

Business Survey

2009

Business Survey Summary Report for the Keene Community Master Plan

A. Introduction

The City of Keene is presently in the process of updating its Community Master Plan (CMP). This plan will be used to foster a shared sense of direction for Keene, better manage community growth and change, and guide local government planning and decision-making for the next ten to twenty years.

Part of the CMP will focus on changing economic conditions in the city with the ultimate goal of creating an economic development strategy for the future. This strategy will reflect the goals and desires of both city residents and its business community. As part of the extensive public outreach process being undertaken for the CMP, a survey was conducted of a sampling of businesses operating in the city. The survey's purpose was, in part, to help formulate an economic strategy that reflects current and future needs of these establishments, which provide the city's economic foundation.

The survey was conducted by RKG Associates, Inc. with support of the Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce which generously provided its mailing list of member businesses and organizations. The survey was conducted as both a direct mail and on-line survey in order to encourage the highest level of participation possible. A total of 315 surveys were mailed to businesses in the city with 66 total responses representing a response rate of 21%. The total surveys mailed account for roughly 36% of the city's private businesses.¹ The vast majority (56) responded via the mail out survey while only 10 completed the on-line version. The survey was conducted during the three-week period between May 19th and June 5th, 2009. A copy of the survey instrument is located in the appendix. The methodology used to gather the survey data was not intended to provide a statistically valid sample although it does provide a reasonable cross-section of the city's business base. The primary goal however, was to provide another method to gather *qualitative* input for the CMP that highlight the needs of area businesses. RKG Associates also conducted a number of in-person interviews with members of the business community prior to the survey. Some of the information gleaned from those interviews are noted in this report.

The following analysis of the survey results are divided into three sections. The first section discusses respondents' level of satisfaction regarding a number of issues within the city. The second section addresses the adequacy of the labor force and training programs in the city and region. The final section provides an overview of the characteristics of respondents (i.e. the businesses establishments) in terms of number of employees, size, type, business performance, and anticipated facilities needs in the future. Most of the questions in the survey were multiple choice selections, however, some allowed the respondents to answer in narrative fashion. Answers to those types of questions have been grouped, to the greatest extent possible, into major categories with a complete list of actual responses provided in the appendix.

¹ As of 2007, NHES reported 864 private sector firms operating in Keene. This figure does not include sole proprietor firms or others that do not participate in the unemployment insurance program.

B. Survey of Satisfaction Levels

Several questions in the survey asked respondents to indicate their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction regarding a variety of features in the city. One such question asked for opinions from a broad perspective as “how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall conditions for doing business in Keene?” Generally, it appears as though respondents are mostly satisfied in this regard. As illustrated in Figure 1, about one-third (32%) of respondents indicated they were “very satisfied” overall with conditions in the city as it relates to operation of their business. The largest number of businesses (58%) said they were “somewhat satisfied” suggesting there is room for improvement in some areas. Only 10% in total, indicated a greater level of *dissatisfaction* with 8% of respondents “not very satisfied” and 2% “not satisfied at all”.

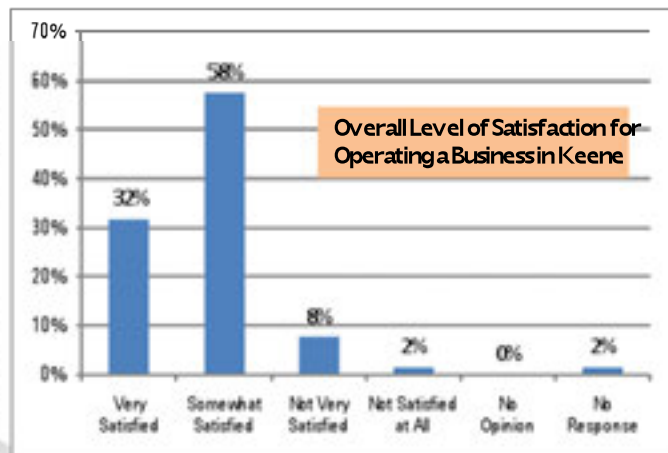
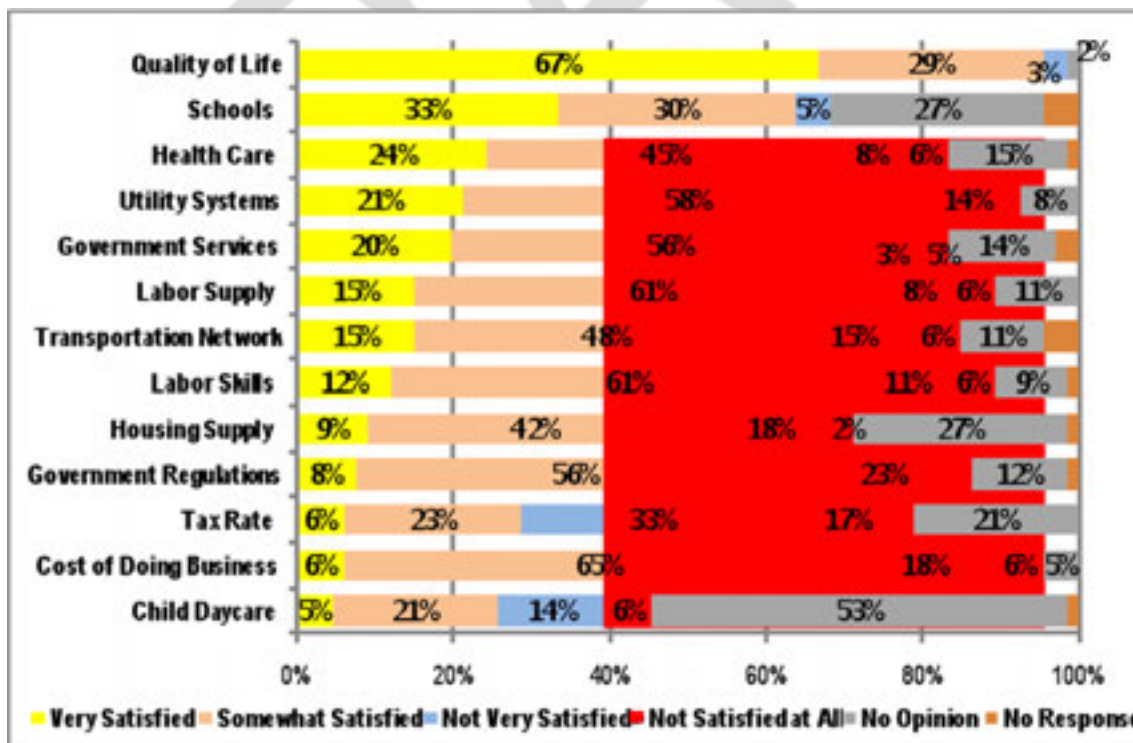


Figure 1

Figure 2 provides more insight into how satisfied respondents are in 13 specific categories that were presented to them in the question “how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following as they relate to operation of your business in Keene?” The greatest level of satisfaction was registered for quality of life in the city where 67% of respondents were very satisfied and 29% were



somewhat satisfied. While the term “quality of life” is subjective and open to interpretation, it

certainly suggests that most businesses believe the city is a good place to live and/or operate their establishments.

Schools also received a generally favorable rating with 33% of respondents being very satisfied and 30% somewhat satisfied. Interestingly, 27% voiced no opinion regarding the city's schools which may indicate a higher-than-expected level of disconnect between the business community and the local education system. Similarly, a very large percentage (53%) of respondents had no opinion regarding child daycare services. This would seem to indicate that it is not an issue related to the operation of their establishment and/or, that many businesses may be unaware of the availability or quality of these types of facilities. Of those that did express an opinion, a slightly greater percentage were in the more satisfied categories (26%) versus the less satisfied categories (20%). In personal interviews conducted by RKG Associates, the availability of daycare services were generally noted as being insufficient, particularly in rural areas outside the city.

Opinions regarding government *services* versus government *regulations* present an interesting comparison. Overall, government services were generally viewed more favorably with 56% being somewhat satisfied and 20% very satisfied. Only 8% in total were not very satisfied or not satisfied at all. Conversely, 23% (the second highest percentage) of respondents were not very satisfied with government regulations indicating that this is one area that businesses consider most problematic. The other area is related to cost of operating a business in Keene and more specifically, the level of taxation. As illustrated in Figure 2, the tax rate received the highest proportion of dissatisfaction amongst respondents with 33% not very satisfied and 17% not satisfied at all. Opinions regarding the overall cost of doing business in Keene also had relatively high percentages in the more dissatisfied categories (18% and 6%, respectively) although *most* businesses were somewhat satisfied overall with the cost of doing business in the city with 65% indicating as such. Once again, in personal interviews conducted by RKG Associates, a high tax rate was often cited as one of the biggest negative factors effecting business operation although there may be other, as yet unidentified factors that increase business costs in the city. One may relate to the regulatory framework, as noted previously.

With regard to labor supply and labor skills, both areas received a 61% response rate from businesses as being somewhat satisfied, suggesting that there is room for improvement but pretty good overall. There was more dissatisfaction with labor skills, 17% in total, as compared to 14% with the labor supply. In RKG's interviews, basic "soft" skills, such as math, writing composition, communication, punctuality, appearance, etc. were often cited as lacking. However, other technical skills, particularly in the trades, were also identified as being in short supply in the region. More specifics regarding skills needs are presented in the subsequent section.

The transportation network received somewhat mixed responses with the majority (48%) being somewhat satisfied overall. Of all the areas respondents were asked to comment on, transportation lies roughly in the middle of the satisfaction scale. Fifteen percent of respondents were very satisfied but 15% were also not very satisfied with 6% not satisfied at all. This suggests that issues regarding transportation may affect some businesses more than others and/or it may indicate that issues are localized in specific locations, as opposed to being network-wide

concerns. Utility systems seem to have better standing with 21% being very satisfied, the fourth highest ranking of all categories. Still, 14% expressed that they were not very satisfied with the systems. Based on a review of narrative comments provided by respondents in a subsequent question, it appears as though desired improvements to the transportation system were equated with the city's utility systems resulting in this higher level of relative dissatisfaction.

The adequacy of the housing supply received somewhat mixed reviews from respondents. The majority were somewhat satisfied (42%) but only 9% were very satisfied. Conversely, 18% were not very satisfied with only 2% being not satisfied at all. A large percentage, 27%, voiced no opinion about the housing supply which may indicate that it has not been an issue for their employees or, that there is a lack of awareness regarding this issue. In personal interviews, RKG Associates typically heard that there is an insufficient supply of housing in the city forcing employers/employees to look elsewhere in the region.

In a follow-on question to levels of satisfaction discussed above, respondents were asked to “indicate the three most important things that City Government could do to support the growth and success of businesses in Keene”. Fifty one (51) of the 66 respondents answered this question providing a total of 134 suggested actions and/or opinions for consideration by the city. As is to be expected, there were a number of common themes and repetition in these answers that would appear to give them more weight amongst the business community. In an effort to summarize these responses they have been grouped into a number of major categories. They are listed in priority order based on how many times a particular answer was given. In some instances, additional bullet points are given within these categories to illustrate some variations in the answers. Naturally, this grouping process required some judgments to be made about the intent of various responses. Therefore, the entire listing of all responses is also provided in the appendix for any who would care to review all of the recommendations given by respondents.

Overall, the majority of recommended actions fell within seven major categories, as shown in the adjoining text box. The two most commonly given responses relate to taxes and city regulations. The need to improve in these areas is consistent with responses received in the previous question regarding lower levels of satisfaction. Comments made regarding the first item, taxes, were fairly straight forward in that respondents felt property taxes were too high and should be lowered as a means to support business growth or, that government and/or school spending should be lowered. In the second area, regulatory impacts, respondents typically indicated that there is too much regulation/enforcement of what are considered to be relatively minor

Most Important Things City Government Can Do...

1. Lower property taxes
 - Control spending
 - Reduce school costs
2. Reduce/minimize regulatory impacts
 - Relax sign regulations
 - Streamline review/permit processes
 - Provide a more pro-business attitude
3. Improve transportation/transit system
 - Reduce congestion and improve access
 - Increase transit availability
 - Expand pedestrian/bicycle options
4. Increase parking availability
5. Maintain streets and sidewalks
6. Encourage economic development
 - Support groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Monadnock Economic Development Commission and Hannah Grimes Incubator, that promote business growth
 - Promote more use/hiring of local businesses
 - Attract new businesses to the area
7. Support/maintain the downtown area

issues, that the permitting/review/licensing procedures are too lengthy or complicated, and that “city hall” often does not emanate a pro-business attitude.

Taken together, items 3, 4, and 5, which relate to the city’s transportation infrastructure, where the next major areas receiving a large number of comments from respondents. Overall, comments generally revolved around the need to reduce traffic congestion, improve access and circulation, and promote alternative transportation modes, such as transit and pedestrian/bicycle facilities.

Finally, items 6 and 7, focused on promoting the city’s economic development efforts and supporting a vibrant and well-maintained downtown area. In particular, comments suggested promoting growth through government support of entities such as the chamber, EDC, and small business incubator, as well as encouraging the hiring of local businesses by the government and other area businesses.

C. Labor Supply and Training Programs

The survey included several questions that were intended to gauge the adequacy of the area’s labor supply, based on the opinions and experience of employers. The ability of businesses to find suitable labor is one of the critical components required to grow and/or attract new industry to the area. In a related question, respondents were also asked whether or not local training and education programs are providing the types of skilled labor they require.

As shown in Table 1, respondents were asked, “is there an adequate supply of suitably skilled labor in the city or region to support your current and future business operations?” A vast majority, 73%, felt that the labor force was sufficient to meet their current business needs. Conversely, 17% indicated it was not sufficient and 9% were unsure. Those who said the supply was insufficient coincides with a previous related question where 17% of respondents indicated they were less than satisfied with the area’s labor skills as it relates to operation of their business.

The businesses that indicated current labor was insufficient were cross-tabulated by type of establishment. The largest percentages who felt this way were Manufacturers (40%), Construction (33%), Finance/Insurance (27%), and Health Care (20%). However, as shown in a subsequent section of this analysis, the sample size for some of these industry sectors was relatively small.

The same question regarding *future business operations* revealed that respondents were less certain about the adequacy of the labor supply with 50% indicating they felt it would be sufficient to meet their needs going forward. A slightly higher percentage (20%) felt it would not be sufficient while those who were unsure increased from 9% to 21%.

Table 1

Is there an adequate supply of suitably skilled labor in the city or region to support your ...
current business operations?

	Count	% Total
Yes	48	73%
No	11	17%
Not Sure	6	9%
No Response	1	2%

future business operations?

	Count	% Total
Yes	33	50%
No	13	20%
Not Sure	14	21%
No Response	6	9%

A follow-on question asked respondents who said no, or were unsure as to the adequacy of the labor, “what types of skills are most needed?”. A little more than one-third (25) of total respondents answered this question and listed 42 skills or other comments. They are summarized in the following text box and grouped by related skill sets. A number of the skills identified by respondents have been categorized as technical/specialized. Within this broad group, skills related to information technology and computer operation were most prevalently cited as being important. However, a comparable level of responses also indicated that skills related to manufacturing, machine operations, and other trades were also in high demand.

Manufacturing/Trades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factory labor • Machining • Manufacturing - technically capable, both mechanical & technical • Welding • Mechanical assembly • Run machinery, printing presses, production copiers, bindery equipment • Machine service & repair technicians • Glaziers 	Management/Analytical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management • Sales - green systems consulting and design for facility management • High caliber business management & analytical skills • Business system analysts 	Office/Clerical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerical • Clerical with computer skills 	Basic Education/Soft Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliable high school and above • Basic fulltime work skills!- show up on time and work • Reliable high school and above • Basic language/math skills • Strong work ethic
Technical/Specialized			
Information/Computers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Technology • CAD computer software • Data management using Excel and database systems • Computer systems operators • Information Technology programmers • Technology - modern software and hardware 	Medical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masters level licensed clinicians in behavioral health, addiction treatment • Licensed Medical • Hard to hire nurses at times 	Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting • Tax preparers • CPA's with experience 	Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineers/Technicians • Technical skills • Applied graphic design (designing for the limitations of industrial manufacturing) • Specialist Thai cooking • Legal

Businesses were also asked their opinion as to whether they “believe current education/training programs at area schools/colleges adequately address the needs of your labor supply?” In response, 41% said yes, 27% indicated no, and an equivalent 27% were not sure, as shown in Table 2. Although the majority answered yes, the fact that 54% said no or were not sure, indicates that there is a gap both in the training offered locally, as well as with the outreach or communication between the business and educational communities. As noted previously, RKG Associates conducted interviews with representatives from both areas and found that a considerable effort was being made from both sides of this issue. However, these responses would seem to indicate that more still needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of these activities.

Table 2
Do you believe current education/training programs at area schools/colleges adequately address the needs of your labor supply?

	Count	% Total
Yes	27	41%
No	18	27%
Not Sure	18	27%
No Response	3	5%

The final directed question was somewhat broader in nature asking “what additional services, facilities, or skill building programs are not currently available in Keene or the region that could support or help your business?” The responses to this question are summarized below.

Skill Building Programs	Services/Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A true culinary arts program • Actuarial Sciences • Auto body • Auto class needs to get with NHADA education "AYES" • Business System Analysts • Certificate program in technical sales marketing • Dental Assisting • Dental Hygiene • Engineering or Technical school • Flooring • High school and/or college apprentice programs • I wish Keene State offered higher level of software courses (continuing ed) I have had to go on line to find these • Information Technology • J2ee programmers • LPN educational programs (more needed) • Machine Assembly • Non-college bound - technical vocational programs • Restaurant management skills • Skilled trades • Teach young people how to count change back to customers • Two year degree in applied graphic arts (with practical experience for different print techniques) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing • Better signage for directions and places of businesses • Daycare - quality, affordable and available • Expansion and support of the "vision 2020" initiatives of the hospital and chamber • More parks downtown • No curb services, city facilities to support art & culture • They are finally letting pumpkin festival go -YES! • Work force housing availability • More voc rehab & job skills bldg • New standards for voc-tech • Machining center operation • Parking in downtown area for workers • Voc-Tech at high school level needs updated

D. Characteristics of Businesses

The median number of years that responding businesses have been operating in Keene is 22 years. About 60% have been in operation more than 20 years indicating that there is a relatively low level of turnover in area businesses, a factor that contributes to the city’s stable economic base.

Table 3 illustrates the number of businesses by industry sector. As shown, a majority of businesses responding were categorized as a Service (21%) or Retail (20%). These percentages are fairly representative of the city’s business mix as a whole, which is predominantly service-based, with 18% of total private businesses in the Retail Trades sector. The Hospitality sector is well represented at 12%, a percentage that fairly well reflects the actual number of firms of this type in the city. Similarly, the percentage of Construction and Wholesale Trades is also comparable overall. The “other” category is primarily comprised of nonprofit or private institutional organizations who responded to the survey.

Business Type	Count	% Total
Service	14	21%
Retail	13	20%
Finance/Insurance/ Real Estate	11	17%
Hospitality/Entertainment/Arts	8	12%
Other	6	9%
Health Care	5	8%
Manufacturing	5	8%
Construction	3	5%
Wholesale	1	2%
Total	66	100%

Finance/Insurance and Real Estate firms accounted for 17% of survey respondents which over represents the city’s 10% as a whole, of businesses in these sectors. The Health Care and

Manufacturing categories each had 8% of the total respondents. The number of firms in these sectors under represents the city’s actual distribution which had 18% and 17% respectively, of the total private sector establishments.

The 66 businesses that responded to the survey employ a total of 2,772 workers, 85% of whom are full-time and 15% part-time. The average number of full-time employees was 39 and 10 part-time. Table 4 present a summary of the number of employees by sizes of businesses represented in the survey. Keene’s employers are predominantly comprised of small businesses. This is illustrated in Figure 3 showing that, of the city’s total 864 private (as opposed to government) establishments in 2007, 43% employed less than 5 workers and 65% employed fewer than 10. Table 4 illustrates that respondents were drawn from a reasonably diverse cross-section of businesses, based on size. However, the smallest-sized firms (1-4) are under-represented in the sample at 19% in comparison to the city’s actual percentage (43%).

# Employees	# Businesses	% Total
1-4	12	19%
5-9	19	30%
10-19	13	21%
20-49	9	14%
50-99	6	10%
100+	4	6%

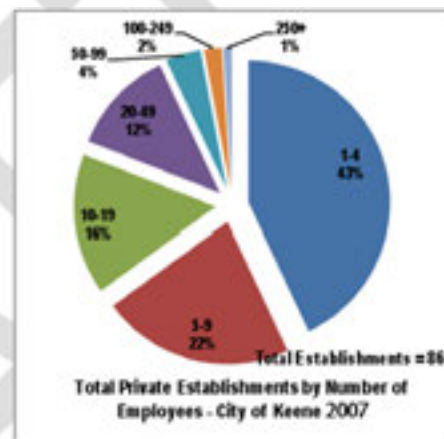
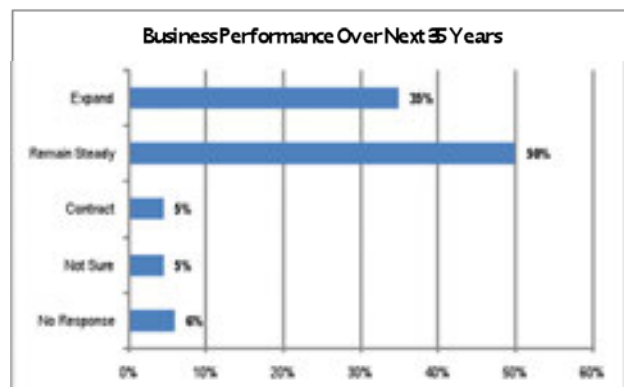
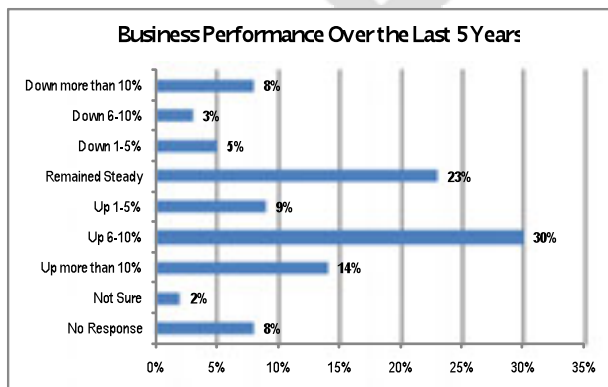


Figure 3

Respondents were also asked to provide some insight into how their businesses had performed in recent years and what their expectations were for the future. As illustrated in Figure 4, a majority of businesses had positive growth or remained at a relatively sustained rate of performance. The largest percentage of respondents, 30%, indicated business performance was up 6%-10% over the last five years with a total of 53% overall reporting that business was up. A total of 23% said that business generally remained steady during this time period. In contrast, 16% in total indicated that business was down over the last five years with half (8%) down by more than 10%. The remaining 10% were not sure or did not respond.



When asked to estimate how their business would perform over the next 3-5 years the majority expected business to remain steady during this time period, with a total of 50% indicating as such. However, 35% believe their business will expand which, although it is a lesser percentage than those who had experienced growth over the preceding five years (53%), still indicates that many area businesses are optimistic despite the current economic downturn. Only 5% felt that business would contract during this time period while 11% were unsure or did not respond.

Finally, businesses were asked to provide some information about their physical building space and land area as they relate to current and future needs. The survey asked “does your business have adequate building space and/or land area to support anticipated needs over the next three to five years?” If the respondents indicated that their current facilities were inadequate, they were further asked “do you believe there is an adequate supply of alternative buildings or developable land in the city to support your business needs?”

As shown in Table 5, 65% of respondents felt they had adequate building space and 59% adequate land area. Twenty-one percent (21%) had inadequate building space and 24% inadequate land area to support current business needs. All 21% who indicated they had inadequate building space also had inadequate land area. Eleven percent (11%) were unsure about both.

Table 5

Does your business have adequate building/land area to support anticipated needs over the next three to five years?

	Building	Land
Yes	65%	59%
No	21%	24%
Not Sure	11%	11%
No Response	3%	6%

Respondents who said their current building or land area were inadequate were cross-tabulated against how they felt about the availability of alternative buildings and land in the city. Of those who said their current building space was inadequate, 29% felt alternative space was available in the city, 43% felt alternatives were not available, and 21% were not sure. For those who indicated their business' current land area was insufficient for current needs, 31% thought there was alternative land within the city to support their business, 25% felt there were no adequate alternatives and 19% were unsure.

Businesses were also asked “if you anticipate expansion, what is the primary type of building space you would require?” A total of 30 respondents indicated they had plans to expand with the types of building space needed shown in Table 6. The table also correlates those who anticipate expansion with the adequacy of their existing building space. As shown, the majority of expected expansion lies with office users at 37% of the total. This was followed by Retail Stores and Warehousing, both at 17%, and Manufacturing at 13%. A majority of Retail space users (60%) and 40% of Warehouse users felt their current space was inadequate to accommodate future expansion. About one-quarter of Office users (27%) and Manufacturers (25%) also indicated as such. All respondents in the Other category, which was comprised of

Table 6

What type of space is needed to support anticipated expansion needs?

Type of Space	Count	% Total	Current Space Adequate		
			Yes	No	Not Sure
Office	11	37%	45%	27%	27%
Retail Store/Shop	5	17%	20%	60%	20%
Warehouse	5	17%	40%	40%	20%
Manufacturing	4	13%	75%	25%	0%
Service Shop	1	3%	100%	0%	0%
Other					
Art exhibit and performance space	2	7%	0%	100%	0%
Education/Classroom	2	7%	0%	100%	0%

arts and educational users, indicated their current space was inadequate. The purpose of these questions were intended to ascertain the potential demand for building space within the city in the immediate future. However, while Table 6 presents the survey findings, the relatively small number of responses for each category are probably insufficient to draw any final conclusions about actual demand.

E. General Comments from Respondents

The final question on the survey asked respondents to provide any additional comments they would care to make. These responses are listed below.

- As we move toward a Greener” community there seems to be a reluctance to acknowledge local resources in favor of something from the net or an outside source. This dilutes the market in two ways; first by not providing an environment for business to grow here and second by losing the “local” control over problem solutions we say we value.
- The ability for someone to run a business & live at the same location in more areas of the city helps to reduce miles driven & allows more flexibility for very small businesses.
- High school/tech school courses should reflect the needed skill sets for corporate/industrial activities in the region. Young people not going into higher education – need to be work ready, e.g. machine operator for turnkey, basic skills for electrician, plumbers
- If the expo center is located on Gilbo it would cause us to move as there is not and would not be adequate parking available
- The City is constantly improving itself & I appreciate those efforts. Our infrastructure needs more attention & funding. The K.F.D belongs at 350 Marlboro Street. The council is the final word – not the union.
- The city cannot create work where there is none. They can keep the police force strong. Do something about the masses of drunk young adults, college students or not.
- Our feeling is that Keene should recruit high paying technical and professional jobs and stop encouraging low paying production seeking companies.
- It is difficult to fill nurses positions at times. When area roadwork is being done – it varies day to day so people visiting./working/living here have a difficult time accessing us these past few months (confusing signs, too)
- Thanks for putting together the CMP. It will prove to be invaluable to all who work, live, and play in our region!
- Keene and the Monadnock area is a wonderful place to live and raise a family. The size and diversity of the area is quite good given the population size. The colleges and vibrant downtown, coupled with the availability of solid medical care are attractive features. However, the location poses challenges for travelers, trailing spouses (employment & shopping), and even infrastructure limitations (including associated business risks) e.g., a single central telephone building. All or some of these may limit businesses and individuals from moving here, particularly those who are highly qualified in their fields.
- There is a lack of reasonably priced spaces for non-profits. A building or facility built or remodeled and reserved for non-profits would be very welcome.
- We don’t hire people with a very high technical skill level, and provide young adults in transitional life periods with a great work opportunity. We would like to offer medical benefits to our non-owner full time and part time employees but it is not feasible.

F. Appendix

Questions 8. What are the three most important things city government could do to support growth and success of businesses in Keene?

First 3 Things	Second 3 Things	Third 3 Things
Be more of a team player in planning & code enforcement	Reduce regulation of small (very small) businesses	
Better traffic flow	Containing college housing	
Combine departments (city)	Lower Taxes	Lower building and permit fees
Do business with Keene businesses where ever possible	Review regulatory process to eliminate irrelevant barriers to growth	Support agencies and organizations who further commercial & industrial growth, ie. Chamber, MEDC, others
Ease up on sign ordinances	Decrease the number of hoops a business needs to jump thru to build	Note: in my 42 years in Keene, it has always had a reputation
Easy to follow guidelines for opening a business (city requirements)	Improve the infrastructure for alternative travel (bikes, walking)	A friendlier atmosphere within the city depts would help. 4) Public restrooms downtown and more police patrolling
Educate the public and the City staff that being "green" and "growth"-new businesses, new housing, expanded businesses - are NOT mutually exclusive		
Expand roads to Keene (although I would not like it)	Lower taxes/property	Free Beer!
Expand the tax base	Public transportation	Infrastructure (road & bridges)
Expand transportation options from college/downtown to commerce park	Support Keene academic center of River Valley Community college	Expand options for daycare to keep qualified individuals in workforce
Financially support organizations like the Keene Downtown Group	Invest in low income housing	Protect & preserve undeveloped land for public use
Fix traffic congestion	Maintain sidewalks & paths for winter use	Put money into schools
Get school spending down	Get school spending down	Get school spending down
Hold growth in fees & misc. taxes to minimum	City employees must work with businesses to accomplish basic goals & requirements and avoid adverse situations	
Improve diversity of medical providers (ie not everyone affiliated w/DMHC)	Eliminate the "view" tax!	Reevaluate the school system top heavy administration on salaries

Improve our infrastructure- better traffic patterns	Ban left turn-use medians where possible	Create parking-North End-Do not weaken ordinance in effect to satisfy a few. Get railroad property built!
Improve parking in the downtown	Stabilize local taxes	Relax some zoning regulations
Improve parking; make Main St. easier to access	Keep downtown looking good (flags, flowers, clean)	Work with the Chamber
Improve street & sidewalk infrastructure	Support our need for improved access to our campus via Pearl Street	Allow improved signage on major street arteries
Improved internet backbone. Faster internet	Facilitate communication among smaller companies. Create forums for them	Ask us more often and more directly how they can help. I don't know-how to access the "City Government". Who are they? What can they do for me?
Include art culture in planning & rep??	Support art & culture as the contributor to economy	Improve transportation
Increase the supply of affordable housing and provide for public day care.	Also, while we have ample parking for our business needs, in general public parking is not adequate downtown.	
Keene could support local contractors instead of going out of town	Encourage other local businesses to support local business	Offer tax credits for new business
Keep downtown vibrant	Manage growth well through planning/zoning	Keep schools strong
Keep taxes from going up	Utilize Marlborough Street property	Maintain roads
Keep taxes in check	Promote development	Keep up services
Keep taxes low	keep the city attractive (there should be more control over business appearance)	make parking very accessible
Keep the tax rate down so folks can afford to move here/live here	manage transportation needs in the city	
Less regulations, permits, fees and bureaucracy for building	More focus on businesses outside of downtown	
Lower business tax rate	Better public transportation	Less red tape, permits etc. to get things done
Lower parking rates No meters - Free Sat	Lower property taxes - control spending	Shut down skate park; less stringent bus. Codes; stop spending stop spending
Lower property taxes	Lower school funding & cost	

Lower tax rates	Relax restrictions on signs, etc.	Provide more local information on the Web
Lower tax rates	Attract new business	Too much signage police ordinance to much
Lower taxes	Stop the big box stores	
Make it easy to do business in Keene. Not with bureaucratic red tape	Prevent the onset of more BOX stores from entering the region.	
More unmetered parking for the employees of downtown businesses.	More affordable housing for young/new families.	More executive(chain?)hotels for multiple reasons...
My answers are not specific to my business - the planning & inspection services Dept was terrible to work with	Expedite the business approval process	Expand parking availability
Parking	Road maintenance	Parking meters & fees
Parking issues	Relax sign code	Support downtown
Promote affordable housing	Continue to work in harmony with KSC & chamber of commerce	Continue infrastructure upgrades as many streets & sidewalks are in poor conditions
React more positively to the concerns & requests of the people		
Recruit high tech business	Control growth of KSC	Eliminate "current use" tax exemptions
Reduce health care costs	Provide facilities for MPG at a reasonable cost	
Reduced regulations	Lower tax rates	
Speed up/simplify the planning/permit process.	We need a local bus system, even if we started with one loop (downtown, KSC, Winchester St, the Marketplace, Keene High school, Maple Ave., hospital back to downtown.)	Reduce government
Support KIDC or maybe it is now MIDC		
Try to bring in more higher paying manufacturing jobs	Curb any type of anti-business city regulations	Work harder w/KSC to better the neighborhoods they are in
Workforce housing - rental and ownership	In the city proper stop the pain in the neck things like requiring pretty fences around the dumpsters	The city can do only much, times are hard

G. Survey Instrument

Keene Community Master Plan Business Survey



(All Responses Will Be Kept Confidential)

Business Name:(Optional) _____ # Years operating in Keene: _____
 Total number of employees at this location: _____ Full-Time: _____ Part-Time: _____

1. Using the enclosed map, please indicate the portion of the city where your business is located.
 (Circle One) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

2. What type of business do you operate? (Check One)

Retail	Wholesale	Construction	Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	Manufacturing
Health Care				
Transportation/Communications/Utility		Service	Eating/Drinking/Recreation/Entertainment	
Other (specify) _____				

3. Do you operate your business out of your home? Yes No

4. Over the last five years how has your business performed? (Check One)

Up 1% - 5%	Up 6% - 10%	Up more than 10%	Remained Steady
Down 1% - 5%	Down 6% - 10%	Down more than 10%	Not Sure

5. Over the next three to five years how do you expect your business to perform? (Check One)

Expand	Contract	Remain Steady	Not Sure
--------	----------	---------------	----------

6. How would you rate your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the following as they relate to operation of your business in Keene? (Check one in each category)

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not Very Satisfied	Not Satisfied at All	No Opinion
--	----------------	--------------------	--------------------	----------------------	------------

 - School System
 - Transportation Network
 - Quality of Life
 - Government Regulations
 - Cost of Doing Business
 - Child Daycare
 - Tax Rate
 - Labor Supply
 - Labor Skills
 - Housing Supply
 - Utility Systems
 - Government Services
 - Health Care

7. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall conditions for doing business in Keene? (Check One)
 Very Satisfied Somewhat satisfied Not Very Satisfied Not Satisfied at All No
 Opinion

8. Please indicate the three most important things that City Government could do to support the growth and success of businesses in Keene.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

9. Does your business have adequate building space and/or land area to support anticipated needs over the next three to five years?

- 1) Building space Yes No Not Sure
- 2) Land area Yes No Not Sure

a) If no, do you believe there is an adequate supply of alternative buildings or developable land in the city to support your business's needs? **Buildings** Yes No Not Sure **Land** Yes
 No Not Sure

b) If you anticipate expansion, what is the primary type of building space you would require? (Check One)
 Retail Store/Shop Office Manufacturing R&D/Flex Space Service Shop
 Warehouse
 Other
 (specify) _____

10. Approximately how much building square footage does your business currently occupy? (Check One)

- Under 1,000 SF 1,000 to 5,000 SF 5,001 to 10,000 SF
- 10,001 to 30,000 SF 30,001 SF to 50,000 SF More than 50,000 SF

11. Is there an adequate supply of suitably skilled labor within the city or region to support your ...

- 1) current business operations? Yes No Not Sure
- 2) future business operations? Yes No Not Sure

a) If no, or not sure, what types of labor skills are most needed? (list as many as applicable)

- _____
- _____
- _____

12. Do you believe that current education/training programs available at area schools and colleges adequately address the needs of your labor supply? Yes No Not Sure

13. What additional services, facilities or skill building programs are not currently available in Keene or the region that could support or help your business?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Please feel free to provide any additional comments you'd like to make:

(All Responses Will Be Kept Confidential)

Thank you for your assistance in completing this survey. Your responses will help provide insights into the economic development strategy for the community master plan. If you have any questions regarding the survey please call Mike Casino or Darren Mochrie at RKG Associates, Inc. at (603) 868-5513.

Please mail or fax the completed survey forms by June 5th to:

RKG Associates, Inc.
277 Mast Road, Durham, New Hampshire 03824
Fax: (603) 868-6463

DRAFT

APPENDIX E

Monadnock Region Broadband Plan



SWRPC

Southwest Region Planning Commission
20 Central Square, 2nd Floor
Keene, New Hampshire 03431
(603) 357-0557
Fax: (603) 357-7440
<http://www.swrpc.org/>

City of Keene

3 Washington Street
Keene, NH 03431
(603) 357-9804
<http://www.ci.keene.nh.us>



City of Keene Municipal Broadband Committee **Monadnock Region Broadband Plan Summary**

INTRODUCTION

The Mayor of the City of Keene appointed members to an ad hoc Municipal Broadband committee in 2003. Representatives of the City, private businesses, local college institutions, the Southwest Region Planning Commission, Monadnock Economic Development Corporation, Cheshire Medical Center, the Chamber of Commerce, Internet service providers and cable television providers together with the Hannah Grimes Center and the Pinnacle Mountain Broadband Committee have made a tremendous effort to plan a solution that will bring broadband services to unserved and underserved communities in the Monadnock Region. The committee has taken a regional approach, acknowledging the clear importance of all 35 towns in the Southwest Region Planning Commission's service area to the economic vitality of this community in the state of New Hampshire.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The unique population density and distribution characteristics of towns in the Monadnock Region do not meet the minimum requirements of broadband provider business models. The wireline, backbone infrastructure is not present, and providers' potential revenue does not justify the expense to build the last mile required to make broadband services available throughout the Region, despite the fact that a universal demand for broadband service is painfully present. In addition, the topography and forested landscape further complicate the business case for the delivery of broadband services.

No single technology is best suited to solve the shortage of broadband services throughout the Region. A diverse, multi-faceted approach utilizing fiber and a combination of wireless technologies that equip the region to participate in the global economy will be required, particularly in light of current geographic challenges.

There is no question that broadband deployment is needed and is vital to the regional economy. The current shortage has posed monumental challenges for economic growth, particularly for small businesses – the nervous system of the NH economy with about half of the employers in the state employing four or fewer employees. The shortage of high speed, affordable broadband services in the Monadnock Region is serious and is identified as a necessary priority in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Southwest New Hampshire, approved by the US Economic Development Administration.

A preliminary map has been developed that visually depicts the unserved and underserved communities across the region. Clearly, some towns are completely left out of service areas altogether, while some have very limited coverage. In some areas, broadband services are available, but no town in the region is without dead zones, including the City of Keene.

THE OBJECTIVE

1. No business or residence in the identified region will be without an affordable broadband option.
2. At minimum, broadband solutions will include a fiber backbone into each of the 35 towns in the Region.

3. 100Mb of bandwidth will be available where reasonably attainable, no less than 50Mb whether wireless or fiber. An approach that phases in the technology required to make this possible over time is acceptable with the absolute requirement that no communities are left out of the early phases due to geographical challenges.
4. The solution will include a comprehensive, region-wide 3G network availing long range, high bandwidth, cellular Internet connectivity.
5. The funding for this project will supplement other public/private investments and further take advantage of partnerships involving local government, educational institutions, healthcare providers, businesses, and others who are vital to the solution. This spirit of community collaboration will avail the best resources to achieve success.
6. The solution will be an open network available to all service providers that promotes competition and service options.
7. The solution will be scalable to accommodate emerging technologies and demand into the future.
8. The solution will significantly reduce vehicular travel to metropolitan centers such as Boston, MA and Manchester, NH with newfound ability to work and shop remotely, thus reducing the Region's carbon footprint.
9. The provision of broadband services will be sufficient to provide the technology infrastructure necessary to keep and attract a competent work force across the Region.
10. The solution must support the digital transition of the local economy to improve local businesses' survivability.
11. Overall, the solution will serve as a vital and necessary component of a vibrant economy and the Region's quality of life.

SUMMARY

There is a clear shortage of broadband services in the Monadnock Region that risks the long term economic health and vitality of its residents, businesses and institutions, among others. This broadband project will equip the community with the basic infrastructure and modern day technology required to provide the resources necessary to participate in the global economy.

MARCH 2009 MUNICIPAL BROADBAND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Tom Link, Cheshire Medical Center/Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene, Chairman

Phillip Dale Pregent, Mayor, City of Keene

John MacLean, City of Keene

Tim Murphy, Southwest Region Planning Commission

Laura Seraichick, Keene State College

Barbara Neylan, Hannah Grimes Center/Pinnacle Mountain Broadband Committee

Neil Gierratana, Lucidus Corp., Chamber of Commerce

Paul Venezia, InfoWorld

Phillip Jones, City Councilor, City of Keene

Rebecca Landry, City of Keene

APPENDIX F

Ideas and Inspiration for the Future

APPENDIX F:

Ideas and Inspiration for the Future

The citizens of the Monadnock Region and the City of Keene provided tremendous input throughout the planning process. Due to the sheer volume of information, it is not feasible to put all of it in one document – hence, the inclusion of this appendix.

In all, nearly 2,000 pages of notes were generated from the Visioning Conversations and Keene Voices sessions, describing hundreds of ideas to achieve the community's vision. Many of these ideas appear below. This appendix also includes actions from previous plans that are still relevant and support the achievement of the community's vision.

The ideas noted here are not prioritized and are in addition to the strategies included in the plan. They should also inspire other ideas as the community works toward achieving the vision.

For ease of use and to illustrate how actions can achieve more than one goal, they have been identified by the six vision focus areas. The six vision focus areas are:

1. A Quality, Built Environment
2. A Unique, Natural Environment
3. A Vibrant Economy
4. A Strong Citizenship & Proactive Leadership
5. A Creative Learning Culture
6. A Healthy Community

Ideas and Inspiration for the Future

1. Perform annual pedestrian amenity inventories to examine the condition of crosswalks, sidewalks, and bicyclist amenities and store the information in the municipal Geographic Information System (GIS). Utilize students and interested volunteers in this program. (1, 2, 4,6)
2. Schedule regular updates Cheshire Medical Center with Planning Board, City Council, Parks and Recreation and Planning staff regarding progress with the Vision 2020 process. (4, 6)
3. Work with local organizations to identify an accessible space for a local year-round farmers market. (1, 2,6)
4. Work with local economic development organizations to identify vacant and underutilized buildings within the city and identify possible re-use options and tenants for them. (1,3,4)
5. Create a Pedestrian, Bicyclist, and Driver Safety Education program with Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC), Bicycle Path Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPPAC), and other community organizations to educate

- these user groups on how to share the road and the responsibility for safe commuting. (4,5,6)
6. Create new, or expand upon existing, festivals to draw different audiences to the community. (2,4,5)
 7. Expand the Historic District from lower Main Street to Route 101. (1,3)
 8. Develop illustrated architectural design guidelines for the downtown districts that can be used to guide the planning process for access management, provision of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and site and building design. (1,2,6)
 9. Adopt standards/guidelines for redevelopment along Gilbo Avenue that will result in similar densities, land uses and overall look and feel as Main Street. (1,3,6)
 10. Create a multi-stakeholder Housing Commission charged with creating a city-wide housing plan that addresses the needs of housing within the community. (1,3,6)
 11. Revise conservation residential design (CRD) subdivision regulations to create incentive for greater densities and the provision of community amenities within a CRD development, especially those that provide natural resource protection. (1,2,3,6)
 12. Streamline permitting for housing developments that are environmentally innovative and support more sustainable lifestyles. (1,2,3,4,6)
 13. Establish a revolving-loan fund or other innovative program to assist homeowners in financing green building projects. (1,2,3,4,6)
 14. Develop local and regional benchmarks to measure how energy efficient and sustainable Keene's housing stock is. Use these to identify further actions, develop programs, and incorporate these ideas into the Regional Housing Needs Assessment and the Cool Monadnock initiative. (1, 2, 3, 4,6)
 15. Create a design competition to showcase affordable, green building within a neighborhood surrounding the downtown. (1,2,3,4,5,6)
 16. Work with local banks and underwriters to provide local mortgage incentives for housing that is more energy efficient and located within existing developed areas. (1,3)
 17. Create a landlord/rental property owners group to provide education and communication opportunities between the city, neighborhood associations, and other community stakeholders. (1,4,6)
 18. Create a landlord/student renter education program that establishes community expectations for proper management of student housing and proper behavior to minimize negative impacts within neighborhoods. (1,4,6)
 19. Create architectural guidelines to promote high quality, attractive design that balances the elements of modern architecture within an historical context. (1,4)
 20. Increase public awareness of the Historic District by creating educational information and opportunities that clearly explains the district, plainly illustrates its guidelines, and achieves appropriate treatments of historic structures. (1,4)

21. Work with education providers to incorporate biodiesel into the school bus fleet to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce pollutants that contribute to poor air quality. (1,2,4,6)
22. Propose water conservation programs that will reduce the need for energy-intensive water treatment processes. (1,2,4)
23. Apply for additional flood mitigation funds to finish flood proofing or other feasible mitigation strategies for the remaining Krif Road and Krif Court commercial and industrial properties. (1,2,3)
24. Develop and implement a mitigation plan to protect Kingsbury Corporation facility, which is partially located in the flood way and entirely in the 100 year floodplain. (1,2,3)
25. Develop a program to mitigate risks and secondary hazards associated with flooding at Tanglewood Estates Manufactured Home Park. (1,2,3)
26. Acquire adequate rights-of-way to allow multi-purpose use of flood control facilities. (1,2,3,6)
27. Strive to create programs to retrofit existing flood channels and detentions basins with trails and other recreational amenities. (1,2)
28. Work with education providers to create a self-perpetuating school recycling program that can also be integrated as part of the curriculum. (2,4,5,6)
29. Re-establish the recycling calendar as an education tool. (2,4,5)
30. Explore the feasibility of creating accessible composting facilities throughout the city. (1,2,3,4,5,6)
31. Create an “ambassador program” consisting of local people to attract regional, national, and international businesses to locate within the city by innovative marketing techniques. (3,4)
32. Work strategically with Keene State College, Antioch New England Graduate School, River Valley Community College, Cheshire Medical Group and other area businesses to develop research oriented business opportunities within the city. (3,4)
33. Expand capacity/programs at the Cheshire Center for vocational trades with a particular focus on needs and desired employee skills of area businesses. (3,4,5)
34. Develop a formal centralized communications network to connect local businesses, non-profits, educational entities, arts and cultural organizations, and others to share information, connect students to internships, provide networking opportunities and create employer-to-skilled worker connections. (3,4,5)
35. Develop partnerships between the Community College, municipal economic development staff, the Chamber of Commerce and education providers to identify emerging educational needs, knowledge areas, skill sets and job opportunities. (3,4,5)
36. Work with economic development and tourism organizations to develop a “brand” for Keene that markets the city as a regional economic engine that is stable, innovative and proactive and has the necessary resources. (3,4)

37. Create a weekly or bi-weekly alternative magazine or newspaper of “things to do” that includes commentary on civic life, arts and culture and political happenings (similar to Burlington’s 7 Days). (3,4,5)
38. Work with Home, Healthcare Hospice and Community Services (HCS) to achieve an expanded and enhanced level of transit service city-wide by creating incentives to increase ridership, allow for walk-bike-ride trips, and by increasing the number of stops throughout the city. Provide increased transit service during the workweek rush-hour times and aim to reduce transit headway, or the time between buses, during rush hour times to 10 minutes or less. (1,2,3,4,6)
39. Work with New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT), Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC), and other transportation providers to strategically locate park and ride facilities, designed to serve commuters working in Keene and other destinations within the region, including transportation to other municipalities (Nashua, Manchester, Concord). (1,2,3,4,6)
40. Create a more formal review process for developments of regional impact that addresses multi-modal transportation issues. (1,3,4)
41. Provide public education regarding non-point source pollution sources, impacts and solutions. (2,4,6)
42. Identify appropriate locations for access to rivers and other water bodies for non-motorized recreational purposes. (1,2,4,6)
43. Building on the natural resources inventory (NRI), develop maps using the City Geographic Information System (GIS) resources that identify existing and potential wildlife corridors. Reference these maps in regulatory processes and open space protection programs to protect and restore wildlife corridors. (1,2,4)
44. Coordinate with other jurisdictions in the Monadnock Region on developing regional standards and plans for regional parks, trails, and open space. (1,2,3,4,6)
45. Develop a long-term plant community inventory program. (1,2,4)
46. Preserve lands essential to maintaining regional ecosystem functions. (1,2,4)
47. Create and adopt an effective surface water ordinance. (1,2,4,6)
48. Create a set of regularly reported on community sustainability indicators. (1,2,3,4,5,6)
49. Explore the creation of a park in the downtown area that seamlessly blends active and passive recreation opportunities (e.g., a park that provides areas to sit, grassy multi-use areas, incorporates skate spots, etc.) (1,2,4,6)
50. Create a comprehensive skatepark system, which includes a network of skate alternatives, such as skate spots, skate paths and skateparks. Utilize the City of Seattle as an example for how to create, design and implement this kind of system. (1,2,4,6)
51. Explore the creation of a Keene Agricultural Commission. (2,6)
52. Identify areas for food storage, processing, and distribution facilities and businesses. (1,2,6)

53. Use the City Geographic Information System GIS system to identify possible sites for neighborhood based community gardens. (2,4,6)
54. Research and identify municipal policies and strategies that could enhance access to the farmers' market (e.g. parking, bicycle access, reduced rates for City Express passengers, etc.). (1,2,4,5,6)
55. Work with local agricultural groups to promote farming of unused or underused lands. (2,6)
56. Incorporate urban food production as a use in commercial and industrial districts. (1,2,6)
57. Introduce urban agriculture as part of housing development or neighborhood revitalization. (1,2,6)
58. Work with mainstream food stores to provide a certain percentage of locally produced foods. (1,2,6)
59. Form a Community Recreational Amenities Committee to ensure implementation of the following:
 - a. Identify and purchase the appropriate software for the Parks and Recreation Department to: (1) track membership in local programs; (2) assess demand for facilities; and (3) help manage and prioritize project renovations and replacements.
 - b. Develop a recreation plan for land at the convergence of White and Black Brooks.
 - c. Improve conditions at the ice skating facility at Wheelock Park including enclosure of the skating area.
 - d. Site, design, and construct a permanent skate park.
 - e. Provide up-to-date signage on all trail networks to include the length of the trails and level of difficulty. (1,2,3,4,5,6)
60. Create a hotline and website for residents and business owners to easily communicate infrastructure problems directly to City officials. (1,4)
61. Update the All Hazard Mitigation Plan to incorporate new data related to climate change. (1,2,3,4,6)
62. Continue to update the City Emergency Operations Plan and incorporate new data related to climate change. (1,2,3,4,6)
63. Continue development of the City Pandemic Continuity Plan and incorporate new data related to climate change. (1,2,3,4,6)
64. Establish a reverse 911 automated call-back system in the community to notify residents of evacuation routes or other information in the event of an emergency or disaster. (1,4,6)
65. Enhance the interactive quality of the City's website through social media networking tools (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In). (1,4)
66. Organize periodic workshops for education providers, City Council or other boards and committees. These would involve a compelling speaker on a topic of interest, allowing opportunity for officials and board members to interact outside of a formal business meeting. (4,5)
67. Identify student liaisons between local government and student groups and seek to involve these students in civic activities. (4,5)

68. Continue to identify police officer liaisons to neighborhood groups as more groups emerge. (1,4,6)
69. Expand the use and access to online government services throughout the city. (4,5)
70. Create citizen awards to recognize businesses and individuals who work to strengthen their community through positive action. (4,5)
71. Publish GIS maps and data to the City's public website. (4,5)
72. Identify opportunities in the local media to highlight success stories of citizen engagement. Highlight through the city's website as well. (4,5)
73. Establish a "state of our people" report that reports measured respect and support levels related to meaning, purpose and connectedness and the ways that citizens care for one another. This could be achieved in collaboration with Cheshire Medical Group as part of measuring progress for Vision 2020. (1,2,3,4,5,6)
74. Begin a regular annual survey of high school students that will help gauge their interests relative to community issues and identify ways to get them involved. (4,5)
75. Continue to build capacity within the senior community to engage in community issues through library training programs, CALL , and volunteer-matching programs, etc. (4,5)
76. Increase the use of public art to assist with the growth of a culturally informed public. (1,3,4,5,6)
77. Coordinate infrastructure improvements (sidewalks, parks, etc.) with opportunities to create public art. Identify a liaison between the City and the arts community to ensure there is a discussion about public improvements and arts opportunities. (1,3,4,5,6)
78. Host a university design competition in which students develop a "Public Art Strategy" for the community. (1,3,4,5,6)
79. Work with local arts, tourism, and economic development organizations to develop media to promote local art and also brand the city as one of New England's artistic hubs. (1,3,4,5,6)
80. Provide arts and cultural events targeted for different age groups, including youth and young adults. (1,3,4,5,6)
81. Ensure local and regional artists are recognized for their excellence, to honor the important roles they play in encouraging other citizens' to participate in and value creative self-expression. (1,3,4,5,6)
82. Continue to collaborate with local colleges/universities and other education providers to conduct service-learning projects (e.g. raising salmon and releasing them into Beaver Brook or long-term macro-invertebrate monitoring program) and incorporate environmental conservation into school curricula. (2,4,5,6)
83. Work to create broad participation on boards and commissions that are representative of Keene's diversity. (4,5)
84. Partner with Southwest Community Services (SCS) and other organizations to enhance childcare options for single parent or working family households. (4,5)

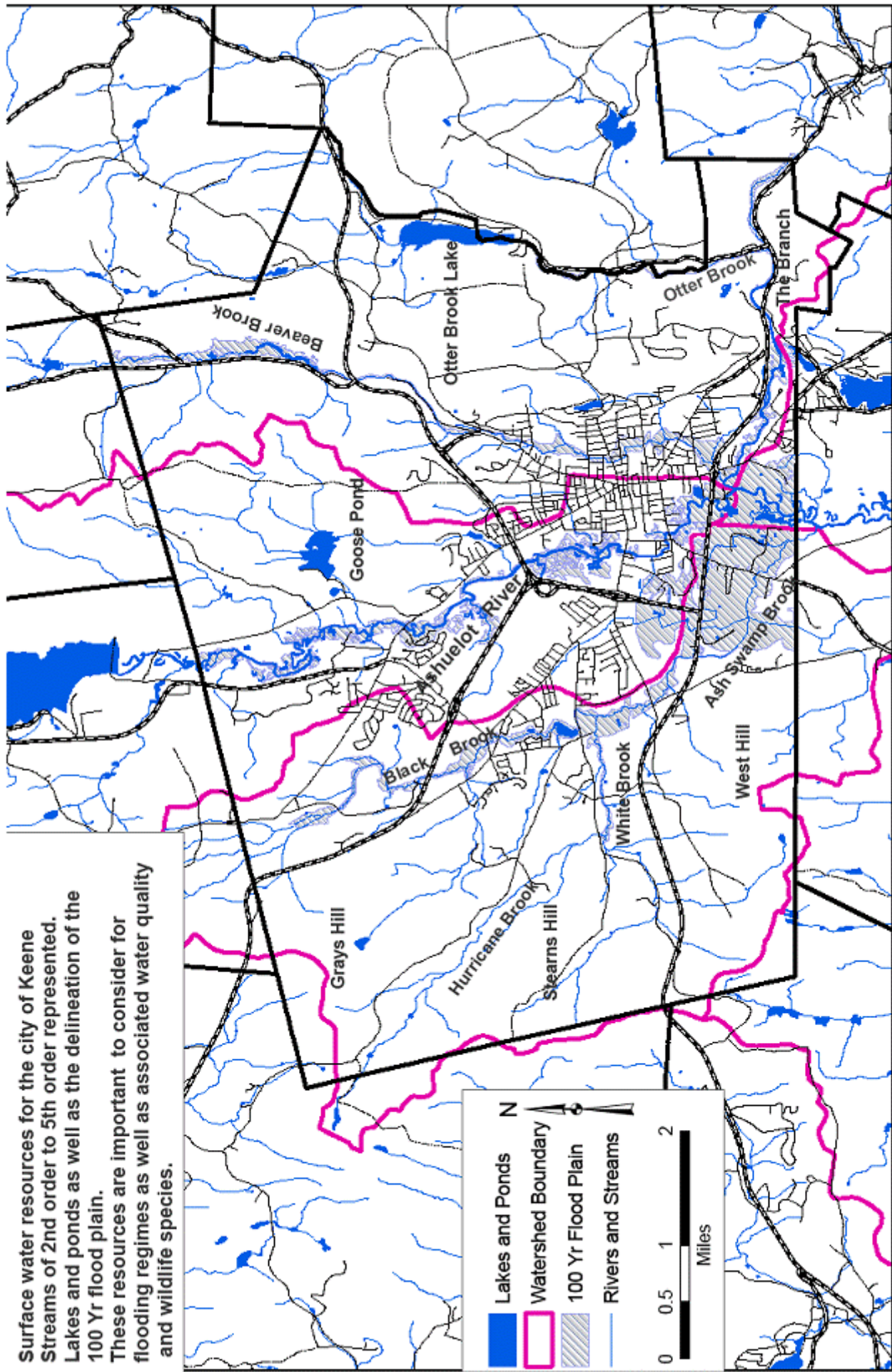
85. Work with the Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) and other organizations to commission a resource based evaluation of local codes and policies within the ten municipalities that steward the Ashuelot River Watershed to enhance planning, protection, recreation and education initiatives. (1,2,4)
86. Examine potential for “re-subdividing” the remaining vacant and underutilized parcels in the Corporate Business Park to allow for more efficient development. (1,2,3)
87. Support further expansion of River Valley Community College campus in Keene. (1,5)
88. Explore the potential use of excess land on existing commercial and/or industrial land for agricultural production as an interim use. (1,2,6)
89. Create a bicycle share program. (1,2,3,6)
90. Establish zipcar or another similar type of car share program (1,2,3,6)
91. Assess public knowledge of governance and issues. Identify new ways of disseminating news and notice about local government. (4,5)

APPENDIX G

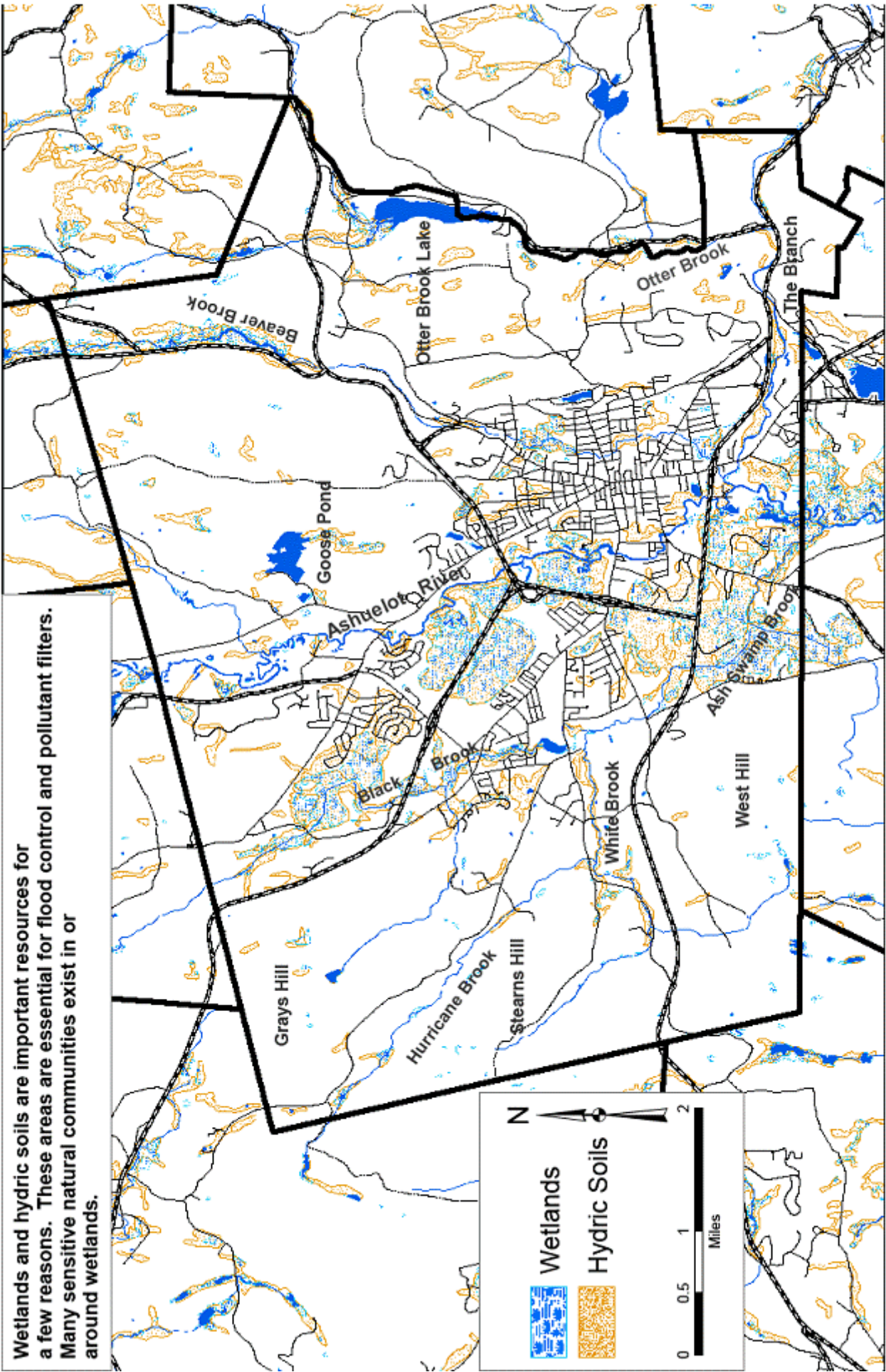
Natural Resources Inventory

2009

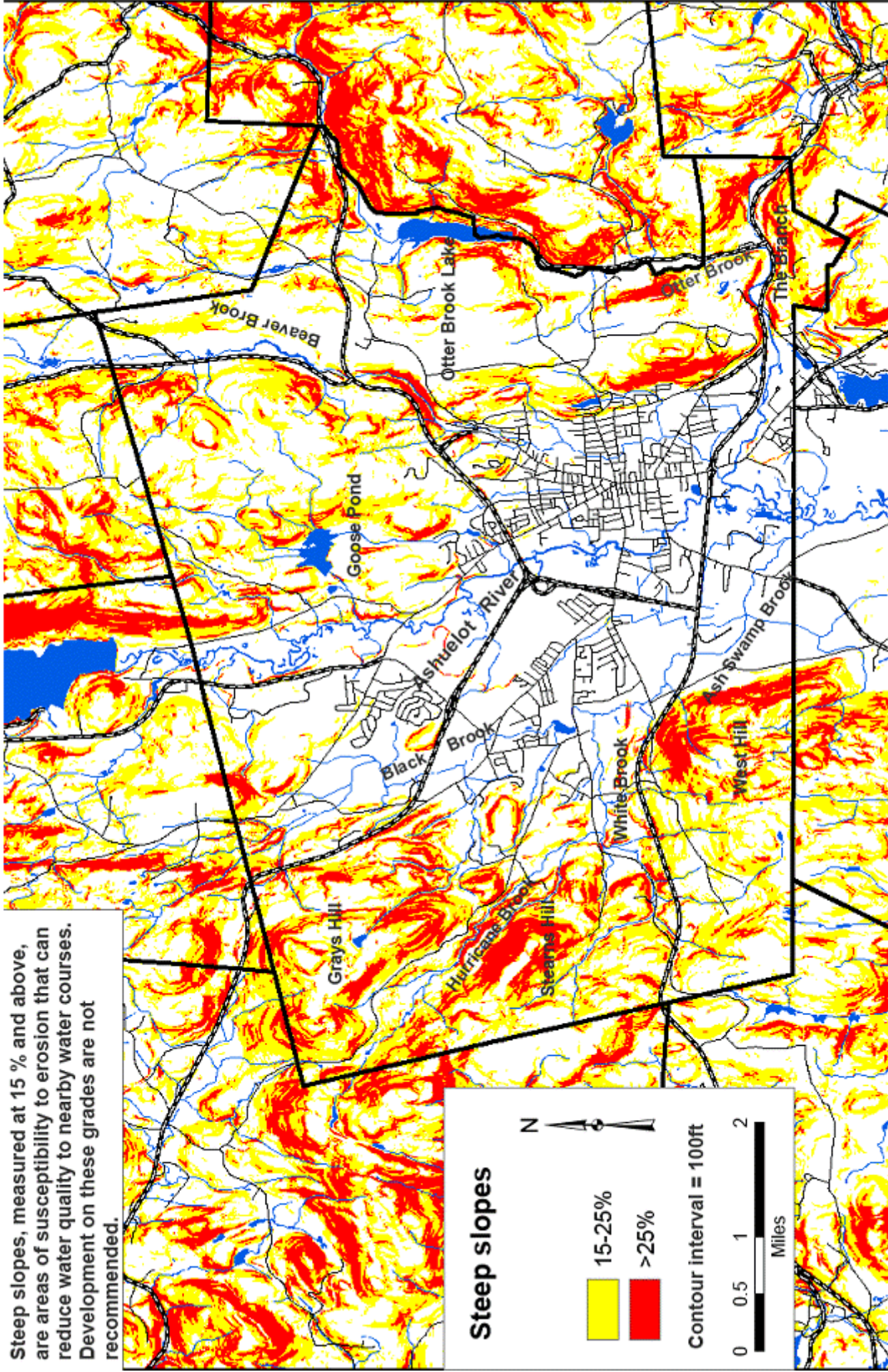
Surface water resources for the city of Keene
Streams of 2nd order to 5th order represented.
Lakes and ponds as well as the delineation of the
100 Yr flood plain.
These resources are important to consider for
flooding regimes as well as associated water quality
and wildlife species.



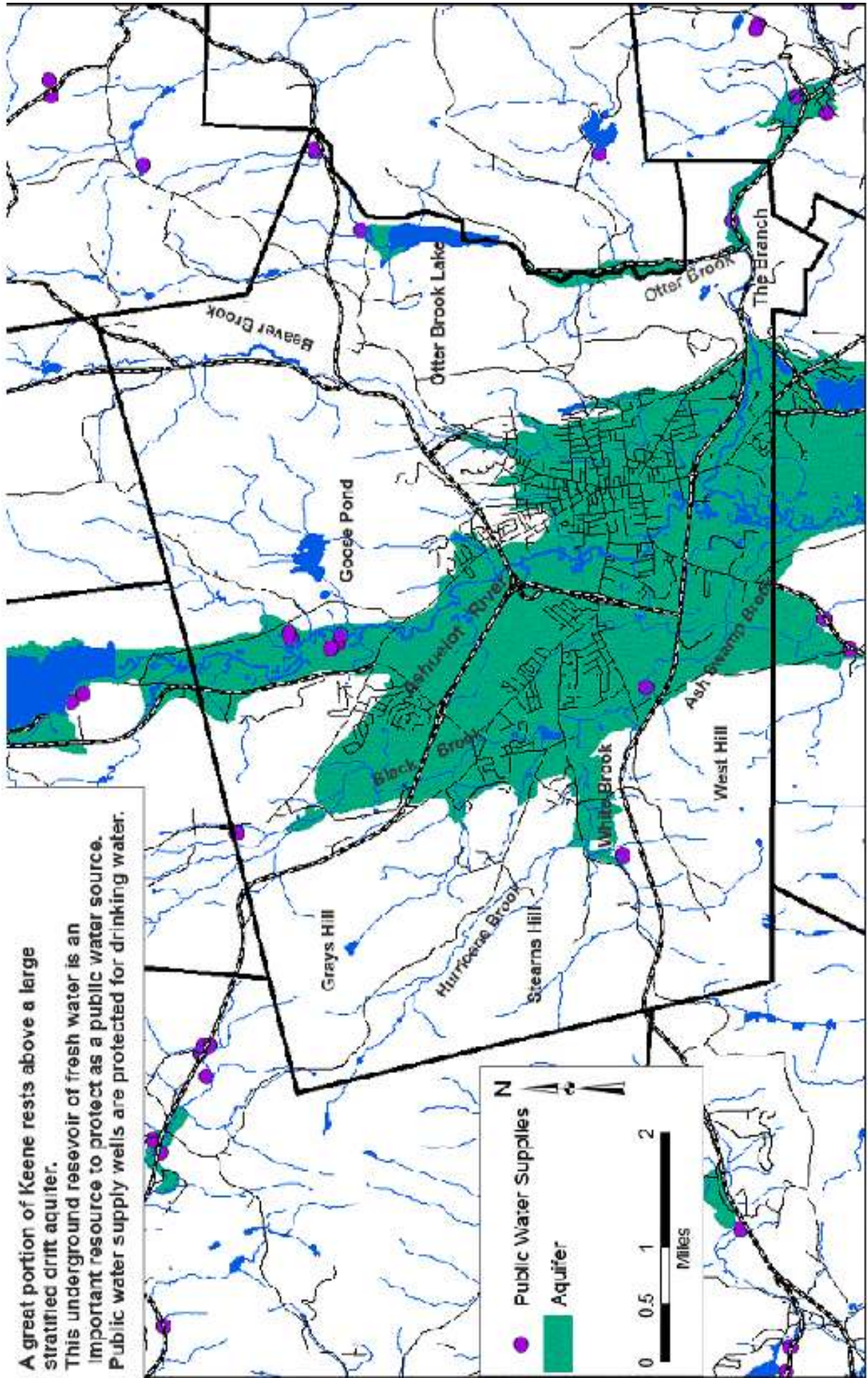
Wetlands and hydric soils are important resources for a few reasons. These areas are essential for flood control and pollutant filters. Many sensitive natural communities exist in or around wetlands.



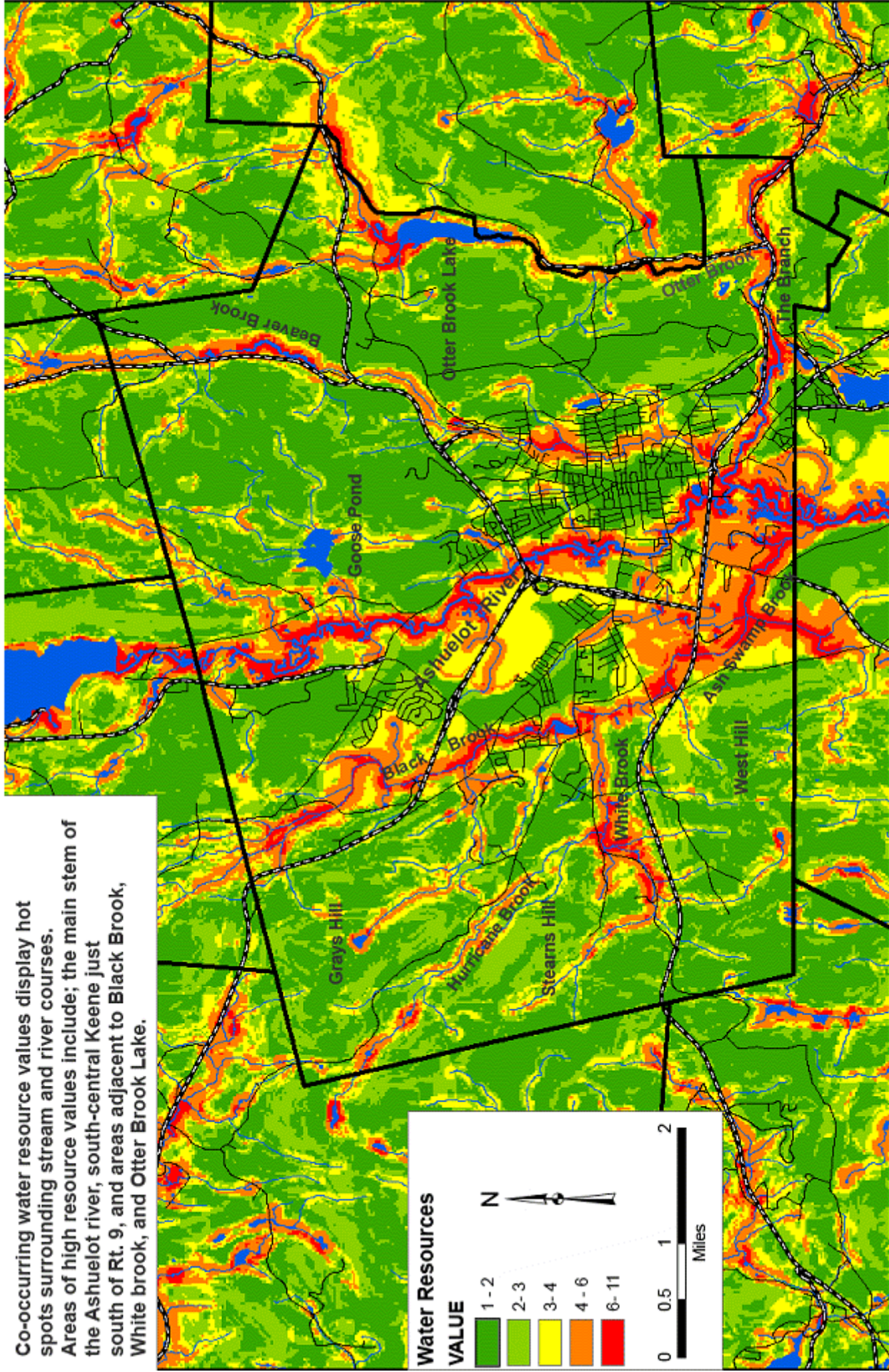
Steep slopes, measured at 15 % and above, are areas of susceptibility to erosion that can reduce water quality to nearby water courses. Development on these grades are not recommended.



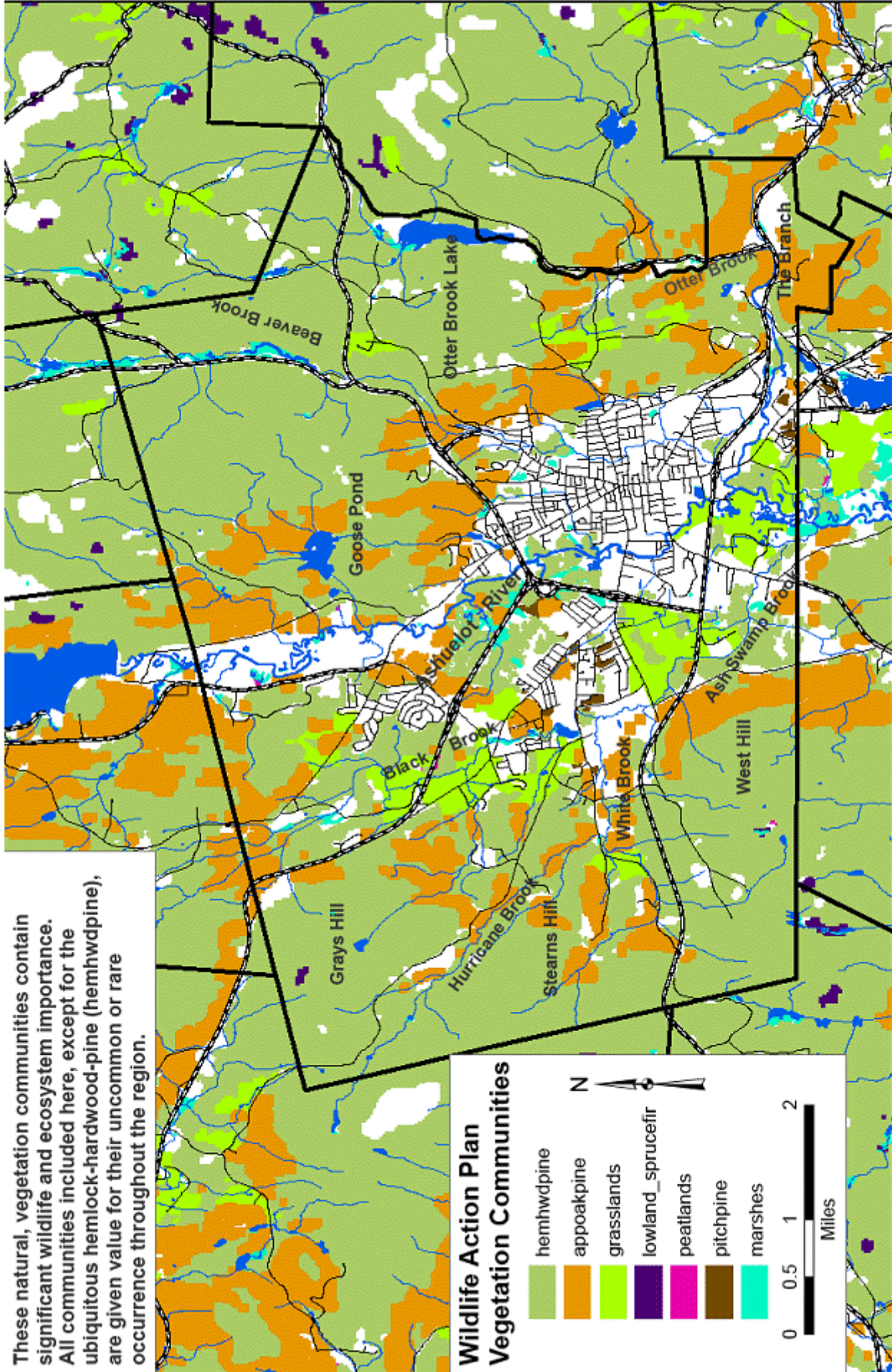
A great portion of Keene rests above a large stratified drift aquifer. This underground reservoir of fresh water is an important resource to protect as a public water source. Public water supply wells are protected for drinking water.



Co-occurring water resource values display hot spots surrounding stream and river courses. Areas of high resource values include; the main stem of the Ashuelot river, south-central Keene just south of Rt. 9, and areas adjacent to Black Brook, White brook, and Otter Brook Lake.

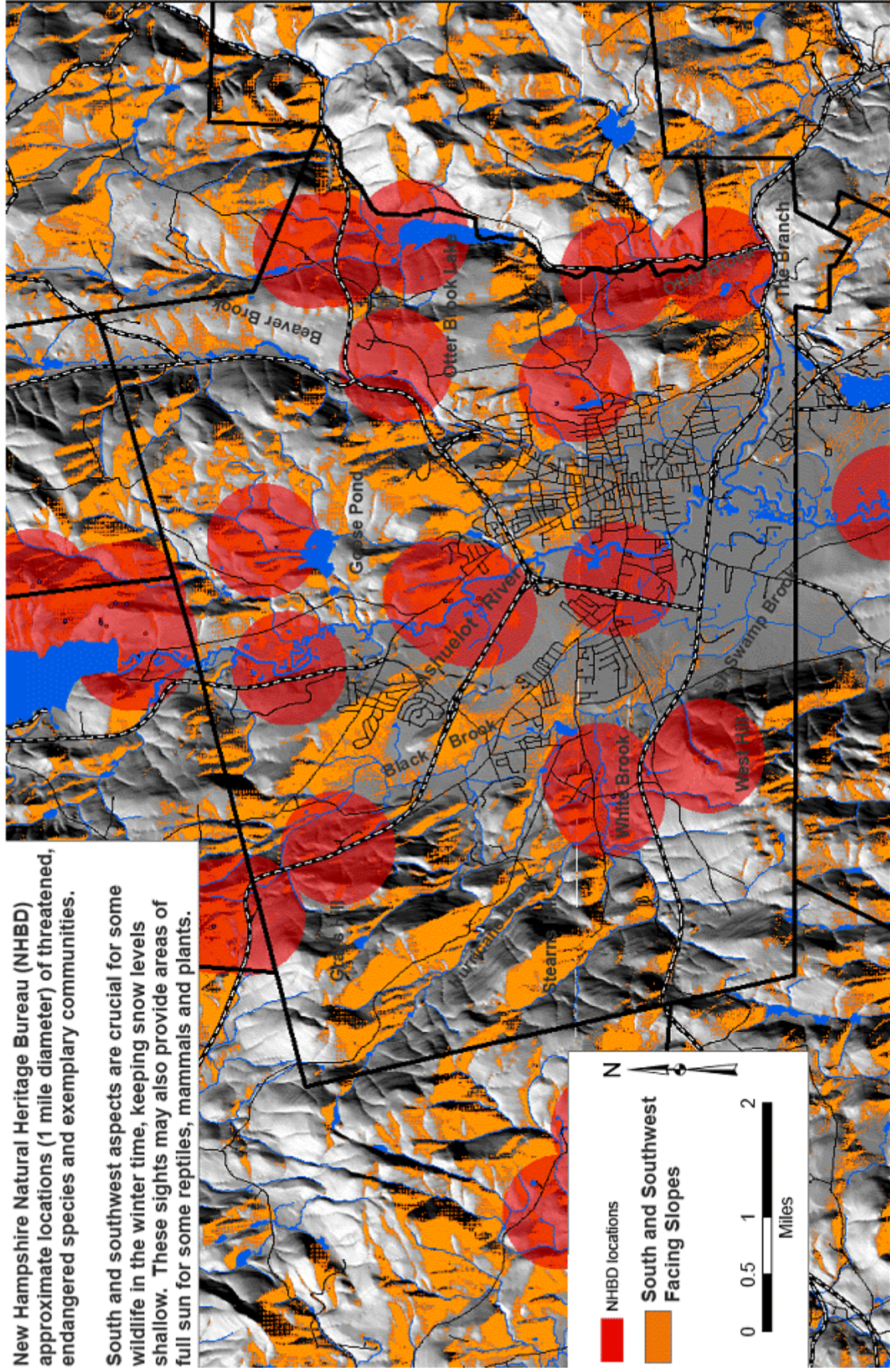


These natural, vegetation communities contain significant wildlife and ecosystem importance. All communities included here, except for the ubiquitous hemlock-hardwood-pine (hemhwdpine), are given value for their uncommon or rare occurrence throughout the region.

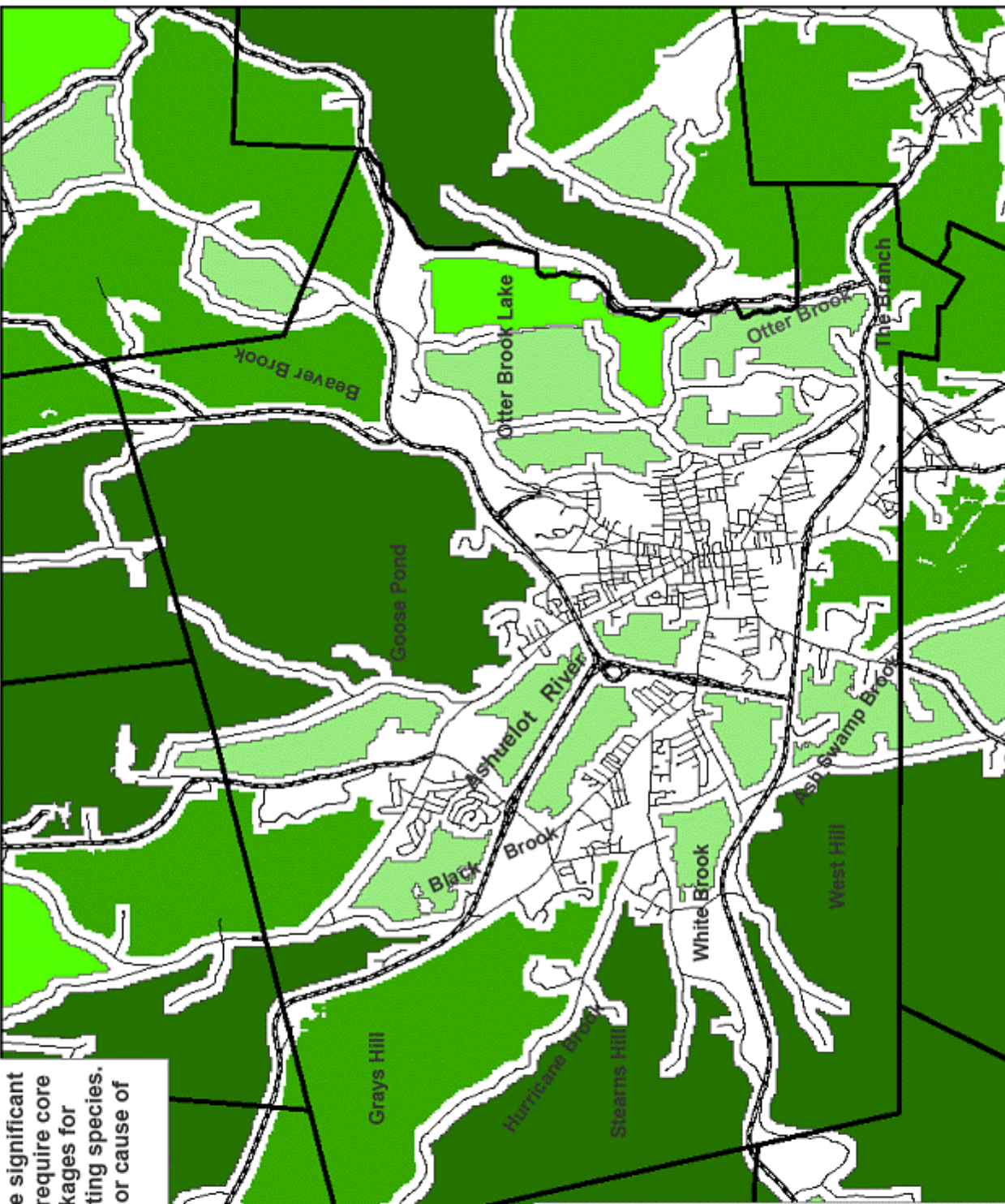


New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau (NHBD) approximate locations (1 mile diameter) of threatened, endangered species and exemplary communities.

South and southwest aspects are crucial for some wildlife in the winter time, keeping snow levels shallow. These sights may also provide areas of full sun for some reptiles, mammals and plants.

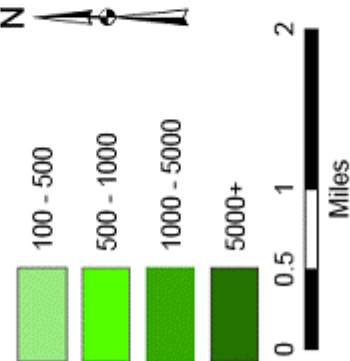


Unfragmented forest blocks have significant implications for song birds that require core habitat and to act as corridor linkages for wide ranging mammals or migrating species. Roads and buildings are the major cause of fragmentation.



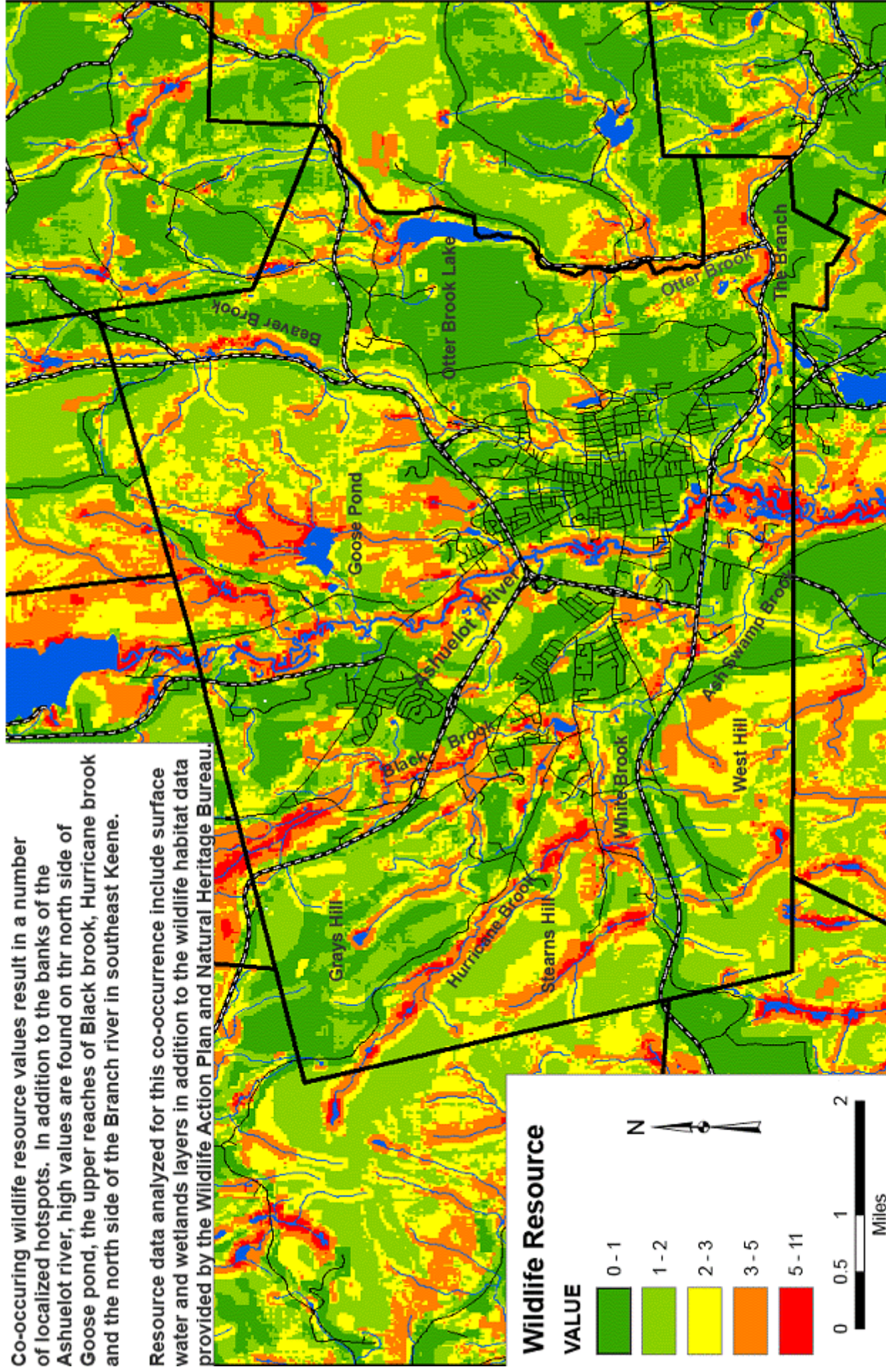
Unfragmented Forest Blocks

TOTAL ACRES

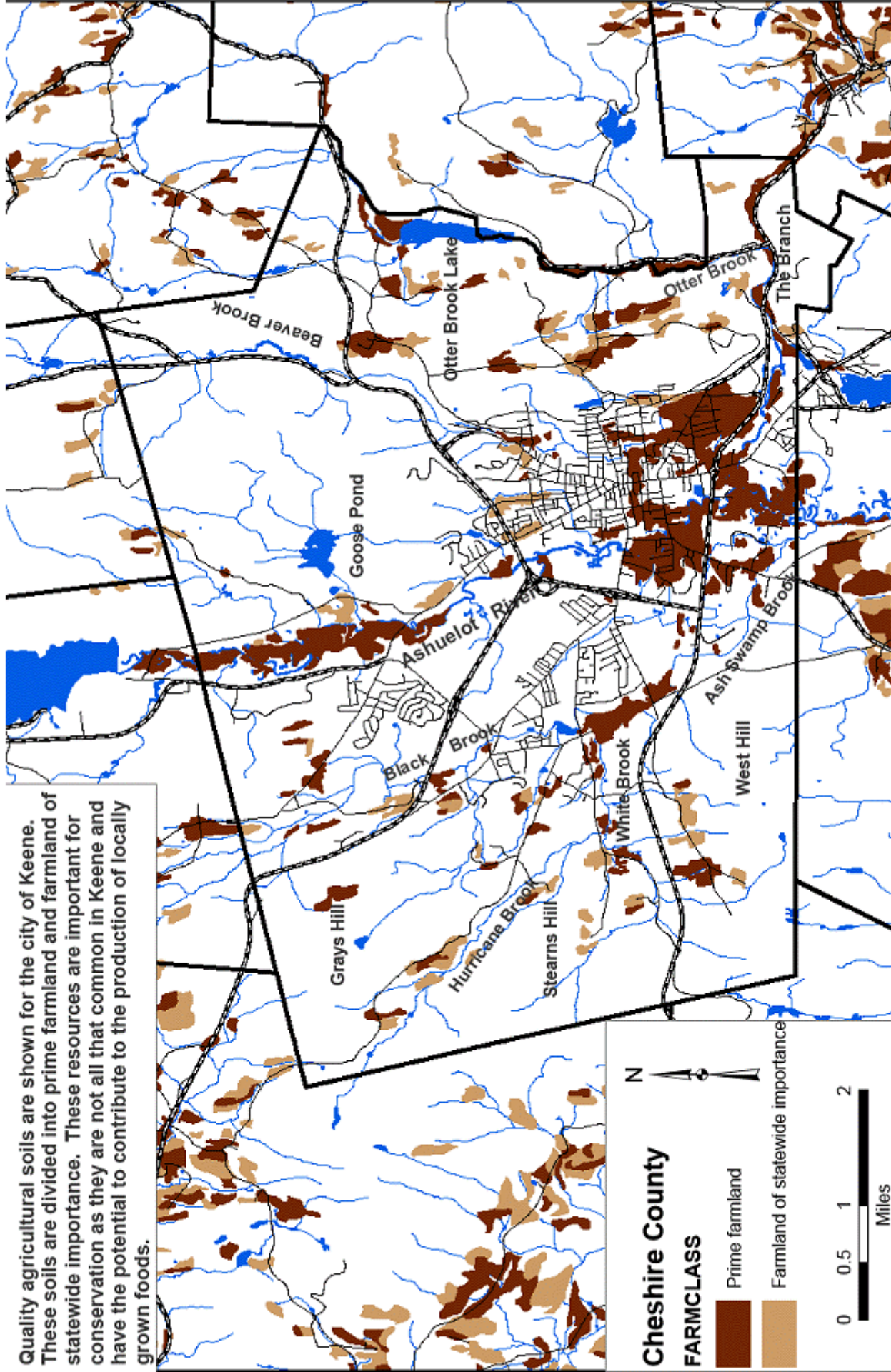


Co-occurring wildlife resource values result in a number of localized hotspots. In addition to the banks of the Ashuelot river, high values are found on the north side of Goose pond, the upper reaches of Black brook, Hurricane brook and the north side of the Branch river in southeast Keene.

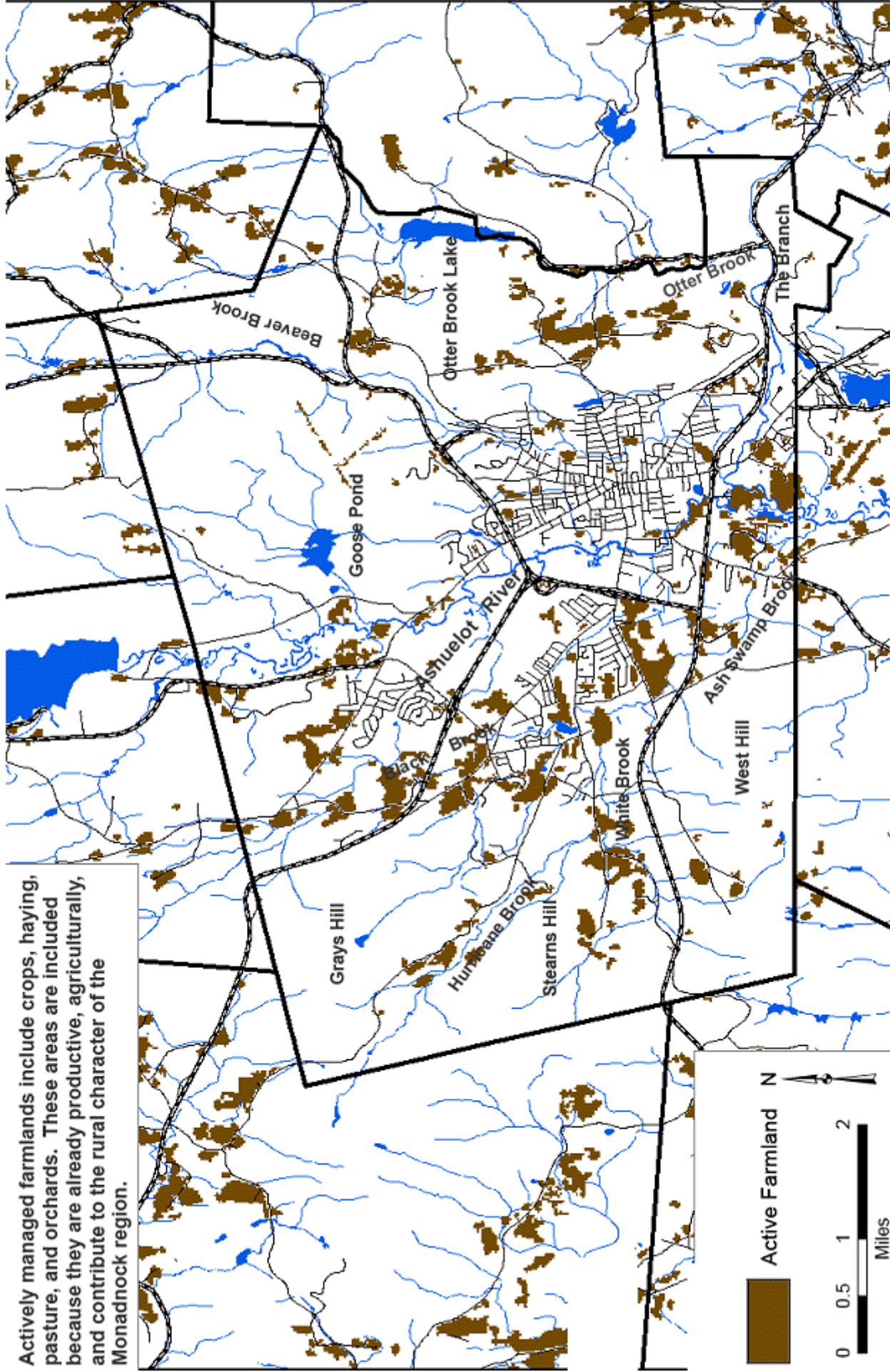
Resource data analyzed for this co-occurrence include surface water and wetlands layers in addition to the wildlife habitat data provided by the Wildlife Action Plan and Natural Heritage Bureau.



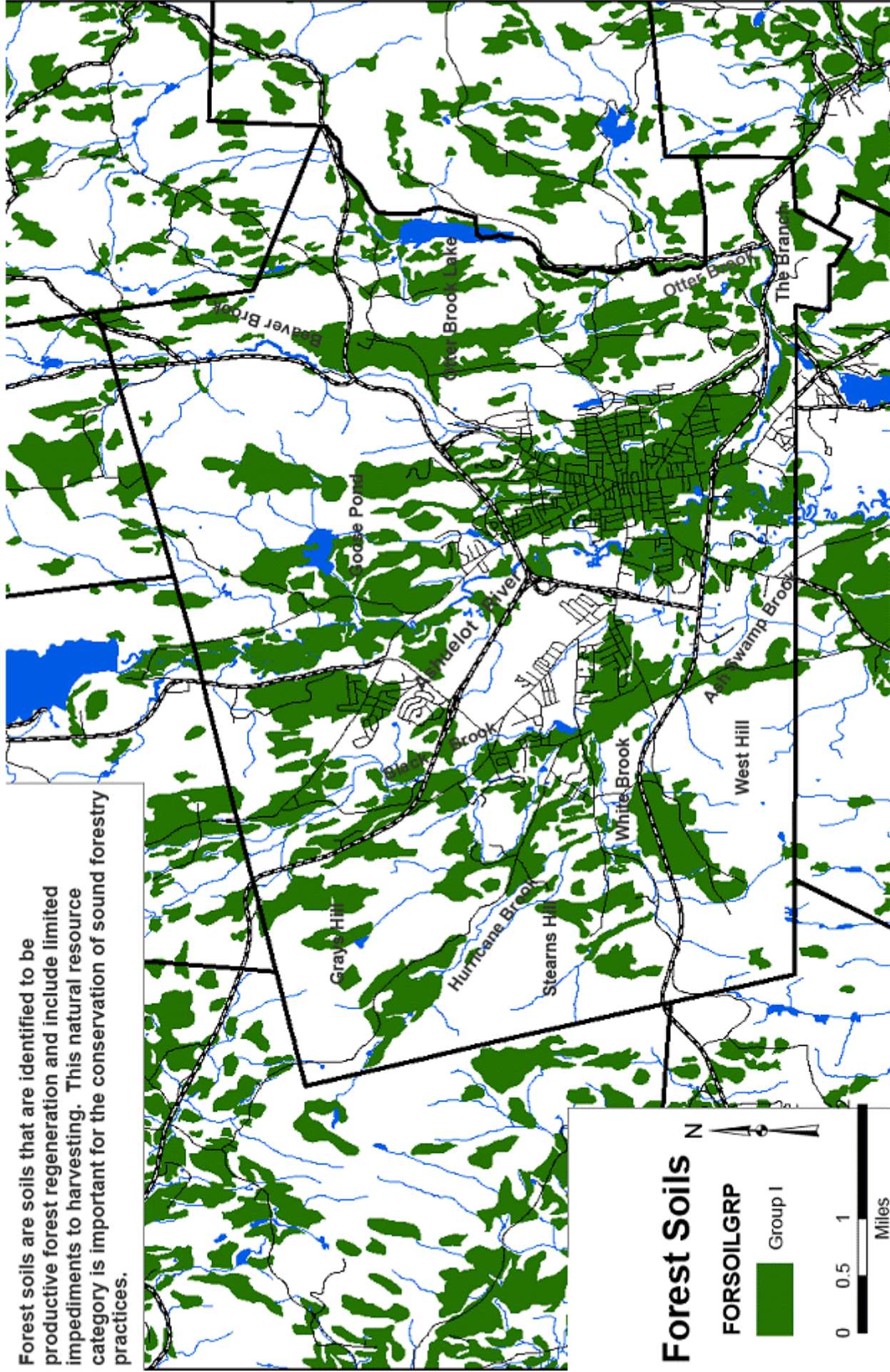
Quality agricultural soils are shown for the city of Keene. These soils are divided into prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance. These resources are important for conservation as they are not all that common in Keene and have the potential to contribute to the production of locally grown foods.



Actively managed farmlands include crops, haying, pasture, and orchards. These areas are included because they are already productive, agriculturally, and contribute to the rural character of the Monadnock region.



Forest soils are soils that are identified to be productive forest regeneration and include limited impediments to harvesting. This natural resource category is important for the conservation of sound forestry practices.



Forest Soils

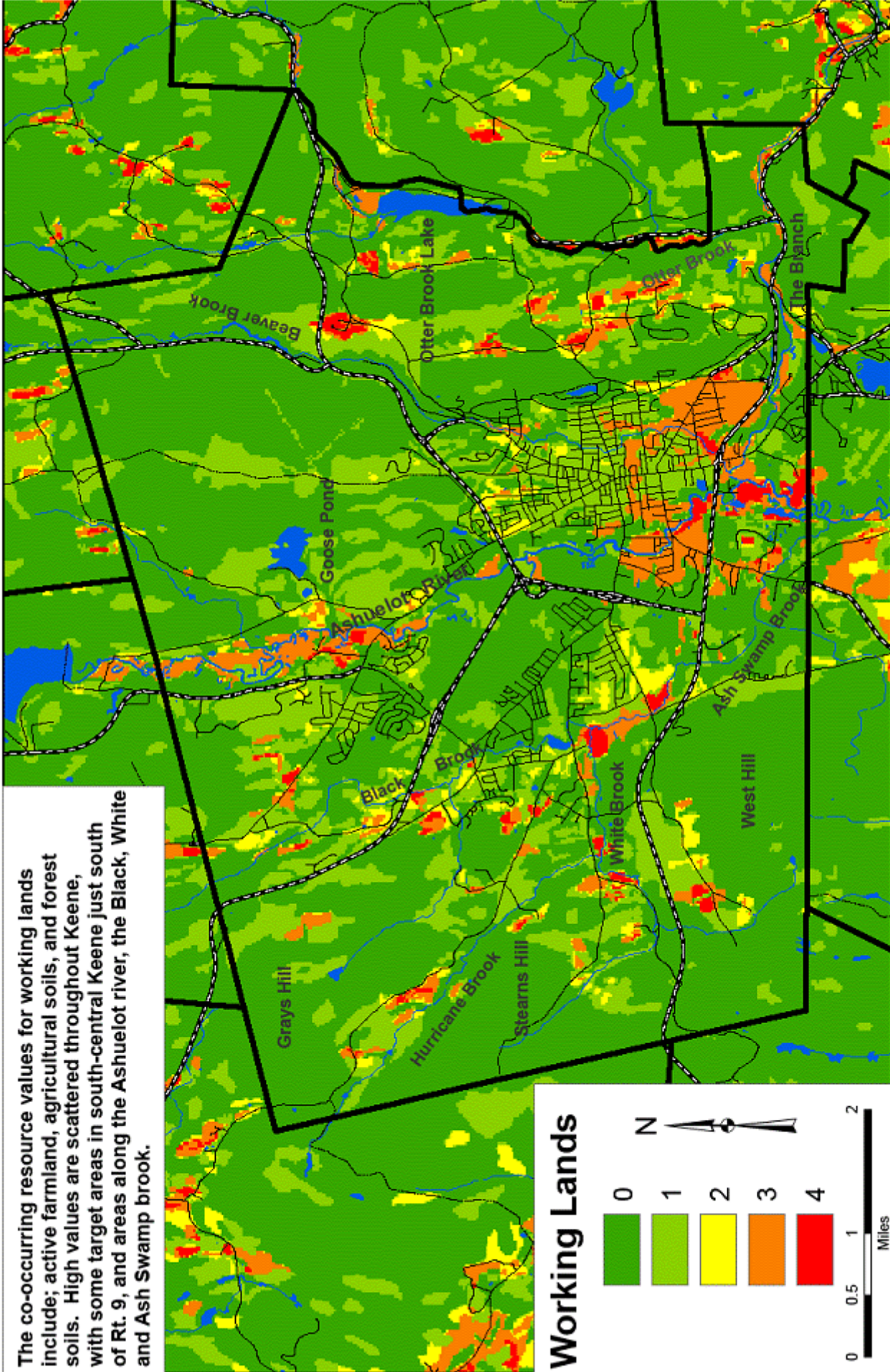
FORSOILGRP

Group I

0 0.5 1

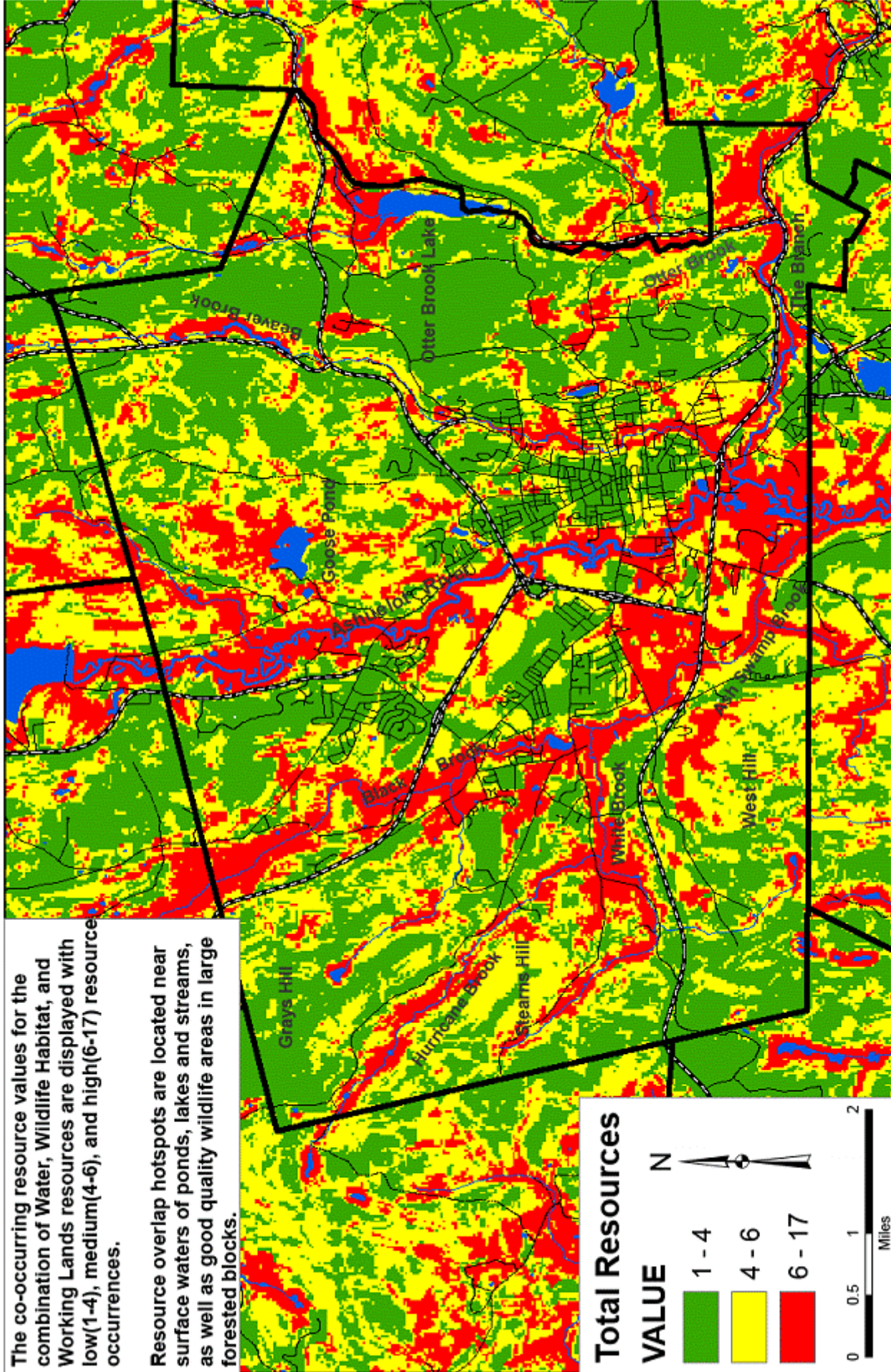
Miles

The co-occurring resource values for working lands include; active farmland, agricultural soils, and forest soils. High values are scattered throughout Keene, with some target areas in south-central Keene just south of Rt. 9, and areas along the Ashuelot river, the Black, White and Ash Swamp brook.



The co-occurring resource values for the combination of Water, Wildlife Habitat, and Working Lands resources are displayed with low(1-4), medium(4-6), and high(6-17) resource occurrences.

Resource overlap hotspots are located near surface waters of ponds, lakes and streams, as well as good quality wildlife areas in large forested blocks.



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